WALDEN UNIVERSITY
A higher degree. A higher purpose.

**Walden University
ScholarWorks**

Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies

Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies
Collection

2015

Leadership Influences of the Veteran Alpha Female Leader

Danielle J. Moncrief
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations

Part of the Business Administration, Management, and Operations Commons, Management Sciences and Quantitative Methods Commons, and the Women's Studies Commons

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Danielle Moncrief

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Kizzy Dominguez, Committee Chairperson, Psychology Faculty
Dr. Barbara Chappell, Committee Member, Psychology Faculty
Dr. Linda Whinghter, University Reviewer, Psychology Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2015

Abstract

Leadership Influences of the Veteran Alpha Female Leader

by

Danielle J. Moncrief

M.A., Michigan School of Professional Psychology, 2006

B.A., Wayne State University, 2001

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Industrial Organizational Psychology

Walden University

November 2015

Abstract

In recent years, more women have entered positions of leadership, and their alpha personalities have compelled them to strive for higher positions of authority. With this influx, it has become necessary to better understand the influences of this type of female leader and to expand narrow conceptualizations. Previous studies examined alpha female leaders of high school and college-age, but studies have yet to explore this type of leader beyond college. This phenomenological study sought to examine the influence of the minority identity, life experience, and leadership duration on veteran alpha female leaders. It was grounded in social-role and ethnic-identity theory. During semistructured interviews, 12 veteran alpha female leaders of various ethnicities explained their experiences. The data were analyzed using the Colaizzi method; 409 significant statements were extracted and then clustered into 8 themes. The findings indicated that although alpha qualities can emerge early, most attributes take time to develop. Seeking opportunities and ongoing mentoring influenced leader experiences and contributed to success and leadership duration. Through exploration of the minority identity status (e.g. gender, ethnicity, culture, etc.) increased motivational influences were found as a direct result of the minority identity, these findings indicated that leaders of color were particularly susceptible to more than one motivational influence. Increased understanding of veteran alpha women could help to improve leadership practices and enhance working relationships, which better support the personalities of this valuable but sometimes challenging leadership type. The general acceptance of alpha women in leadership roles promotes positive social change by helping to facilitate growth in female leadership representation.

Leadership Influences of the Veteran Alpha Female Leader

by

Danielle J. Moncrief

M.A., Michigan School of Professional Psychology, 2006

B.A., Wayne State University, 2001

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Industrial Organizational Psychology

Walden University

November 2015

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my appreciation to my committee those who began with me and those who were with me to the very end, it was your support and feedback that has allowed me to reach my matriculation goals. I would also like to thank my family and friends who have listened to me vent, sweat, cry and finally succeed, it was your continued encouragement, your recruitment efforts, your love and faith in me that has enabled me to obtain this prestigious degree. And last but certainly not least, I want to thank my research participants, I could not have earned the title of *Doctor* without the time you volunteered to be a part of this study.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

There is a rarely referenced category of women frontrunners, who maintain particular personality characteristics which define them as *alpha leaders*. This type of female leader includes a class of women who have embraced their leadership ambitions despite implicit messages that have assigned women lifelong roles of caretaking and helping (Ludeman & Erlandson, 2007; Ward, Popson, & DiPaolo, 2010). Distinct differences exist between alpha leaders and nonalpha leaders which indicate dissimilarities between the alpha female leader and the traditional female leader (Ward, DiPaolo, & Popson, 2009). Those with an alpha female personality exude confidence, leading others to respect *her* as an equal. As a result, these particular female leaders have not viewed gender as a deficiency or barrier (Ward et al., 2010). Alpha female leaders not only self-identify as alphas, but also demonstrate blatant characteristics that others have found more than simply notable, but specific to this particular type of leader (Ludeman & Erlandson; 2007; Ward et al., 2010).

The alpha female personality seems to have escaped the tenets of social role theory, which assigns distinct roles to each gender. Perversely, the alpha woman considers herself equal to her male peers and believes her ability to achieve success to be just as limitless. Alpha women include those who are able to maintain high achievement in educational and career endeavors and have demonstrated more ambition than the traditional female leader (Kindlon, 2006). Alpha women also possess more masculine qualities than nonalpha women and would be most likely able to take an authoritarian approach to genderless leadership without compromising their leadership success (Ward

et al., 2010). This chapter introduces the research and provides the background of the research, the purpose and nature of the research study. The chapter also defines the operational definitions, discusses the research question, and provides a conceptual framework of theories that inform the study. Lastly, the chapter outlines the significance, the limitations, scope and delimitations of the research.

Background

Eagly's (1987) social role perspective postulated that women are naturally designed for caretaking roles and men are better suited for leadership. Under this premise, gender is defined as the only determinant of job success. Berry (2010) proposed that for women to have a chance at leadership, overachievement was required. Because women have not been traditionally viewed as leaders in the United States, the leadership standard was automatically set higher for female leaders than for male leaders (Heffernan, 2002). Similar to the notion of *double burden* (Jamieson, 1996), which proposed that women, unlike men, have had the dual obligation of managing domestic and work responsibilities, Heffernan (2002) found that female leaders not only had the responsibility of their leadership position but also of proving their capabilities. Men, on the other hand, could allow their experience and education to speak to their ability. Previous studies (Ward et al., 2009, 2010) have found that families are increasingly raising women to consider themselves equal to their male counterparts.

Research has further indicated that the same characteristics responsible for alpha achievement also contribute to a detrimental increase in organizational risk (Ludeman & Erlandson; 2007). Despite the potential risks, businesses have attributed organizational

success to alpha leadership (Ludeman & Erlandson; 2007; Ward et al., 2010). Although there are differing opinions about the contribution of female leadership to successful management, some business authorities believe that hiring a female executive increases the likelihood of hiring a quality employee (Ludeman & Erlandson; 2007; Ward et al., 2010). Heffernan (2002) contended that women were not only capable of leadership but also that businesses could not continue without female influence. Since the 1970s when new laws mandated women's equality, a positive shift occurred in female leadership numbers. In 2005, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicted a consistent increase of women in management. Presently, women account for more than 50% of total employment and over half of those employed in management, professional, and related occupations (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014a).

Like the topic of alpha female leadership, the role of diversity on alpha leadership has also been relatively unexplored. Livingston, Rosette and Washington (2012) found evidence to support leadership success to be predicted by race rather than gender; they found better societal acceptance of dominant characteristics from Black female leaders than from White female leaders. Where Livingston, Rosette and Washington attributed gender to leader success other research found leadership styles to be culture specific. Collectivist societies such as those in Australia and New Zealand have been more likely to promote egalitarian leadership (Stedham, & Yamamura, 2000). Conversely, cultures that have had high numbers of female representation, such as Norway, face different challenges than those who reside in the United States where there has been consistently more male leadership representation (Evans, 2011; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, &

Gupta, 2004).

Although at one time European American women held the majority of management positions, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014a) found that Asian women were more likely to maintain management and professional positions (48%) followed by White women (43%), Black women (34%), and Hispanic women (26%). CNN (2008) predicted that by 2050, the United States would evolve into a country in which European Americans would be the minority population and Latinos, African Americans, Asians, and multiracial populations would constitute the majority. As a result of findings in the literature, I propose that ethnicity and the values associated with one's particular ethnic identity could directly influence the effectiveness of the alpha leader.

The current study extends this research and adds to the understanding of women as leaders; it involved 12 female past or present leaders of varying ethnic backgrounds who met the alpha veteran female-leader criteria (see Chapter 3 for criteria). I interviewed each participant independently to gain insight into how these women were influenced by their leadership experience. Since alpha female leaders are likely to hold positions of power and women have been increasingly taking on more roles of authority (Ward et al. 2009), a better understanding of the alpha female leaders has more presently become important.

Problem Statement

Very little research exists on the alpha female and alpha female leadership. Former alpha female studies (Kindlon, 2006; Ward et al., 2009, 2010) involved a demographic that did not reflect the leadership growth that has occurred over time (U.S.

Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 2014a). Previous research explored alpha female leaders under the age of 21 which consequently negates the influence gained from longevity and experience (Kindlon, 2006; Ward et al., 2009). Without research to address the gaps in the literature a thorough understanding of women as leaders has been subsequently lost.

Although previous literature (Ward et al., 2009, 2010) has not shown evidence of a standard leadership practice, it has supported the need for leadership that has considered diversity differences. Since veteran leaders have had more time to formulate their ethnic identity and cultivate their experiences as alpha female leaders, the knowledge gained from the research will provide insight into an unfamiliar category of leader that is most likely representative of the face of leadership (Ludeman & Erlandson, 2007). Due to the rapid increase of minority populations evolving into majority status and the expansion of women in leadership in both definition and in magnitude, it is imperative to expand outdated conceptions of female leaders.

Purpose of the Study

This phenomenological study sought to examine the influence of the minority identity, life experience, and leadership duration on veteran alpha female leaders. The leadership measure used in this study identified alpha female leaders of various backgrounds and ethnicities, whereas previous research primarily investigated women of European American descent (Ward, DiPaolo, and Popson, 2009).

Research Question

In this study, I employed a phenomenological approach to examine the central research question: How is the experience of being a veteran alpha female leader

influenced by minority identity, leadership experience, and duration? A phenomenological study maintains that the research question must illuminate the quintessence of the experienced phenomenon and not conjecture relationships (Moustakas, 1994). Correspondingly, the research inquiry was driven by a qualitative search that personally captured the research participants while enabling elaboration of the experienced phenomenon through detailed descriptions (Moustakas). In addition to the research question, there were four subquestions:

1. What is the experience of the veteran alpha female leader?

2. How do ethnic, racial, or minority identity influence the alpha female leader and her leadership experience?

3. How does leader duration influence the alpha female leader?

4. How do work and life experiences influence the veteran alpha female leader?

Conceptual Framework

Social role theory and ethnic identity theory provided the conceptual framework for this research. Social role theory proposes that men and women possess specific qualities that are determined by gender, and that these characteristics are reinforced by society through social interactions (Eagly, 1987). Despite various progressive movements that promote equality between genders, a general perception continues that the ideal leader is male (Elsesser & Lever, 2011). Berry (2010) suggested that these gender-based beliefs have been strengthened throughout childhood—in playgroups, in schools, and through mannerisms instilled by significant adults. Socialized ideologies are perpetually reinforced though caretakers, peers, media, and schools, which have served as the main

contributory reason for the rejection of women to many positions of leadership. Women's leadership training often began through a trial-and-error process; although men have been groomed from childhood to lead, women have been socialized into roles of support (Berry, 2010).

This study relates to the perspective of social role theory, which posits that socialized perceptions have automatically prevented women from being considered as either alphas or leaders. Under the social role premise, *alpha* and *leader* have been male-designated roles. Some believe that women do not have characteristics that allow them to successfully lead, and therefore a woman's gender renders her incapable of being successful in leadership (Berry, 2010; Eagly, 1987). Based on the premise of social role theory, the alpha female leader is an anomaly since she has been successful because of her assertiveness, confidence, and relentless ambition (Ludeman & Erlandson, 2007; Ward et al., 2010). According to social role theory, the very characteristics that make the alpha woman a successful leader contradict the composition of her female personality and diverge from what has been considered required for effective leadership.

In addition to social role theory, the research was also grounded in conceptual framework of ethnic identity theory. Although ethnic identity theory has shared commonalities with personal and collective identities, it contains particular characteristics that make it distinct from racial and other group identities (Phinney & Ong, 2007). Ethnic identity theory describes a process that involves a developed connection between one's self-perception and identification with cultural personification (Phinney & Ong,). It

incorporates significant cultural practices and characteristics that bring meaning to one's sense of self (Cokley, 2005).

Cultural contingencies have often been considered unique to a particular ethnic group; such cultural differences dictate one's work priorities, group identity, work ethic, and leadership style (Chen & Francesco, 2000; Miroshnik, 2002). Some values, traditions, and beliefs depend on a person's cultural background and its influence on his/her belief system (Phinney & Ong, 2007). For example, the idea of "filial piety" (which mandates honoring and obeying one's parents) aligns with Asian cultures (Kim, Atkinson, & Umemoto, 2001). Latino culture, in contrast, associates with beliefs in "familism," which demands loyalty to the entire family, not just to one's parents (Sabogal, Marín, Otero-Sabogal, Marín, & Pérez-Stable, 1987). Although honoring one's family versus honoring one's parents may seem a small distinction, I propose that such differences could help influence leadership commitment and that different cultural connotations could influence how alpha women lead. For instance, the work commitment for the Asian leader who has several dependent family members and deceased parents may differ from the Latino leader with an identical family dynamic. Ethnic identity theory provides the conceptual foundation for the component of this study because it was found as the most appropriate theory to demonstrate the connection between personal and ethnic identity.

Nature of the Study

The goal of this study was to examine the influence of the minority identity, life experience, and leadership duration on veteran alpha female leaders. In accordance to suggestions on phenomenological research by Moustakas (1994), this study aimed to

understand the collective experiences of a group through my ability to enter into the world of the participant and capture the essence of the experience. For the current study, I employed a phenomenological inquiry using a semistructured interview to help each participant clarify their experiences. Because the goal of the study was to explore the experiences of the participant, phenomenological analysis was considered the most appropriate method for conducting this study.

This study used purposeful sampling to examine the experiences of 12 women of various ethnic and employment backgrounds. The women who participated voluntarily discussed their unique experiences of being an alpha female veteran leader. Participants were adult leaders who had served in a leadership capacity for at least 10 years and were identified as alpha women by the Alpha Female Inventory (Ward, DiPaolo, & Popson, 2010). *Data analyses involved expert-panel verification, rich thick descriptions*, and *member checks* (See Chapter 3 for elaboration of terms).

Operational Definitions

Definitions of several terms important in this study follow.

Alpha female: Kindlon (2006), who conducted research on high school students, defined the alpha girl as someone who could be considered a natural leader who was driven and self-assured. Ward et al. (2009) defined the alpha female as one who was confident and whose direction and authority others respected. The alpha female defined by this study was consistent with the literature (Kindlon, 2006; Luderman & Erlandson, 2006b; Ward et al., 2009, 2010), defining the alpha woman as a self-assured, goal-driven, competitive, high achiever who maintained egalitarian beliefs and did not perceive any

distinction between herself and her male counterparts. The alpha women in this study were innate leaders who self-identified as such and were identified on the AFI as alpha females.

Leader: Hogan, Curphy, and Hogan (1994) defined a leader as one who is able to persuade others to meet the collective needs of the group for a specified timeframe. For the purpose of this study, a leader was defined as a woman responsible for managing the work or organizational activities of others, or who was responsible for inspiring others to perform, or who was the head of operational activities.

Minority Identity: In this study minority identity refers to various ways the participant experienced being a minority. For the purpose of this research study, the minority identity encompassed self-identification as a minority by being marginally represented through gender, race, ethnicity, or cultural representation.

Multiple minority: All participants in the study had at least two areas in they could have been identified as a minority (i.e., alpha female + veteran leader or alpha female + ethnic minority + veteran leader). For the purposes of this study, *multiple minority* references the various ways participants were marginally represented, encompassing all ethnic backgrounds and minority identity status. Participants involved in this study who belonged to a minority race were further considered multiple minorities due to their tripartite representation as an alpha woman hailing from an ethnic minority and serving as a veteran leader. Nonminority participants fit multiple-minority status due to their dual minority participation as alpha women and veteran leaders.

Veteran: Piirto (2004) contended that "any person must have been working in a domain for a minimum of 10 years in order to achieve international recognition" (p. 15). Therefore, this study stipulated that study participants must have been involved in leadership capacity for at least 10 years.

Limitations

This qualitative study was intended to reveal information unestablished in current literature and designed to close gaps in female leadership research; therefore, the participants involved in this study were not selected as representative of a specified population. This study was limited by the points of view of the participants and the accounts of their leadership experience. Conversely, other variables (e.g. job type, relationship status, children, etc.) that could potentially affect the veteran alpha female leader were not included in this study. Although it cannot be consequently assumed that the results are generalizable to any specific population, rich detail has been provided in the results section to allow readers to determine whether the information is useful for their specified purposes.

Unconscious biasness was another potential limitation of the research. A condition of phenomenological research involves the topic being of personal relevance to the researcher. It is possible that unintentional, preconceived ideas about the research outcome could have been conformed to my beliefs. Since lack of awareness of unconscious bias could dramatically impact research findings, noting my initial assumptions in the context of the study was essential to limiting researcher bias. In an effort to reduce personal bias, I also employed more than one method to analyze the

research data and support the validity of the findings. An additional method of limiting preconceptions was the implementation of the expert panel. The interview protocol was reviewed by an expert panel, and I used the suggestions of *the experts* to finalize the guideline questions and avoid leading the participants in a particular direction. I also used member checking to ensure the accuracy of the experience was verified by the participants and not solely based upon the researcher's interpretation.

<div align="center">**Scope and Delimitations**</div>

The research study explored the experiences of veteran alpha female leaders through their leadership influences, during a semistructured interview. Although this study ensured a diverse sample of participants, this study did not explore veteran alpha women in specific arenas, such as only leaders in a nonprofit or corporate arena. Instead, I selected alpha women from various professional fields. The present study also did not account for lifestyle differences between alpha female leaders with children and those without, between married alpha female leaders and single alpha female leaders, or between veteran alpha female leaders who were just reaching their veteran status (e.g., 10 years) and those who had maintained a leadership position for numerous decades. Distinctive lifestyle differences could affect the alpha female leader experience. For example, if family importance is a cultural distinction and deemed an influencing factor, family could have more of an impact on a newer veteran leader than on a veteran alpha female leader who has been in her field over 10 years, but further research would be needed to further explore the significance of these various factors.

Significance of the Study

Turnover can cost companies time, money, and resources. Catalyst.org (2011) estimated that replacing employees cost employers 50- 60% of the worker's annual salary, and turnover cost is at least 40–140% more, ranging from 90–200% of the annual salary; therefore, identifying alpha leaders could enable department heads to proactively decide whether they want the risk associated with the alpha personality. With the influx of women with alpha personalities heading major corporations along with increases in female and minority leadership, alpha leadership research has become important. Such research could help improve organizational structure and employee retention.

Increased awareness of the alpha woman further enable improved working conditions tailored to the personalities of this valuable but sometime challenging leadership type. Learning more about the veteran alpha leadership experience could allow for a better match among colleagues and increase receptivity of the alpha leader so that alpha behaviors are less counterproductive to job performance (Luderman & Erlandson, 2006b).

Without social role limitations, alpha women seem to excel in leadership with less strain than traditional leaders (Ludeman & Erlandson, 2007). Ward et al. (2010) designed a tool to differentiate alpha leaders from female leaders, but the researchers noted that the lack of diversity among research participants caused an inability to confirm whether the alpha measure was applicable to all populations. The diverse sample of participants involved in the current research further extends the comprehension of the alpha measure. The study will enable the development of diversity practices that better align with the

minority status needs of the alpha female leader.

The study sample was not representative of a given population and therefore cannot be assumed to be generalizable to any specific population. The detailed results can enable the reader to determine how the information is useful for their given purposes, so this study could benefit any leader desiring a better understanding of the influences that underlie female alpha leadership. This research could be additionally used to help the veteran alpha female leaders better understand the developmental practices that contributed to their growth as alpha women. Additional knowledge about the origin of alpha female development could provide veteran alpha female leaders with the tools to promote the progression of other women in their organizations. Ultimately, a better understanding of the experience of veteran alpha women and the ways leadership experiences influence this leader type allows business leaders to make more predictive and effective leadership decisions when selecting future alphas for top positions. Since this study could help predict leader talent outcomes, it facilitates positive social change through its ability to contribute to the enhancement of organizational culture. The study also promotes growth in female leadership representation by fostering an improved acceptance of alpha women in leadership roles.

Summary

Researchers showed that the ambitious nature of the alpha leader is necessary for organizational success (Ludeman & Erlandson, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Ward et al. 2010). However, the meticulousness and overachievement qualities of an alpha leader have correlated with increased stress and reduced morale (Ludeman & Erlandson, 2006b). A

better understanding of the unique experience of the veteran alpha female leader and her influences can help companies identify more effective ways of managing this type of leader. Learning more about this type of leader could contribute not only to improving practices of managing the veteran alpha female leader but could also contribute to improving overall job satisfaction.

This chapter outlines the study and provides a comprehensive account of the research question, the conceptual foundation, and the significance of the research study. It also defined additional key concepts related to the research, including the ways in which the research facilitates social change. The study utilized a phenomenological approach to explore the experiences of the veteran alpha female leader.

Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive review of the literature. The chapter reviews studies on alpha female leadership, existing leadership literature and further elaborates upon research that has highlighted previous leadership studies. The literature review examines the qualities of a leader, leader success, and limited female leadership rationales (e.g., work/family balance, glass ceiling, and beyond the glass ceiling). Additionally, the conceptual framework of social role theory and ethnic identity theory are further explicated.

In Chapter 3, the research methodology, design and the rationales for the chosen research method are discussed, including particulars on the role of the researcher and analysis procedures as well as a discussion about the data collection method, theme identification, and trustworthiness procedures. Additionally, the results and overall conclusions of the study in Chapter 4, and the key findings of the study are also

presented. Chapter 5 provides a comprehensive explanation of the conclusions generated

from the research along with an interpretation of the findings presented in Chapter 4.

Finally, Chapter 5 elaborates upon the study's limitations and implications of those

findings, which include the recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to extend the concept of female leadership through the exploration of the experience of the veteran alpha female leader. The research examined the ways in which leadership experiences, duration, and the minority identity status influence this specific type of female leader. It has remained unclear whether alpha personality differences have resulted from shifts in women's perceptions about their leadership capabilities or if these changes reflect a societal attitude shift. In the last few decades, increasing numbers of women have entered management positions, accounting for 26.3% of chief executive positions (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014a). Furthermore, women have increasingly earned degrees and taken on higher management positions (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014b), and this influx of women in organizational authority has helped to reduce sex discrimination (Stainback & Kwon, 2012).

Understanding the experience of this limited group has become more important because the presence of alpha female leadership is increasing (Ward, DiPaolo, & Popson; 2009, 2010). One of the few research studies to qualitatively explore alpha female leadership only examined the experience of having this type of leadership personality with college participants (Ward et al., 2009), but little research exists on the alpha female personality and her experiences beyond the college years.

Luderman and Erlandson (2006b) described the alpha man as stubborn, resistant to advice, judgmental, and lacking in emotional intelligence. Although the alpha woman was associated with similar qualities, alpha women were also considered to be less direct

and less confrontational but more introspective, collaborative, and receptive to coaching than alpha men (Luderman & Erlandson, 2007). A positive correlation between the personality strengths of the alpha man and organizational risk was found to result in higher turnover, less worker satisfaction, and overall financial losses for the company (Luderman & Erlandson, 2007). However, New (2007) suggested that alphas who displayed human qualities such as smiling, direct eye contact, charisma, and doubt were able to relay a more positive message to employees and increased their popularity as alpha leaders. Additional research by Luderman and Erlandson (2006b) suggested that all alpha personalities were not uncompromising; instead, there were four different types of alpha leaders, and alpha type predicted performance outcome. They suggested specific techniques which corresponded to each particular alpha type that could better ensure the likelihood of a collaborative interaction. Overall, increased awareness on the alpha personality could help reduce the anxiety, poor retention, and decreased motivation that the alpha leader may invoke (Ludeman & Erlandson, 2007). This chapter provides a review of the literature that outlines the research question.

Literature Search Strategy

I conducted a review of the literature using the following electronic databases: EBSCOhost, SAGE, ABI/INFORM, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, and SocINDEX. The search was limited to academic articles within the psychology and management databases. I also gathered leadership and statistical data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Catalyst.org; I used the following keywords to search the literature: *women leadership, gender role, role-incongruity, leadership, senior leadership, retention, women leaders,*

minority leadership, minorities, senior leadership, work satisfaction, female leaders,

gender perceptions, alpha females, alpha leaders, and *alpha.*

I reviewed recent dissertations, relevant articles, and books listed on

bibliographies. I partitioned the literature review into three sections: leadership studies,

theoretical framework literature, and limited female leadership rationales. The review of

literature examined historical and current research from 1991—2015 and solidified the

need for additional research on the alpha female.

Leadership Studies

Literature throughout the Years: The Qualities of a Leader

Consistent with research that showed differences in leadership traits between

genders, Barlow, Jordan, and Hendrix (2003) identified character as a necessary

component of leadership and found character levels to depend on leadership levels.

Lickona (1991) defined character as the ability to make moral choices despite external

influences. Lickona's (1991) study of 1,110 military officers supported the hypothesis

that women maintained significantly higher character scores of compassion than male

officers. Thus, although character was necessary to be a successful leader, gender

influenced the specific character traits a leader possessed. Embry, Padgett, and Caldwell

(2008) specifically found gender to be a contributing factor to success. Their study

consisted of 180 participants involving the distribution of vignettes that purposely did not

identify gender but instead described either a masculine or feminine leadership style.

They found a significant association between the leadership style and the gender

associated with the style; consequently, participants associated men with characteristics that aligned with the archetypal gender role perception.

Hollander and Julian (1969) argued that preconceived gender perceptions influenced one's opinion of leader potential and effectiveness; however, the implicit leader theory (Lord & Emrich, 2001) proposed that these perceptions were of personality characteristics that leaders needed rather than being gender based perceptions (Eden & Levianthan, 1975). Consistent with the implicit leader theory, previous researchers argued that people have their own perceptions of the strengths and characteristics needed to lead; leaders were selected on the basis of those perceptions and not on actual ability (Eden & Leviathan, 1975; Lord, Foti, & De Vader 1984; Rush, Thomas, & Lord, 1977).

Research on personality and leader effectiveness categories (Gough, 1990; Hogan, 1978; Kenny & Zaccaro, 1983; Lord, De Vader, & Allinger, 1986; Stogdill, 1974; Tarnopol, 1958; Zaccaro, Foti, & Kenny, 1991) found that leaders tended to possess distinct personality characteristics that fell into five comprehensive categories: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness. Researchers partitioned these personality characteristics into smaller categories of five characteristics; the absence or presence of particular personality qualities were of potential leadership candidacy or successful leadership selection. Natural leaders possessed characteristics that contributed to employees rating leaders favorably, and the characteristics the natural leaders possessed were not a self-perception of how a supervisor should behave; rather, characteristics were genuine personality traits that seemed to contribute to their approval among employees (Tarnopol, 1958).

Despite talent and educational achievement, several studies attributed personality differences specifically to leadership failure (Hazucha, 1991; Lombardo, Ruderman, & McCauley, 1988; McCall & Lombardo, 1983). Hogan et al. (1994) attributed management failure neither to gender bias nor preselected personality characteristics but rather contended that leadership decisions were often made on the incorrect assumption that a person who was proficient in a particular task would naturally possess the skills necessary to lead others in the leader's area of expertise. These authors suggested that such an assumption contributed to management failure because this type of management selection practice could result in dismissing a person more suited to managing others than a person who only knows how to perform well (Hogan et al., 1994).

Leader and Leader Success

Hogan et al. (1994) defined a leader as one who is able to persuade others to meet the collective needs of the group for a specified time frame. The authors surmised that morality and gender were irrelevant to leader effectiveness, and the establishment of group collectiveness and the ability to maintain an open, nondictatorial atmosphere were necessary to be a successful leader. Fibuch (2011) explored the failure of senior leaders and attributed leader success to the democratic practice of motivating employees to adopt a common goal of organizational achievement. Fibuch defined leadership as the ability to be more than authoritarian while establishing a collective objective of excellence and achievement. Chemers (2000) attributed successful leadership to people who were trustworthy, able to cultivate relationships, and goal-oriented.

Fagenson (1990) argued that successful leadership was gender-based and claimed that the personality characteristics needed to be an effective leader were not possessed by women, and that the absence of these qualities in women prevented them from advancing in leadership. Nevertheless, Williams and Best (1990) found that the collaborative, relationship-oriented approaches of female leaders were not only increasingly preferreds but also contributed to overall leader success. Meta-analytic studies on sex differences in leadership and effectiveness did not reveal any significant gender differences in behavior but found overall evidence to support the claim that men were more effective in leadership. sDespite these arguments that deem one sex superior in effectiveness than the other, Rosener's (1990) research found value in leadership approaches of both genders. Rosener found complications with leadership styles that were too authoritarian and also with qualities that were too compromising; this research suggested that leadership success could be best obtained by incorporating productive masculine and feminine styles.

Alpha Studies

It could be argued that previous research on gender-based social role perceptions (Eagly & Karau, 2002) would have disputed the likelihood of success for women who met the alpha criteria, since alpha characteristics could be considered contrary to the gender based perceptions assigned to women. Ward et al. (2009) investigated alpha women through a qualitative lens. The female participants were dually identified as alphas through peer perceptions and congruency with established criteria of the term "alpha." Ward et al. (2009) also provided additional qualities to define the alpha woman, describing her as a self-defined, ambitious leader who believed herself equal to her male

counterparts, and one whom others tend to pursue for direction; the caveat to the Ward et al. definition of the alpha woman was that, in addition to these qualities, the alpha woman also feels a measure of authority among other females. However, the researchers did not make this distinction of superiority in their definition of men.

Using the same parameters to define alpha women, the researchers also investigated alpha women quantitatively in a survey of 637 women from various colleges (Ward et al., 2010). This study found differences in masculinity and leadership characteristics between alpha and nonalpha women, supporting the hypothesis that alpha women displayed higher levels of masculine characteristics. All participants were first year students around the age of 20, but the majorities (88.1%) were of European decent, unmarried, and from well-educated two-parent households. Despite these demographics and in contrast to Bass and Bass (2008), this research found a correlation between leadership and family status. Ward et al. (2010) further found that income, education, race, and age were not influential factors in predicting alpha status and that no significant differences existed in these factors among alphas and nonalphas. In spite of these results, the Ward et al.'s (2010) research derived its results from a predominantly homogenous population of alpha women, which does not account for alpha women of other demographics, education, and social economic statuses.

Ludeman and Erlandson's (2006b) research on the alpha leader maintained that many characteristics that helped alpha executives become successful also made working with this type of individual difficult. Although the research on alpha leaders is sparse, most research conducted on alpha leaders made comparisons between the alpha and the

nonalpha. By contrast, Ludeman and Erlandson (200b) found distinct alpha types and suggested that the integration of strengths from each type, in addition to developing qualities of transparency and introspection, could be instrumental in effective alpha leadership. Their research divided alphas into the following categories: visionaries, commanders, strategists, and executors. *Visionary* alphas were future-oriented leaders who focused primarily on the overall outcome but whose projected view could be considered overzealous. *Commander* alphas were action-oriented, results-driven leaders whose methods were overbearing. *Strategist* alphas were leaders who focused on the way they approached a task; they were systematic and employees could perceive them as egotistical. Finally, *Executor* alphas were process-oriented leaders focused on organizational objectives; employees were likely to perceive them as inexorable. In their research, Ludeman and Erlandson (2006a) pointed out gender differences among alpha personalities. Alpha personalities highly correlated with characteristics of anger, impatience, and competiveness; however, in comparison to women, men had higher scores for anger and impatience than women.

Although Ludeman and Erlandson's (2006a) research on alpha men continued to acknowledge women as capable alphas, they indicated that alpha men were more inclined than alpha women to demonstrate risky behaviors. This propensity induced the likelihood of alpha men being considered more likely than alpha women to cause damage to the organization (Luderman & Erlandson, 2006a). Due to the limited research on the alpha female personality, additional research can provide insightful tools to help evaluate the benefits and detriments to organizations when employing alpha women.

Theoretical Framework Literature

Social Role Theory

Social role theory, developed in the 1980s, contends that socialized gender based messages instilled from childhood perceived leadership to be a male designated occupation (Eagly, 1987). A derivative of social role theory, gender role incongruity theory/role congruency theory proposes that people hold role expectations for both sexes, and any disparity between gender role perceptions and the actual gender characteristics results in negative consequences (Eagly & Karau, 1991, 2002; Eagly, Karau, & Makhijani, 1995; Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992; Heilman, 2001). According to Catalyst.org (2005), aptitude did not determine effectiveness; people automatically considered women less capable in positions that were perceivably male when compared to positions considered to be for women. Berry (2010) argued that girls were trained to play in small groups, be submissive, play fair, and nurture, whereas boys were taught to play in larger assemblies, compete, brag, and follow and implement rules. As a result, children were taught behaviors deemed appropriate for their sex. The socialization that was learned in child's play tended to cultivate gender specific behaviors, and gender determined whether specific traits were nurtured that would later manifest in the corporate arena.

Because of her gender, a woman would be considered incapable of possessing the necessary personality characteristics needed to be successful at leadership (Eagly et al., 1995). New (2007) suggested that gender could determine how people perceived the success of an alpha individual. New argued that men were effective when displaying

anger, and women were less creditable when exhibiting such characteristics. Men were associated with agentic qualities such as assertiveness, competiveness, and authoritativeness, whereas women were linked to communal qualities such as empathy, passivity, and compassion (Rosette & Tost, 2010). Eagly and Carli (2003) found that women leaders who were successful tended not to challenge gender based norms by aligning with gender perceptions and demonstrating a supportive, democratic leadership style. Social role theory argues that gender roles dictate the behaviors that members of each gender are expected to enact and that deviation from the gender norm could result in adverse social reactions (Eagly & Karau, 1991, 2002; Eagly et al., 1995; Rudman & Glick, 2001).

Research has indicated that "best fit for the company" was often the only factor considered when choosing a man for senior leadership because men, by nature of their gender, have been assumed to be born to lead (Berry, 2010; Emerald Publishing Group, 2008). Berry (2010) concluded that early socialization could drive men to consider their male peers as more suited to leadership than their female counterparts. Researchers found a huge disparity between a woman's perceived role and its contradiction to the gender based perceptions of the leader role (Galanaki, Papalexandris, & Halikias, 2008). Galanaki et al. (2008) found that receptivity to leadership style depended on gender, and deviation from one's social role perception could contribute to leader ineffectiveness. Their study suggested that women who took a transactional leadership approach were perceived as overbearing and overly masculine. Effective leadership characteristics like assertiveness and confidence were perceived positively if demonstrated by a male leader,

but a female leader enacting a transactional style of leadership was demonstrating characteristics contrary to her perceived gender role. Gender bias was exclusive toward female leaders and nonexistent for their male counterparts enacting the same approach, thereby suggesting gender differences in leadership.

A number of earlier studies (Haccoun, Sallay, & Haccoun, 1978; Rosen & Jerdee, 1973; Wiley & Eskilson, 1982) found that women who displayed characteristics that are considered masculine—such as being overly forceful, dominant, assertive, or aggressive—were perceived negatively and as less effective than a man for whom such characteristics were deemed appropriate, expected, and effective. In contradiction to the social role research mentioned above, which argued that a woman is unable to deviate from her gender-role perception without sacrificing her effectiveness, Kwawkami, White, and Langer (2000) found evidence that supported the claim that a woman could display male qualities of "coolness" and still be deemed effective. Their results suggested that women who displayed masculine qualities must also be warm while exhibiting these characteristics to be deemed effective and highly evaluated by their employees. Kwawkami et al. concluded that the addition of authenticity ("mindfulness") enabled female leaders to be respected and liked; therefore, if a female displayed a genuinely masculine leadership trait, the incongruence of the trait with her social role expectation did not undermine her leadership proficiency.

Consistent with previous researchers who found the democratic style of transformational leadership to be the most effective leadership style (Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996) and consistent with other research (Petty & Lee, 1975; Petty &

Miles, 1976; Roussell, 1974), Galanaki et al. (2008) found that when women attempted to adopt a more aristocratic leadership approach, subordinates were less satisfied. Additionally, the women leaders were ultimately found to be less effective. Galanaki et al. also found that men were able to change their leadership style without penalty, but women were not accorded the same flexibility.

Consistent with the Galanaki et al. (2008) research, Eagly and Carli (2003) contended that the flexibility allotted to male leaders provided men the ability to align their leadership style or behaviors to the circumstances. In contrast, successful women leaders were those who enacted approaches that demonstrated gender consistent characteristics and prevented female leaders from alternating between egalitarian and authoritarian behaviors without negative consequences. The researchers found low self-esteem and conformity to gender stereotypes as identified barriers to the progression of women in leadership roles. Galanaki et al. (2008) concluded that men's attitudes toward women in management had not changed in the last 15 years, and the attitudes of women had only minimally changed.

Although some researchers argued that gender determined leader success, Eagly and Carli (2003) contended that gender did not determine leader efficiency and instead both genders had the capability to be effective in leadership. However, contrary to proponents of social role incongruence theory, other leadership research found evidence that challenged the gender biased prediction that behaviors contradicting the gender role perception resulted in the ineffectiveness of the leader. Rosette and Tost (2010) agreed that conforming to gender role identity determined leader success but added that gender

and position in the organization were necessary for successful leader achievement. In addition they raised evidence to support an exception to the rule of social incongruence theory. Their research found top women leaders to be more agentic than communal and showed that successful women in top positions who received credit for their success were considered higher achievers than their male counterparts. Moreover, these women were able to possess traits associated with both women and men without consequence to their leader effectiveness. Top female leaders were allotted a "female advantage" as a result of the leader's ability to surmount perceived challenges created as a consequence of their gender (Rosette & Tost, 2010).

Various researchers (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Galanaki et al., 2008; Williams & Best, 1990) found that when comparing women to men, women possessed more relationship-oriented characteristics. These perceptions about a woman's natural inclination to be egalitarian suggested that women would be more effective in leading others. Because gender challenges create multiple barriers for women leaders, those who were able to overcome these challenges and thrive as successful leaders were consequently assumed to be exceptionally competent in leadership (Eagly & Carli, 2003). In support of findings pertaining to female advantage, Eagly and Carli (2003) suggested that women were afforded a slight advantage of increased leader proficiency not provided to men as a result of battling the adversity of stereotypical bias.

Furst and Reeves (2008) found that women who strove for high-leadership positions had the advantage over their male counterparts of being more capable of leadership success in "turbulent industries," where previous male leaders often had been

dismissed involuntarily. The authors proposed that some perceptions (i.e., gender bias, stereotyping, and social role) that prevented women from obtaining top management positions would be advantageous in crisis situations for female leadership candidates. The female associated characteristics of collaboration, humility, and equalitarianism enabled female leader candidates to be more valued than male leader candidates in circumstances in which previous male leadership had led to poor performance. Researchers (Furst & Reeves, 2008; Ryan & Haslam, 2005; 2007) indicated a relationship between gender-based perceptions and company influx, which suggested that, in a crisis, a woman would be more likely to obtain a leadership position. Despite gender based advantages for women in leadership positions, these advantages were limited and occurred in atypical circumstances.

Consistent with research indicating a lack of female advantage or limited gender-based female advantages, Kulich, Ryan, and Haslam (2007) found that female leaders were penalized less severely than male leaders when the company was unsuccessful. Their findings suggested that the allure of seeking leadership positions was more appealing and beneficial for male than female leaders. Although the results indicated that female leaders had an advantage over male leaders, Kulich et al. (2007) argued that this advantage was insignificant in their overall findings.

Researchers contended that women were less likely to be considered for leadership positions and less likely to be equally compensated for the same amount of work effort as their male counterparts (Kulich et al., 2007). Further, the overachievement of women was necessary for women to be deemed competent as leaders, diminishing the

same idealization for leadership that motivated men to pursue leadership. Kulich et al. (2007) suggested that leadership for men was, overall, far more advantageous than for women, and alternatively, the gender benefit for women leaders to escape the penalty for company underperformance was a less-than-noteworthy consolation to be considered a significant advantage. In general, the researchers concluded that although female leaders might be afforded some gender-based advantages, the overall challenges women faced to prove their capability deemed any advantage gained to be inconsequential. Contrary to the research that found women to have a gender-based advantage, Galanaki et al.'s (2008) research argued that female leaders had an automatic disadvantage. The researchers found that gender-based perceptions dictated leader succession, and therefore a woman was automatically excluded from consideration for leader positions because of the belief that maintained that, by design, a woman was incapable of possessing the characteristics needed to successfully lead.

Eagly and Carli (2003) focused on female advantage based on their research that demonstrated people assumed that women naturally possessed skills that enabled them to be more effective leaders. Despite these findings, Prime, Carter, and Welbourne (2009) argued that relationship-oriented perceptions did not provide such a gender-based advantage. Prime et al. (2009) contended that men who dominated positions of authority failed to recognize women leaders with the ability to possess leader skills comparable to male leaders and that gender inherently deemed women the inferior sex in leadership arenas. Prime et al. explored the gender perceptions of 296 managers and found that participants believed gender predicted leader success. They also found that women

tended to perceive female success more favorably than male success. Results indicated that gender perceptions deemed women to be less business savvy than men, and subordinates were more likely to question and scrutinize female leader directives and decision making. Prime et al. also suggested that more value was placed on gender-based perceptions than on actual performance; women were generalized into caretaking roles and as a result, a woman's tangible demonstration of leadership was likely to go unrecognized.

Ethnic Identity Theory

Ethnic identity theory, originally proposed by Phinney (1989), derived from social identity theory and Marcia's (1966) ego identity development theory. Phinney described ethnic identity as a developmental process that began with people's attempts to gain a sense of themselves (*ethnic identity diffusion*) by either assimilating the familiar ethnic group identity (*foreclosed*) or investigating the most suitable identity (*moratorium*). The development of ethnic identity is a process culminating in a solid awareness of oneself. The overall outcome of identity formation occurred through the integration of life experiences that transpired throughout one's development and became instrumental to the achievement of one's identity.

Charmarman and Grossman (2010) explored the significance of racial/ethnic backgrounds of male and female, culturally divergent participants. They examined 923 Black, Latino, and Asian adolescents and found that participants valued racial/ethnic identity, and no significant cultural differences existed on how positively perceived this value was to participants' identities. Ethnic identity was strongest in African American

and Latino cultures compared to other ethnicities, and that women valued their ethnic/racial identities more than men did. Finally, the researchers did not find consistency for the importance of ethnic identity in thematic meaning between the genders or those of various racial backgrounds. Umana-Taylor, Backen, and Guimond (2009) presented ethnic identify formation as an ongoing developmental process similar to the process of personal identity development and concluded that the formation of identity was most instrumental during adolescent stages of development. If, as Phinney (1989) suggested, ethnic identity was a process originating at the onset of adolescence, Charmarman and Grossman's (2010) research on racial/ethnic identity is important to understanding of one's perception of ethnic identity at its initial stage of formation. However, without longitudinal data, it would be difficult to ascertain from the research alone if racial/ethnic identity is consistent over time.

Seaton, Scottham, and Sellers (2006) conducted a 2 year longitudinal study of 224 African Americans between the ages of 11 and 17. The researchers found a positive correlation between achieved identity status and well-being and also foreclosed identity status and well-being. Although the research was not generalizable to all races, additional research further substantiated Marcia's (1966) ethnic developmental process and supported Phinney's (1989) statuses of ethnic identification, finding commitment to be a significant characteristic in African American adolescent identity formation.

In contrast, Yoon's (2011) study of 289 European and nonEuropean college-age participants found that ethnic/racial identity was culturally driven. Yoon also found that African American participants had higher indicators of achieved status, which was

consistent with previous studies (Negy, Shreve, Jenson, & Uddin, 2003; Turner & Brown, 2007). However, no significant differences emerged between European identity and well-being in this current study or in previous research (Goodstein & Ponterotto, 1997). These findings indicated that minorities need strong ethnic/racial identities to promote healthy self-esteem and well-being.

Umana-Taylor et al. (2009) did not find ethnic identity growth predicted self-esteem among Latino participants, nor did findings support any significant difference between genders. The study investigated self-esteem progression as a predictor of ethnic identity development and examined 323 Latino male and female adolescents over a 4 year period. They found gender-based significant differences for Latino girls' propensity to explore and formulate their ethnic identities. Further, Latina girls sought identity formation at an earlier developmental stage than Latino boys. The researchers concluded that Latino girls had a responsibility expectation toward that culture that Latino men did not, and the additional weight of that responsibility contributed to the developmental differences between girls and boys.

The findings of Umana-Taylor et al.'s (02009) longitudinal study contradicted those of Pahl and Way (2006), who did not find any progression of Latino adolescence ethnic identity achievement over time. The researchers rationalized the incongruence between study results as the need for affirmation, attributed to a likely occurrence in particular situations in which minority status increased (Umana-Taylor et al., 2009). Other researchers (Phinney, 1992; Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997) indicated that a secure perception of ethnic identity related to high self-confidence, self-worth, and overall well-

being. The characteristics involved in being an alpha leader consisted of ambition and confidence (Ludeman & Erlandson, 2006a). Although some researchers found that leadership success required a secure ethnic identity and a strong sense of self (Phinney, 1992; Phinney et al., 1997), others indicated that ethnic identity formation was culturally motivated and that nonminorities tended to be less dependent on ethnic identity as a predictor of well-being (Goodstein & Ponterotto, 1997).

Although several studies explored cultural influence on leadership, no studies explored the impact of race on the alpha female leader. Ethnic identity theory proposed ethnic identity was a process influenced by decisions made throughout development. Cook and Glass's (2014) findings on leadership composition suggested broad diversity among leadership was tantamount for corporate success. Exploring the experience of potential cultural differences on a homogenous leadership type seemed to be essential in a society that has become increasingly diverse (CNN, 2008; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014a). Understanding the role that race and gender play in leadership and the manner in which ethnic identity influences the alpha female leader is instrumental to improving organizational practices by ensuring a practical balance between cultural and organizational demands.

Limited Female Leadership Rationales

Despite the qualities that facilitated achievements of the alpha women and congruent with social role literature, gender role perceptions have contributed to the scarcity of the alpha female population in leadership positions. Ludeman and Erlandson (2007) identified gender-based differences among alpha leaders and defined alpha

executives as those who were highly successful, confident, capable, intelligent natural leaders who continually pursued challenges and maintained high level positions of authority. Alpha status was initially considered a male characteristic and as many as 70% of male executives were categorized as alpha males, but women minimally met the complete definition of the alpha profile (Ludeman & Erlandson, 2007). Negative characteristics such as defensiveness and aggression were qualities in the alpha personality found to be less tolerable in the female gender. The lack of tolerance for particular alpha characteristics in women contributed to the low numbers of women in executive level positions and has been used to exclude woman leaders from being able to meet the alpha profile (Ludeman & Erlandson, 2007).

Work–Family Balance

Furst and Reeves (2008) identified more than one reason for the lack of female presence in leadership. The premise that women were less capable than men to balance work and family was rooted in stereotypical perceptions that resulted in fewer women in leadership roles. Furst and Reeves (2008) believed social roles dictated that women were caregivers or family-focused, and this perception biased people into assuming that women were less career-driven than men and were naturally inclined to put their family before their job. Another gender-dictated assumption was that women in their childbearing years were not likely to retain a long-term leadership position.

In contrast to the assumption that women would be likely to place their family above their careers, some researchers (Burke & McKeen, 1993; Schwartz, 1989) found that women leaders were as committed to their careers as their male counterparts. Sex

role perceptions categorized women into caregiving roles and, as a result, women were perceived to be less capable of leading than men; in contrast, men were viewed as automatically leader proficient simply because of their gender. Berry (2010) found that hiring criteria were based on gender and not solely on position fit. Organizations considered cost effectiveness in lieu of proficiency when hiring a female leader who was of childrearing age. These same considerations were not usually made when hiring a man for a leadership position. Women who wanted to become successful made choices rarely required of men (Berry, 2010).

In a 2008 review of global management practices, researchers identified society as maintaining a system that automatically specified women as principally responsible for childrearing accountabilities (e.g., ensuring adequate nurturing, chauffeuring, and managing illnesses) regardless of the woman's marital status or career responsibilities (Emerald Publishing Group, 2008). Corporate women who took extended time off to have or raise children rarely returned to work at the same corporate level from which they left (Emerald Publishing Group, 2008). A survey conducted at a well-known law firm showed that more than half of the most successful women in the law firm did not have children, and the others who were successful delayed having children until they had already attained the most senior status (Emerald Publishing Group, 2008). In line with these findings, O'Laughlin and Bischoff (2005) found drastic gender differences in career support. The results of their survey of 85 men and 179 women indicated that women felt more pressure and less consideration for family and work responsibilities than their male counterparts. Women often chose between corporate success and motherhood whereas

men were allowed to balance these responsibilities. Women were required to make more sacrifices to maintain their position of leadership than men in equivalent leadership positions (O'Laughlin & Bischoff, 2005).

Glass Ceiling

Some attributed the scarcity of female leadership to an implicit gender-based threshold that limits how high women can succeed in an organization. This threshold was often referred to as the *glass ceiling*. Under the glass ceiling concept, success was limitless for men but limited for women, regardless of capability, education, or seniority. The capability for position best fit was often diminished due to the propensity of job industries that only appointed people to particular positions who demonstrated congruency with characteristics linked to the male gender (Furst & Reeves, 2008); as a result, these gender biases often prevent the best candidate from being considered.

Top leaders, and even recruiters for senior leadership, instinctively recruited leaders who were congruent with previous leaders (Khurana, 2002; Morrison & Von Gilinow, 1990). Because these leaders were traditionally male, a female candidate was generally not considered despite her qualifications and experience because her gender was not deemed an appropriate match for executive leadership (Powell, 1999). Due to the disproportionate ratio of women to men in corporate leadership, male-based perceptions became the norm and automatically prevailed (Catalyst.org, 2005). Goodman, Fields, and Blum (2003) argued that higher leadership positions were often reserved (consciously or not) for the "better suited" male candidate, which resulted in these positions becoming off limits for female applicants because they did not fit the criteria of being male.

Ryan and Haslam (2008) did not dispute the reality of the glass ceiling but added another layer by exploring the existence and effect of the *glass cliff*. In a study of 95 management graduates, Ryan and Haslam found that, when provided with an option of gender in placing leaders in a failing or a declining company, participants were more likely to place women based on the assumption that women were a better match to lead in situations of increased pressure than men, and situations of declining performance would provide great leadership opportunities for women. Leadership that occurred during situations of duress were more accessible to women because women leaders were considered a less valuable commodity than male leaders. A woman leader's assumed expendability created the perception that company burn out or resignation of a woman leader was less consequential to the company than the loss of a male leader (Ryan & Haslam, 2008). Bruckmüller, Ryan, Haslam, & Peters (2013) concurred that gender discrimination involved the automatic association of the male gender to leadership and the female gender to crisis and people management. Men have been allowed the luxury of only having their leadership acumen in question, whereas women have faced the additional challenge of their leadership proficiency and gender being scrutinized (Bruckmüller, Ryan, Rink, & Haslam, 2014). The initiation of a gender-diverse culture begins with implementation of practices by upper management; Bruckmüller et al. (2014) suggested integrating organizational diversity through recognition of individual differences.

Beyond the Ceiling

      Socialized modesty. Although researchers attributed the glass ceiling, male-dominated, hierarchical structure (Eagly & Carli, 2007) and denial of leadership differences between genders (Bartol & Martin, 1986) to the lack of female presence in senior leadership, Budworth and Mann (2010) contended that women were absent from leadership due to socialized modesty. The authors argued that whereas men were taught to be self-confident, women were taught modesty. The researchers proposed that women were limited in leadership roles because they failed to affirm their accomplishments, whereas men have done so readily. Budworth and Mann (2007) found that "modesty effects" were dependent on gender; women who scored lower in modesty received higher salaries, whereas men made higher salaries when modesty was increased. Women who were less modest and participated in self-promotion were deemed more competent than those who were modest and failed to promote their proficiency (Rudman & Glick, 2001). A woman's socialized inclination to minimize her accomplishments were not only damaging to her career but also affected the likelihood of her obtaining leadership positions (Budworth & Mann, 2007). Consistent with literature (Budworth & Mann, 2010; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Rudman & Glick, 2001), Bongiorno, Bain, and David's (2014) suggested that timorousness in leadership reduced female likability; however, the research findings found that men leaders were afforded shy management characteristics without likability consequence. Thus, male leaders have been afforded more flexibility in leader style, approach, and leader clemency than female leaders.

Training, mentorship, and networking. Tharenou, Latimer, and Conroy (1994)

found lack of training and mentorship as a contributing factor for the lack of female

leadership presence. The authors contended that men had more opportunities for

advancement because they had more opportunities for training than did women. Male

leaders had more career support and mentor/mentee opportunities than women leaders

(Tharenou et al., 1994). Networking is another advantage for male leaders. Although

researchers attributed the limited presence of female senior management to the lack of

participation of women leaders in networking events, they ascribed the inclination not to

attend these events to the company's propensity to gravitate these event toward male-

oriented networking activities (Emerald Publishing Group, 2008). On one hand, an

increased presence of women in networking activities would improve leadership

opportunities; however, women were implicitly excluded from attending these male-

centered events.

Compensation. In considering compensation as a reason for the limited presence

of women in leadership, in research conducted by Catalyst.org (2004), researchers asked

705 senior level women to name their top three reasons for resigning from their

organization. Forty-two percent cited the desire for more compensation whereas 35% left

for professional advancement and 33% left for better opportunities. The study found no

significant difference between men's and women's responses when the reason was the

development of new skills or advancement opportunities; however, a significant

difference emerged when the reason for separation involved higher compensation. Of the

243 men interviewed, more men (51%) left their companies for compensation reasons than did women in senior level positions.

Job satisfaction. Oplatka and Mimon (2008) reported that regardless of gender, being unhappy with employment was not a sufficient reason for most to leave their job; thus, job dissatisfaction did not account for the gender disparity of women in management. Although studies were inconsistent about which gender had more job dissatisfaction, some studies (Chiu, 1998; Quinn, Mangione, & Baldi de Mandilovitch, 1973; Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza, 2000; Stedham & Yamamura, 2000) found that women were specifically unhappy about receiving lower pay than their male counterparts. In research with 168 women and 128 men, Catalyst.org (2005) found that senior female leaders cited gender stereotyping as the primary reason for their limited presence in top leadership positions.

Performance evaluations. Research findings of Kulich et al. (2007) contributed gender-biased evaluations to differences in female leader presence. The researchers found that men and women leaders were evaluated based on gender, not proficiency. Administrators evaluated male leaders solely on performance-based measures and, as a result, compensated them monetarily when successful. In contrast, when women leaders contributed to company success, administrators evaluated them on performance and leadership competency. Therefore, Kulich et al. (2007) concluded that a woman leader who contributed to company success was not rewarded financially, as was the case for her male counterpart; instead, she was credited as being worthy to lead *despite* her gender.

Summary

This chapter provided an exhaustive review of the literature divided into three sections: leadership studies, theoretical framework literature, and limited female leadership rationales. The first section reviewed the literature and provided a scholastic definition of a leader in addition to providing research findings on specific leader qualities. This section further provided an exploratory look at various related leader research studies and specific literature on alpha leaders. The second section discussed the literature that supported the conceptual foundation of the research. The final section compared and contrasted research on various rationales for the limited number of women in leadership, described as a scarce demographic due to the culture of leadership. Chapter 3 provides a detailed account of the research method and procedures implemented to further explore the research question.

Chapter 3: Methodology

There are limitations in female leadership literature that has sparingly included research on a less referenced type of female leader referred to as the alpha female. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the influence of the minority identity, leader duration, and leadership background on veteran alpha female leaders. This chapter describes the study's methodology; in it I present (a) the various research designs used in qualitative research, (b) the decision to use a phenomenological design for this study, (c) the steps involved in executing the study, and (d) the rationale behind the selection of the instruments, (e) the setting for the research, (f) justification for the size of the study and selection criteria, (g) insight into data-collection procedures, (h) the responsibilities of the researcher, and finally (i) the various methods used to ensure the ethical protection of research participants.

Qualitative Research Methods

The intent of this study was to investigate the experiences of the veteran alpha female leader. Qualitative research differs from quantitative research in the method's aim to uncover the nature of the experience versus the quantity of a hypothesis result: "Qualitative methods enabled us to explore concepts such as beauty, pain, faith, suffering, frustration, hope, and love, which can be studied as they are defined and experienced by real people in their everyday lives" (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, p. 5). Qualitative research allows for the illumination of the participants' experiences by enabling the reader to understand the world through the participants' perspective (Bogdan & Taylor). Since the current research did not examine a formulated hypothesis nor was numerical data needed

to answer the research question, a quantitative methodology was not deemed appropriate for this type of research.

Creswell (1998) described five commonly used research strategies for qualitative research: ethnography, case study, grounded theory research, narrative study, and phenomenology. Although this study explored the life experience of members of various ethnicities, it did not attempt to understand a specific cultural group; therefore, I did not select ethnography because it was not appropriate as a research method for the purposes of this research initiative. A case study was also inappropriate because this particular methodology involves research on a particular case or cases, and such a design would not yield the data needed to answer the research question. In grounded theory research, researchers develop a theory generated from the data and attempt to create or improve an existing theory by comparing supporting research in a particular area of interest (Creswell, 1998). Because the main goal of grounded theory is to develop or refine an existing theory, grounded theory was deemed an inappropriate method to best meet the aims of this study (Ludeman & Erlandson; 2007; Ward et al., 2010).

Although similarities exist between narrative and phenomenological studies, the experience of the phenomenon being studied is central to the phenomenological method. Narrative approaches are initiated by stories. In a narrative approach, the participant shares her story or journey with a particular phenomenon; however, in a phenomenological approach, the participant answers specific questions about the lived experience with the phenomenon, and the researcher compiles the data into a story. A phenomenological approach focuses on a specific phenomenon that is to be studied, and

questions are asked of participants of their lived experiences with the phenomenon. In using the phenomenological approach, interpretation of the data derives from the meanings participants attach to their experiences, and the emphasis of the research is based on the lived experiences of participants (Moustakas, 1994). The most appropriate method to meet the objectives of this study was to collect data via interviews, thus I found the phenomenological research method to be the most appropriate method to address the gap in the research.

Rationale for the Phenomenological Approach

This study qualitatively explored the meaning that veteran alpha women from various ethnic groups attached to their leader experiences. The research question that informed the study asked how the experience of being a veteran alpha female leader was influenced by minority identity, leadership experience, and duration. The objective of the study was to better understand the ways the leader's life and leader experiences influenced veteran alpha female leaders from diverse backgrounds. The purpose of this research was to create a better understanding of this type of leader and ultimately promote increased female leader representation. It was anticipated that a better understanding of the veteran alpha female leader could reduce organizational risk and help to create better alignment between the alpha female leader and organizational demands. I explored the experiences of this phenomenological research study through the structured interviews of 12 participants.

I selected the qualitative phenomenological approach as the most appropriate method through which to explore the research question because this particular strategy

offered the best lens through which to study individual and collective experiences. The phenomenological approach requires participants to articulate their perceptions of their experiences of a particular phenomenon in hopes that the experiences could be better understood by others. I used semistructured, open-ended questions to assist in capturing the essence of the experience. Phenomenological research involves the extraction of themes derived from the verbalized experience of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

The collaboration process between the research participant and researcher involves the capability of research participants to describe the meaning of their experience combined with the researcher's ability to impartially and accurately interpret the experience. Munhall (1989) suggested that the repetition of a shared experience indicates the validity of the interpretation of the experience. The distinction between the phenomenological methods and other research strategies is that the lived experiences of individuals and the meaning participants ascribed to the experiences are fundamental to the phenomenological study.

Role of the Researcher

The following sections describe the research process used in this study, beginning with announcing the study and ending with establishing the trustworthiness of the findings from the study. I oversaw the entire process.

Announcing the Study

I added a brief description of the study to Walden University's Participant Pool, which is a web portal solely used to obtain or recruit research participants. Additionally, I provided a description to various leadership groups (toastmasters, sororities, Zontas, etc.)

and asked if they would post research invitations through a study inquiry flyer (see Appendix A) to secure potential participants. I also posted these invitations in local businesses and scanned them onto social media sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn. I limited direct solicitation of colleagues but instead referred potential participants to a website (https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LH5QXSK) that listed information about the study and contained the necessary forms to complete the study. Referring potential participants to the website reduced the potential for colleagues to feel a sense of obligation to participate if I approached them.

Additionally, I announced the study through professional networking and I asked colleagues to share flyers (refer to Appendix A) about the study with other female leaders. I also indirectly invited the participation of public leaders who were well known in their respective fields by sending a recruitment letter (see Appendix B) to specific individuals potentially interested in participating in the study. Finally, in addition to professional networking, I recruited participants through snowballing, which involved the enlistment of research participants through the acquaintances of existing participants.

Consent Process

Prior to completing the survey and upon expressing willingness to participate in the study, the participants were emailed or sent the *Survey Monkey* weblink to complete written consent (Appendix C) requirements for participation. The weblink and paperwork consents were identical and ensured that each participant received the details of the research.

Administration of the Alpha Female Inventory (AFI)

After providing informed consent, I administered the Alpha Female Inventory (AFI; see Appendix D) either through the Survey Monkey website link (see announcing the study) by email or phone (reading aloud the survey questions and writing down the answers on the survey form). Prior to using the measure, I contacted the creators of the AFI and asked permission to use it for the current study (see Appendix E). I scored the AFI, created by Ward, DiPaolo, and Popson (2009), based on a 5-point Likert-type scale.

Ward, DiPaolo, and Popson (2010) found that women who rated high in extroversion, leadership, and strength were likely to demonstrate higher alpha scores whereas women who rated low in those areas were less likely to possess enough of the alpha characteristics needed to be identified as an alpha woman. Since self-identification as an alpha female could be considered subjective, I used an objective measure to distinguish alpha leaders from nonalpha leaders. I used the AFI to determine alpha woman in accordance to the results of the alpha survey. Female leaders who scored 24+ in leadership, 16+ in strength, and 11+ in low introversion were considered alpha women and included in the study.

Screening consisted of verifying if the participant met the qualifications stated above in addition to identification as an alpha woman based on the administered measure. Subsequent to the telephone call or after exporting the participant's survey responses, I immediately scored the AFI and, based on the results, determined whether the potential participant would be interviewed. I considered the women who met the veteran leader requirements for this study, who were identified by the AFI as alpha females, and who

signed and agreed to the terms and conditions of the consent as candidates to be interviewed for the study. Recruitment continued until I obtained the desired minimum number of participants. I assigned each participant an alias to ensure confidentiality of the data when it was analyzed.

Sampling Strategy and Sample Size

Sixty-four women completed the AFI survey; of those, I identified 12 participants who met the criteria for participation in the study and asked them to share their leadership experiences during an in-depth, audiotaped interview. A decision to use 12 participants was based on research that has confirmed when data and thematic saturation occurs. Patton (2001) called *saturation* the goal of qualitative research and described it as the point in the research at which all the themes have manifested themselves and there is nothing left to learn from the participants. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) conducted empirical research on data saturation and concluded 12 participants was a sufficient number to obtain saturation.

Criterion sampling was selected as the most appropriate sampling method because this method produces a more applicable participant match for the study. Since the study aimed to use the veteran alpha leader experiences to uncover the influence of the minority identity, duration, and leadership experience on alpha women, the experience of being an alpha female leader was the main criterion for inclusion in the research study. I required participants to be female adults who self-identified as leaders and had experience in a leadership positions for at least 10 years. I purposely recruited women leaders who met the research criteria and could offer diversity to the study in areas of ethnicity, culture,

leader occupation, and years of experience. I contacted potential participants directly by telephone or email.

After consent and was provided and participants were chosen who met the inclusion criteria, I emailed the participants a copy of the Guideline Questions I planned to ask during the 30–90 minute interview (see Appendix F) and requested that each participant submit an information form (see Appendix G). Prior to each interview, I explained the purpose of the study and ensured that participants voluntarily consented to participate, agreed to have their interview recorded, and understood that withdrawal from the study could occur at any time.

Establishing Ethical Compliance

Moustakas (1994) described the importance of abiding by ethical principles when conducting human science research. To ensure compliance with ethical standards, it was important that I informed participants of steps I took to maintain confidentiality. I provided participants with full disclosure of the research including potential risks and benefits. In an effort to ensure the study was ethically compliant, I made provisions consistent with Moustakas's (1994) guidelines for conducting ethical research. I ensured confidentiality by assigning aliases to protect participants from being identified. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants were able to withdraw at any time from the study without consequence. The data were transcribed by a transcriptionist service. All data reviewed by anyone but me was treated as confidential, and only I possessed identifying information. All identifiable material will be kept in a secure area for a period of 5 years, and at the end of 5 years, I will destroy it. To ensure that the

research methods were ethically sound and met university and federal research standards, I obtained Institutional Review Board approval (No. 01-31-14-0077211) before collecting any data.

Based on the nature of the study, an adverse reaction to the research was not anticipated. As a precaution, provisions were made to ensure the participant's emotional protection. In the event any of the participants had an adverse reaction resulting from their participation in the research study, I was prepared to provide a customized list of no- to low-cost counseling services. The counseling list would include services based in the community where the participant resided; however, none of the participants reported any adverse reactions and therefore such a list was not necessary.

Study Location

I interviewed the participants either in person, by means of video conference (e.g., Skype), or on the telephone. Consistent with Moussakas's (1994) suggestions, I prepared a comfortable environment for the participant, provided time for the participant to focus on the experience, and informally interviewed the participant, asking open-ended questions to help elicit the experience. I conducted the interviews in an area selected by the participant that was private and free from distraction. I purposely avoided conducting in-person interviews in participants' homes to ensure privacy and to circumvent any potential distractions. Meeting places included libraries, private meeting rooms, or outside venues that offered seclusion and were convenient for the participant. The participant initially selected the setting, which I finalized prior to the interview.

I anticipated that I would conduct most interviews in person; however, in extreme circumstances (i.e., out-of-state participant, time limitations, transportation issues, etc.), I considered Skype and telephone interviews under the condition that the participant could ensure complete privacy for at least 60 minutes and that the interview could occur without interruption. I took responsibility for preparing an open, unconditional environment in which the participant could feel free to reveal her experiences without judgment (Moustakas, 1994).

Developing the Interview Protocol

Semistructured interviewing, unlike structured interviewing, requires building rapport, establishing trust, and creating an environment of authenticity with the researcher and the research question (Patton, 2001). I repetitively reviewed the research question and initially created 13 open-ended questions that could explore the essence of the leader experience. The 13 questions were presented to an expert panel to ensure that the instrument was valid and had internal consistency. Experts in the subject content and in qualitative methodology from Walden University participated in the panel. A total of five out of seven experts agreed to participate, one of whom was a faculty member at a university unaffiliated with Walden. I sent a letter with the interview questions and research questions to each individual. The panel experts reviewed each question to ensure each question's objectivity and applicability to the research question. The final set of questions incorporated the suggested revisions by the expert panel and consisted of 17 questions (see Appendix H) that helped the veteran alpha female leader elaborate on the influences of her leadership experiences.

Conducting the Interview

Prior to each interview, I began by using a process Moustakas (1994) referred to as *epoche*. Moustakas (1994) suggested interviewing as the best approach for data collection in phenomenological research. I designed Guideline Questions (refer to Appendix F) and ensured that all participants received an advanced copy of the interview questions. Phenomenological interviews are conversational in nature, and one objective of this type of interview is to comfortably invite the participants to describe their past experiences.

Phenomenological researchers work to understand a person's lived experience with the phenomenon of the study and the meaning a person attached to their experience (Moustakas, 1994); thus the questions are retrospective and open-ended. The Guideline Questions (see Appendix F) were semistructured, and I only asked them if needed, which depended on the flow of the interview. Researchers agree that informal conversation tends to enable the most natural of dialogues and the spontaneity of conversation establishes a comfort that allows more to be revealed (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2001). Moustakas (1994) contended that interview questions should be used as a guideline to assist the participant to elaborate upon her experiences. The interview approach for this study was semistructured and informal; therefore, all questions were not required to evoke the essence of the experience.

I anticipated that the conversation would flow freely; however, in the event the participant had difficulty independently speaking about her experiences, the guideline and probe questions on the Interviewing Protocol (see Appendix H) were tools developed

to help the participant to elaborate on her experiences. If after asking a guideline question the participant's account of the experience remained limited, I used verbal prompts (refer to examples in Appendix H). The verbal prompts (e.g., "Can you tell me more?") were used until the participant provided sufficient detail that vividly conveyed the experience. I used member checking to ensure accuracy of the interpreted experience by providing the participant a summary of the findings once analyzed. None of the participants requested the need to further clarify their experiences; therefore, I considered the lack of response as confirmation of the accuracy of the interpretation of the experience.

Analyzing the Data

The study explored ways in which alpha women were influenced by their minority identity, leadership experiences, and leadership duration. I took responsibility for reviewing the data, organizing it, and extracting potential themes that emerged from the data. Prior to data analysis, I followed Moustakas's (1994) suggested series of steps for the analysis of phenomenological data. First, I immersed myself in the data. I reviewed the transcripts and recordings of each participant interview several times to ensure familiarity with the data and connection with the experience.

I anticipated that incorporating the epoche process would assist me in evaluating the data impartially and therefore, I made these efforts to circumvent preconceived conclusions that could occur as a result of potential unconscious bias. During the analysis process, I used Colaizzi's (1978) method to analyze the transcribed data, and I augmented my analysis by using the NVivo qualitative software program to help me better classify,

sort, arrange, and extract themes from the data that I might have manually missed. The

steps I used to analyze the data were as follows:

1. I read and listened to the tapes of each participant's interview in order to

   obtain a feel for them.

2. From each transcript I identified significant statements and phrases that

   directly related to the influences of the minority identity, duration, and

   leadership experiences.

3. For each significant statement or phrase, I formulated meanings in my own

   words.

4. I formulated meanings an organized them into clusters of themes.

5. I used the results of the analysis process to create a detailed description of the

   experience of the veteran alpha female leader.

6. I engaged in member checking to ensure the accuracy of the experience by

   providing a summary description of the experience to each participant.

Establishing Trustworthiness of the Study

Throughout the research process, I employed reputable methods of analysis and

data collection that have been documented as internally valid. In an effort to increase the

likelihood of objective analysis, I implemented several methods (e.g., epoche, member

checking, prolonged engagement) to ensure my familiarity with data. The study

incorporated several steps that ensured the research was impartial (e.g., expert panel

reviewers), established transferability and repeatable (e.g., rich thick descriptions),

creditable and verifiable by others (e.g., prolonged engagement, member checks), and

applicable to wider populations (e.g., validated instruments and rich thick descriptions). All of the methods discussed in the sections below elaborate on the ways in which trustworthiness was established in the research.

Rich and Thick Descriptions

This method involved describing the research study in comprehensive detail. I also confirmed transferability through the use of verbatim descriptions. The rich descriptions of the experience used the respondent's verbatim accounts to help illuminate the experience and allow for transferability of the research in more than one context (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Rich and thick descriptions enable study reliability, which is a component of establishing internal validity. The research findings included verbatim quotes of the qualitative interviews and selected words or phrases that were distinctive to the context of the interpreted experience. Lincoln and Guba (1985) described thick descriptions as a way to demonstrate transferability and illustrate applicability in various settings. The descriptions were derived from verbatim transcripts. The use of rich and thick descriptions not only enabled replication of the research, but also provided a better determination of applicability for the reader.

Member Checking and Prolonged Engagement

As a final step in the analysis process, I emailed participants their final descriptions to ensure accuracy of the experience. I spent several hours of *prolonged engagement* with the data reading transcripts, verifying the experience with participants, listening to recorded interviews, and analyzing the data. Moustakas (1994) suggested member checking as a viable verification method to ensure validity of the lived

experience, and Lincoln and Guba (1985) contended that member checking and

prolonged engagement established the credibility of the research findings. I provided the

participants a short summary of the findings (Appendix I) and encouraged each of the

participants the opportunity to further clarify any inaccuracy in the interpretation of their

experiences. Both credibility measures of member checking and prolonged engagement

helped to ensure confidence in the truth of the findings.

Epoche

In effort to limit potential researcher's bias, I used the epoche process prior to

gathering and analyzing the data as a way to establish the conformability of the data to

help ensure the validity of the research. During the epoche process, I took responsibility

for identifying potential biases and attempting to prevent those biases from influencing

the findings or the participants. The participant transcripts were also used to offer an

audit trail that enabled transparent documentation of the research and analysis process.

By providing an audit trail and engaging in the epoche process, confirmability was

created which enabled neutrality amongst the findings so that the data could be shaped by

the respondents and less likely to be influenced by my personal research biases.

<div align="center">

Summary

</div>

This chapter provided specific information on the research procedures. I

described the research method and rationale behind the selected research method. I

further described my role as a researcher and the steps involved in preparing and

executing the research study. Finally, I systematically described the analysis process and

the methods used to ensure trustworthiness. Chapter 4 details the results generated from

this qualitative inquiry and extensively presents the themes extracted from the data to

best illuminate the lived experiences of veteran alpha female leader.

Chapter 4: Results

This study explored the experiences of the veteran alpha female leader and examined the ways in which leadership experiences, duration, and the minority identity status influence the alpha female leader. The study was designed to answer the following research question: How is the experience of being a veteran alpha female leader influenced by minority identity, leadership experience, and duration? I explored the experiences of veteran alpha female leaders through the analysis of 12 individual interviews. To fill a gap in the literature, I selected alpha female leaders from diverse backgrounds who had 10 or more years of leadership experience to participate in the study. I differentiated alpha female leaders from nonalpha female leaders using the AFI, an instrument developed by Ward, Popson, & DiPaolo (2009). I invited only alpha female leaders to participate in the study. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed using the phenomenological procedures described in Chapter 3. This chapter includes an overall representation of participants and presents the themes that emerged from analysis of the data to illustrate the essence of the veteran alpha female experience.

Setting and Sample Conflicts

I interviewed participants at a mutually agreed upon location or over the telephone and audio recorded all interviews. Although the settings varied, the location had to be private and free from distraction for the duration of the interview. Although I anticipated that this sample of participants would have time limitations, time was more of a factor than I originally expected. Most participants were difficult to contact after the preliminary survey, requiring several emails or calls to establish an interview day and

time. Once I established contact, participants seemed genuinely excited about

participating in the research, but due to busy schedules, scheduling the interviews took

longer than anticipated.

Demographics

All participants were females over the age of 21 and had at least 10 years of

leadership experience. Participants varied in position, industry, and ethnicity, and all

scored 24+ in leadership, 16+ in strength, and 11+ in low introversion on the AFI (Ward

et al., 2009), which indicated that they were alpha females. Table 1 provides specific

details on the demographics.

Table 1

Female Participant Characteristics

Participant (pseudonyms)	Leadership Experience (years)	Occupation	Race	Alpha Scores
Elizabeth	35	President/CEO of international weight loss company	White	25/18/22
Paulette	18	President/CEO of a consulting company	White	27/19/19
Tracy	15	Psychologist/radio host	Black	25/20/14
Kelli	10	Vice President of Strategic Implementation Department	Black	30/18/19
Symphony	20	Nurse	Black	24/17/14
Penny	15	Chief of Development and Validation Branch	Asian	25/18/22
Terry	20	Vocational Director - Nun	Mexican	25/18/11
Dagwood	40	Retired Professional Recruiter	Black/Irish-Indian	24/17/17
Jasmine	14	Nursing Home Administrator/Adjunct Faculty	Black/Hispanic	27/20/20
Lisa	23	Retired Govt. Contracts Manager	White /Hawaiian	29/19/12
Golda	25	Executive Director of Respiratory and Pulmonary Diagnostics Department	White/Latino	29/16/13
Suzie	40	CEO/Owner of electronics company	Asian/European	30/18/19

Data Collection

The purpose of this study was to explore the influence of minority identity, leadership experience, and duration as it relates to the experience of being a veteran alpha female leader. Twelve women were selected based on their AFI scores for interviews. The location of the interview varied for each participant. All of the in-person interviews were conducted in Michigan, and the participants who resided outside of Michigan were

interviewed over the phone. All interviews were audio recorded. I asked participants to ensure they could participate uninterrupted for 30 to 90 minutes.

The questions listed in the Interviewing Protocol (Appendix H) are not listed in the order in which I asked the participants but instead the Guideline Questions reflect the basic chronological order (Appendix F). The Interviewing Protocol displays the research subquestions and related interview questions along with the probing Guideline Questions that were asked of participants when elaboration of the experience was needed. The Interviewing Protocol included each research subquestion and the corresponding Guideline Questions.

Data Analysis

To ensure familiarity with the data, I read each transcript or listened to the audio recording at least three times in its raw form. I used NVivo to help sort and classify the transcribed data. During the review process I used Colaizzi's (1978) method of analysis. I carefully studied each participant's responses to individual interview questions. I extracted and color coded key statements from individual interviews and made notes to indicate the significance of the reference to the experience. Following the identification of key statements, I formulated meanings from the statements that best captured the essence of the lived experience. Examples from influences of minority identity and influences of leader duration are displayed in Table 2 (see Appendix J for extended table).

Table 2

Example of Key Statements and Their Formulated Meanings

Key Statements: Influences of the Minority Identity	Formulated Meanings
Lisa: I think the view is in the Hawaiian culture if you have a gift, you have an obligation to share it with others in your community and the world and if you hide it, then you're not living up to your gift.	The ethnic/racial identity motivated the desire to guide others. Character attributes described as a direct influence of her ethnic identity
Jasmine: I try to be for others what they need. Sometimes I feel like a part of it might have something to do with being a female, maybe by nature having the desire to be able to empathize with everybody. A part of me tries to be for others what I feel they need or connect with others in a way that I feel they need a connection.	The minority identity influenced her compassion and empathy (described as a direct result of her gender). Gender has influenced her leader approach.
Key Statements: Influences of Duration	**Formulated Meanings**
Penny: There's plenty of work for anyone, and everyone's just so territorial, and to move, progress forward, I needed a higher leadership position to leverage that change, punch that wall.	Over time developed the need or desire to effect change. Obtaining higher leadership was viewed as a way to influence change and to be more effective as a leader.
Suzie: I've had it all, you know? I don't want to be the greedy person, so helping other people, scholarship, whatever way I could help somebody else, I do that, and it brings me great satisfaction. I can sleep at night.	Reflective statement of internal satisfaction. Satisfaction developed from helping and doing for others.
Kelly:…And if you allow that to continue or if you choose to stay (in my opinion), you will remain stagnant in that career until you are reflective enough to remove yourself from what you feel is lack of leadership. And that means either leaving that opportunity and placing yourself in a way or area that is different or going out and finding your own level of growth in order to feel that your expectations are being met.	Development over time of internal resolve and self-reflection. Development of internal power/ influence. Career satisfaction more important than career complacency.

Four hundred and nine key statements were identified in the transcript. I

developed formulated meanings for each key statement and used the formulated

meanings to develop themes (see Table 3). Thirteen themes were initially revealed from the data.

Table 3

Example of Two Different Theme Clusters with Their Subsumed Formulated Meanings

Leadership modality is experienced as transformative or oriented toward social betterment.
a. She defined her leader approach as collaborative. (23)
b. Her leader approach was used to better others. (33)
c. Her leader approach is focused on relationship building and supporting others. (57)
d. She did not want to dictate directions but wanted to include others' suggestions. (16)

Ostracism was perceived as a direct influence of the minority identity.
a. She perceived that her minority identity influenced others' perceptions of her capabilities. (15)
b. She perceived her character attributes were a direct result of her minority identity experience. (21)
c. She perceived that others' expectations of her were influenced by her minority identity. (15)

Note. Numbers in parentheses reflect the times mutually expressed statement occurred in the transcript.

For some themes, I created subthemes (e.g., themes 4, 5, 6, 7) of the clusters that depicted the experience but could not stand alone as a single theme. I then reviewed all themes along with their formulated meanings to see if any of the themes overlapped. Redundant or overlapping themes were collapsed into a single theme, which resulted in the final set of themes. The analysis process resulted in a total of eight themes that best captured the ways the experience of being a veteran alpha female leader was influenced by minority identity, leadership experience, and duration. To help simplify the interpretation of the experience, the final themes were categorized into three distinct groupings of influence: the influence of the minority identity, the influence of duration,

and the influence of leadership experiences (see examples in Table 4). The eight final

themes were then used to answer the research question.

Table 4

Initial Theme Formation

The Influence of Leadership Experiences	Answer to RQ
• Leadership modality • Leader presumption • Leader display	The veteran alpha female leader experience is influenced through (Theme 1), leadership modality (Theme 2), leader presumption (Theme 3) and leader display. Leader duration of the alpha female was influenced by leader experiences (Theme 4).
The Influence of the Minority Identity	**Answer to RQ**
• Motivation (by social change to improve situations) • Motivation (by social change to improve outcomes) • Motivation (by heightened awareness of workplace biases) • Motivation (by challenge) • Perception of outcome (ostracism) • Perception of outcome (capability not fully recognized) • Perception of outcome (need to overcompensate)	The minority identity was influenced by motivation (Theme 5) and the leader's perception of outcomes (Theme 6).
The Influence of Life Experiences	**Answer to RQ**
• Leader efficacy • Learning (from experience,) • Learning (to face challenges) • Learning (to give emotionally) to others • Learning (to give physically) to others • External support	Life experiences are influenced by efficacy (Theme 7) and external support (Theme 8).

Qualitative Analysis of Key Findings

The central question was as follows: How has the experience of being a veteran

alpha female leader been influenced by minority identity, leadership experience, and

duration? Eight themes were uncovered and clustered into three inclusive categories—the

influence of the leader experience, the influence of the minority identity, and the

influence of life experiences. This section presents the eight themes and the key findings that emerged from the experiences of the 12 participants.

The Influence Leadership Experiences

Leader modality, leader presumption, leader display, and leader duration were the four themes found that best illustrated the influence of leader experience. The following describe the ways in which leader experience was influenced.

Theme 1: Leader modality. Most of the women leaders in this study described their leadership experiences as primarily influenced by their leadership modality. Although cultivating relationships were valued as essential to most of the participants, less than a quarter (17 %) of the participants involved in this study were influenced in their leadership approach by the betterment of organizational outcomes whereas just about half of the leaders (41.6%) involved in this study experienced their leader approach as being influenced more so by the betterment of their employees than the outcome of the organization. Correspondingly, a quarter of the participants were neither driven by organizational objectives nor employee growth, but instead they described their leader approach as primarily being influenced by relationship-oriented skills of maintaining good employee relationships and particular qualities of being fair, open, and nonjudgmental.

The women in this study emphasized a leader approach, which was defined as transformative or oriented toward social betterment**.** Despite the various approaches in leadership that were not oriented toward building relationships (laissez-faire, authoritarian, etc.), all but one of the women involved in this study described a leader

approach that accentuated the importance of building relationships with others.

Conversely, Dagwood described her leadership focus as more task-oriented than

relationship-oriented; she stated, "I am a paper person…I believe in checking sheets and

forms and doing things. I'm the type of person, who steps in when other people have not

been able to succeed, and I try to make that succeed--I try to make it work." Although

this leader in particular did not disclose transformational leadership qualities, the qualities

she did display were very closely related to the transformational approach and only

differed in the motivation behind her leadership initiative. Dagwood described her

motivation as task-oriented, which was more descriptive of transactional leadership than

the people-focused motivation of transformational leadership. Although the leaders in

this study were all veteran alpha females, one distinguishing difference for Dagwood was

the responsibilities of her position: Of the 12 participants involved in this study,

Dagwood did not have leadership responsibilities to manage others whereas all the other

leaders seemed to have responsibilities to manage or direct others. The majority of

participants involved in this study described leadership practices that were focused on the

importance of establishing and maintaining relationships with others. Although the

driving force varied, the focus of maintaining and building relationships was instrumental

to the majority (11 of 12) of these leaders.

Theme 2: Leader presumption. Leadership experiences influenced the leader's

perceptions. The leaders presumed that others viewed them as overly assertive or

particularly leader adept. Within the experience, it was revealed by many of the

participants that others looked to the leader for direction. Tracy disclosed that friends

"will come to me with the direct questions, they will come to me with questions that they're not too sure about, or they use my leadership skills to help them get to where they want to go." Over half (58%) of the participants described a personal attribute of assertiveness, which they considered as negatively viewed by others. The participants found that others misperceived either their firmness in their leadership direction or their opinionated nature, often misconstrued them as "bossy." Golda discussed her assertiveness as being presumed by others as a definitive statement of her sexual identity. "Everyone thought I was going to be a lesbian...My nickname growing up was Butch. That was hurtful."

Either the leaders were instrumental in initiating their leader experiences or others instinctively entrusted the leaders in this study with pioneering experiences. At least half of the participants discussed ways they implemented new programs, pioneered in their field, or were the first to start a particular procedure or new program. Paulette disclosed that her pioneering experiences were instrumental in influencing her perceptions and said, "Being the only female of management committee Americas and the only female running an engineering group throughout the whole company, it gave me a little bit of different view in dealing with certain situations". In addition to being solely perceived as overly leader adept, I further found that at least half of the participants discussed the dual experience of being perceived as both overly assertive and leader adept.

Theme 3: Leader display. Leadership experiences influenced the leader's presentation. The leader experienced an internal need to display confidence courageousness or exhibit tenacious perspicacity. Although within the experience of the

veteran alpha female leader, the attributes of confidence, courageousness, and tenacious perspicacity varied, and these feelings were described as innately experienced or feelings, which increasingly developed over time. These particular characteristics were common among participants and seemed to the leaders to be an obliged necessity. Jasmine said, "Me being an alpha female means being comfortable with being out in front and taking charge."

Some of the leaders found that their need to display confidence stemmed from their desire to separate others' perceptions from what they recognized to be effective leadership, where others revealed that their display of confidence manifested from a desire to fit in. The alpha female leaders either all implied or directly stated their need for courageousness in their willingness to face challenges or to lead uncharted ventures. A quarter of the participants disclosed their need for courage facilitated their ability to take leadership risks. Penny said, "I don't have a whole lot of fear when it comes to the challenges that I take on; in fact, I relish challenge. If I'm not challenged, I'm not real happy."

In addition to the qualities of confidence or courageousness, participants expressed an insistent perceptiveness in leadership, which indicated a tenacious perspicacity in their leadership proficiency. The findings indicate that over half (67%) of the participants described naturally demonstrating leader adeptness, which consequently led to a felt necessity to display characteristics of confidence, courageousness, or tenacious perspicacity. Paulette said, "I got the right people to give me their ideas,

opinions, and then I formulated what I believed these three departments should look like, and those three departments are still active departments today."

Theme 4: Time. In exploring the influence of leader experience, the leaders indicated that time in leadership greatly influenced the alpha female leader's experience. All of the participants described their experiences of developing leadership strengths over the duration of serving in a leadership capacity. The research findings found that over time, the veteran alpha female leaders developed in four ways: internal satisfaction/leader resolve, maturation or self-confidence, the desire to establish/facilitate balance, and the cultivation of self-analysis. The following subthemes elaborate on how leader duration was manifested among the veteran alpha leader participants.

Subtheme 4.1. *Development of internal satisfaction/leader resolve.* The alpha female leaders described either the experience of regret or growth as antecedents to obtaining more for their business, organization, or themselves. Time in the leader position seemed to increase self-actualization and either satisfaction in leadership achievements or efforts to increase internal satisfaction. Overall time influenced internal confidence, and the women found more freedom to take leadership risks. Dagwood stated, "I evolved in doing things I really like to do now. Sometimes I get pulled in a lot of different directions (help me with this, help me with that), but I evolved to the point where I can say NO. I can say I can't because I can't."

Subtheme 4.2. *The development of maturation or confidence*. Many of the participants spoke of a continuous process of learning, growing, and positively evolving in leadership proficiency. The result of the growth seemed to provide participants with an

increased freedom and security in the leader role. The leaders referenced the ways time influenced their leader satisfaction. Lisa said:

> I went from probably not being interested in leadership to actually enjoying leadership and a management role because of its ever-changing issues and working with people, so for me it was acquired for over 22 years. I kind of fell into my expertise, and I kind of fell into my leadership role, and probably because I was predisposed to becoming a leader. I just didn't know it.

Subtheme 4.3. *The development of the desire to establish/facilitate balance.* Time also influenced the ability to establish or see more clearly the need for balance. Over time, alpha leaders recognized or acknowledged a developing need for balance between work and life responsibilities. Although a few of the leaders revealed some difficulty in establishing balance, the leaders were better able to prioritize the need for work and life balance as a leadership necessity. Traumatic or life altering events (i.e., new motherhood, illness of a family member) initiated a hastier recognition of the need for balance and as a result, balance was established earlier than for those who had not experienced a traumatic event. The need for balance seemed to increase with leader duration and as a result, the longer the leader remained in leadership, the better the leader recognized the importance of balancing work and life responsibilities.

Subtheme 4.4. *The development of the cultivation of self-analysis.* Time cultivated self-analysis of the leader's path or role for herself or of those directly (e.g., coworkers, direct reports, family, etc.) impacted by the leader. This developed introspection resulted in leader's augmented desire to further develop others or herself.

The majority of the participants found value over time in self-reflection and altering ineffective processes or gaining additional training, mentorship, or education to enhance their skillset. Symphony described the gradual development of her self-analysis process, which she felt was instrumental to her ability to effectively lead: "I think that most of my experience in this role has been I would say probably in the last 5 years just knowing more about myself. I feel that experience and just knowing myself better has really created a better me, which created a better leader."

The Influence of the Minority Identity

One way this study is unique is the diversity of the participants. The participants were all veteran alpha female leaders, but the leaders involved in this research derived from diverse cultural and employment backgrounds. Since gender can inevitably disqualify a female counterpart to be recognized as either alpha or leader, women leaders are considered minorities in both alpha and leadership status. Other variables such as race and ethnicity can further contribute to minority status. The women leaders in this study revealed their experience of the ways in which their minority status influenced their leadership experience. The themes that best captured the influences of the minority identity included leader motivation and leader perception of outcomes.

Theme 5: Leader motivation. The majority of the female leaders referenced the ways their racial, ethnic, or minority experiences influenced their motivation. Many participants seemed to use this influence of motivation as a catalyst for their achievements in leadership. The veteran alpha female leaders discussed how particular challenges motivated their desire for social change, awareness of workplace bias, or drive

for success. The following subthemes discuss in greater detail the ways in which racial, ethnic, or minority experiences served to influence motivation.

     Subtheme 5.1. *Racial, ethnic, or minority experiences motivated the desire for social change to improve situations or outcomes.* Golda, whose leadership experiences involved nursing, found that her culture was an influencing factor of motivation. She says, "I think it's [passion to be a nurse] from my culture and my practicing Judaism as my background. It's a very open, your door is always open, a help those who are in need, kind of culture and attitude." The leaders felt that their leader motivation was influenced by the ethnic, racial, or minority identity particularly in three specific ways: through the desire for social change, the awareness of workplace bias, and the drive for success.

     The women stated that their experience of marginal representation influenced their sensitivity toward workplace predisposition. The leaders also emphasized that cognizance toward the lack of female representation strengthened their desire to improve these conditions and influenced their leader commitment. For some of the leaders minority representation served as a catalyst for initiative. Some of the women revealed that their minority status pushed more than their desire to improve biased working conditions; it also led to participation in social initiatives that promoted the expansion of female equality.

     Subtheme 5.2. *The racial, ethnic, or minority experiences influenced the leaders' motivation to work harder.* The majority of participants expressed a common experience of needing to overcompensate in the leadership position, which was directly influenced by their minority status. This need to work harder was felt as a consequence of success.

The leaders implied or directly stated that because of the lack of representation in ethnicity, racial, or gender representation, they felt a stronger motivational desire to demonstrate courageousness in their willingness to face challenges or to lead in uncharted areas/ventures.

Although motivation overlapped in the ways it manifested among participants, 42% of the participants reported their ethnic or racial experiences influenced their minority identity experience. Elizabeth expressed her minority experience as it related to gender; she, like the majority of the other leaders, emphasized that her minority experience perpetuated her drive to succeed. An entrepreneur, Elizabeth said, "There are things that were not open to me because I was a female. I remember (now it's different), but many clubs in the City of Detroit like the [Detroit Athletic Club] were all male. I think I had to work harder because I am a female."

The research found that women who were not of color tended to describe their minority identity (gender) as the influential factor in motivation; however, women of color in this study reported more than one motivational influence (i.e., gender and ethnicity). Jasmine talked about not only her ethnic minority experience, which influenced her perceived need to work harder in leadership, but also an additional internal pressure to be successful for her ethnic community:

Because I tended to work in environments again where I was only African American employed, appointed on the management team, I always feel like I have to really be the best. When I try to carry out my responsibilities, I always think

I'm trying to give 120% as a leader because I feel like I'm representing my ethnic community.

Subtheme 5.3. Motivation influenced the leaders' drive for success. The women involved in this study described being motivated by the overall challenge which contributed to driving their success. Challenge seemed to be the most referenced motivating factor influencing the drive for accomplishment. Although the challenge of adversity motivated some participants, other participants disclosed being more motivated by the thrill of getting beyond the impediment; Suzie, who reflected upon working in a male dominated field and taking "male-oriented" math and science subjects, said, "When I analyze my life, because of my association with males and always being in a male part, male business, not anything female, I think I excelled because I always had the challenge of the man putting me down, saying, 'Here comes the woman; she can't do it!'"

Theme 6: Leader perception of outcomes. The majority of the participants expressed particular perceptions that influenced their leadership that they felt directly related to their ethnic, racial, or minority experience. Two perceptions in particular that seemed prevalent to these experiences were the perceptions of ostracism and inadequate recognition. Because these perceptions served as a consequence of the leader's experience, both of these perceptual outcomes consequently overlap.

Subtheme 6.1. The leaders perceived ostracism as a direct influence of their ethnic, racial, cultural or gender minority identity statuses. The leaders emphasized their perceptual experience of external judgements from others and related these perceptions to their minority identity status. These perceptions influenced the participant's leadership

decisions in various ways. Kelly described how ostracism served as a catalyst to thrive;
she stated:

> When I think about ethnic, racial, or minority identity being a minority myself
> (and I'm a woman, so double minority), I think I'm highly sensitive to allowing it
> not to affect my leadership decisions, and what I mean by that is creating a team,
> leading a team such that everyone has equal opportunity on the team, so I think
> I'm hypersensitive to it.

Subtheme 6.2. *The perception that capability was not fully recognized was
experienced as a direct influence of the ethnic, racial, or gender minority identity status.*
Many of the women emphasized that within their leadership duration, they believed their
minority status influenced their ability to receive recognition that matched their leader
expertise. Leadership recognition was experienced as limited due to gender bias or
prejudiced beliefs about race or culture. The participant's perception of inadequate
acknowledgment was believed to have challenged their success in ways in which
someone of majority identity status would not experience. These perceptions existed
early in the leaders' career and remained but progressively decreased in its perceptual
impact over time. Terry said, "I think in the past I was pretty invisible and yet (there's no
acknowledgment to this) my culture really was [pretty invisible] because that's just the
way the church was--everybody was kind of lumped together."

Paradoxically, despite limitations in recognition, many of the women were
successful as leaders. They felt that biased beliefs about their minority status contributed
to their feelings of resentment, pressure, frustration, or perseverance. Positive or negative

association of the experience also varied, but the perception of insufficient recognition was experienced mutually among the majority of the participants involved in this study. One of the 12 participants denied any limitations in her ability to be recognized, and therefore she attributed very little influence towards her ethnic, racial, or gender minority identity status.

The Influence of Duration

Leader efficacy and external support were two themes which emerged that illustrated the influence of duration on the leader.

Theme 7: Leader efficacy. A common occurrence among the veteran alpha leaders was the importance of continuous learning and its value to the participants. One hundred percent of the women leaders involved in this study expressed appreciation for their ability to learn to face challenges, learn from experience, or learn from others. The ways in which learning influenced the women leaders seemed to overlap, but all expressed the importance of learning to their overall leader experience. The following examples describe specific ways learning influenced their experience.

Subtheme 7.1. *Learning from experience.* The veteran alpha leaders described the ways learning from their experiences influenced their leader efficacy. Some of the women found that gradually they learned to adapt to their environment and demonstrate from their knowledge what was most effective. Paulette said, "What I always try to do was learn from every experience, be it bad or good, what worked well, what didn't work well, and then adapt and change." Other leaders experienced that learning information

(i.e., continuous education, mentorships, learning various job functions) helped them to be the most effective in leadership.

Subtheme 7.2. Learning to face challenges. The ability to learn from the obstacles of experienced challenges was another influencing factor instrumental toward the leaders' experiences. Penny found that learning to face challenges was key to providing her the avenue to grow in leadership: "So I think leaders build wealth, so that's what I will think I will say is a pretty good leadership alpha trait to have is the ability to always be challenged, build those roads, seize the opportunities."

Subtheme 7.3. Learning to give (emotionally or physically) to others. The majority of the leaders referenced feeling an internal satisfaction in being able to give to others. Giving involved being able to mentor, mold, volunteer, and give more to their families or to those financially deficient. Suzie said, "I'm going to amicably keep giving. It just makes me, it's the best medicine. I don't take pills, I don't get sick. I don't get headaches. Why? Because I give constantly when I help God's children." The leaders attributed their overall leader satisfaction and effectiveness to their ability to give to others. Some of the women found that this desire to help others was always embedded in their upbringing whereas others progressively learned the importance of giving to others.

Theme 8: Leader external support. All of the veteran alpha female leaders discussed the essential influential factor of having external support from others. External support varied, meaning that support did not have to come from a two-parent home, nor did it have to come from parents or immediate family. Penny emphasized receiving her support from her spouse and children; "They support [her ambition]….My family has

been very supportive and of course, no leader, I don't think, can get real far without that [support], the support that it takes on the long hours of lonely work to get ahead." Participants described support from spouses, siblings, children, aunts, and mentors in addition to parents from both one- and two-parent homes.

The majority (92%) of the women involved in this study attributed their early life influences of their family (parents, siblings, and immediate family members) as influential to their latter leadership initiatives. The participants revealed that they experienced being influenced by the external support of either one particular parent (16%), from both of their parents (25%), or the life experience of the participants was described as particularly influenced by a sibling (16%). A little less than half (42%) of the participants experienced parental support as essential to their experience.

Similarly, at least four of the participants (33%) contributed their influence of external support not exclusively to a parent but to various immediate family members. Kelly said, "I think that the experiences I have had and the family I have been blessed with (who were leaders at that time) have allowed me to refine and grow the characteristics I needed in order to function in leadership." The source of support was inconsequential to the leader's experience, but throughout the leadership reign continual encouragement was experienced as an influencing factor towards the leader's overall success.

Summary

This chapter covered the results of the study, including setting and sample conflicts, demographics, data collection and analysis, and qualitative analysis of key

findings. In evaluating the leadership influences of the veteran alpha female leader, eight

essential themes (leadership modality, leader presumption, leader display, leader duration,

leader motivation, leader perception of outcomes, leader efficacy, and external support)

emerged from the leader experience. Chapter 5 includes an interpretation of the findings,

a discussion of limitations, research recommendations, findings implications, the social

impact of the study and potential areas for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to illuminate the experience of veteran alpha

female leaders and to help promote an expanded definition of women as leaders. The

study uncovered ways in which the minority identity, leader duration, and leadership

experiences influenced veteran alpha women leaders. Eight essential themes emerged

from the leader experience: leadership modality, leader presumption, leader display,

leader duration, motivation and perception of outcomes, leader efficacy, and external

support. Extensive data analysis procedures (described in Chapter 3) revealed that the

veteran alpha female leaders' experiences were influenced in three ways—by leadership

duration, through the minority identity experience, and through leadership experiences.

This chapter interprets the findings; discusses limitations, recommendations, and

implications. It concludes by expounding on the social impact of the study and detailing

potential areas for future research.

Interpretation of Findings

The role of leadership is expanding and, as the country evolves, so do

opportunities for leadership by female minorities (Chin, 2010). Researchers argued that,

as a result of the incongruence between a perceptual mismatch between the role of

leadership and the perceived communal qualities of the female gender, women are not

designed biologically to be successful in leadership (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Eagly & Karau,

2002). Chapter 2's literature review indicated distinct differences between female leaders

and alpha female leaders (Ward et al., 2009). Alpha female leaders possess a genderless

approach that enables them to avoid gender role challenges that traditional female leaders face (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Eagly & Karau, 2002).

The 8 themes and 12 subthemes identified help conceptualize the experience of the veteran alpha female leader. The research involved a purposeful sampling of 12 female leaders from different backgrounds who have served or presently serve in various leadership arenas. Previous research used participants primarily from identical backgrounds and ethnicities, and thus the AFI was unable to distinguish alpha women from introverted, extroverted, and dominant cultures (Ward et al., 2010). The diversity of the sample used in the current study successfully identified alpha leaders from diverse backgrounds which consequently extends the comprehension of the alpha female measure. This study adds to the limited research on alpha female leaders, and the findings confirm the contribution to the extension of academic knowledge in literature. Key findings are addressed in three areas of influence: influence of the leadership experience, influence of the minority identity, influence of duration.

Influences of Leader Experience

The research findings from this study found that leadership modality, leader display, and leader presumption influenced veteran alpha female leaders' experiences.

Leader modality. The leadership modality among veteran alpha leaders in this study described an approach to leadership that contained transformational qualities or involved an approach that was prone toward social betterment (i.e., community improvement, gender equality). In accordance with Fibuch's (2011) and Rosener's (1990) research on leader success, the transformational approach predicted leader success, and

because the veteran alpha female leaders in this study referenced this type of approach, their success as women leaders could be attributed to the enactment of these well-received method. This finding is consistent with Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and van Engen (2003), who compared female to male leaders and found women to be more likely to use the transformational approach. Because transformative leadership is a type of leadership described as relationship-oriented with emphasis on work democracy, employee needs, and employee engagement (Bass & Avolio, 1994), this style seems to lend further support to the findings in this study. New's (2007) research on alpha women leaders found alpha women to be more likely to smile, display charisma, and use direct eye contact, which are also likely characteristics that could be described as relationship-oriented and consistent with previous findings that have predicted female leader effectiveness (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

The literature review in Chapter 2 discussed findings from previous research on alpha leadership that compared alpha men and women and found that alpha women were likely to possess traits that indicated more openness to mentoring, relationship orientation, and self-reflection (Luderman & Erlandson, 2006b). The current research shows that regardless of the driving force, the focus of maintaining and building relationships was instrumental to 92% of the leaders involved in this study. The veteran alpha female leader's desire to mentor others was also consistent with Catalyst.org's (2012) leadership research, which established that women leaders gravitated toward assuming mentoring roles, especially mentoring other women.

One of the 12 participants involved in this study described an approach different than transformational, and although her approach was described as very similar to some of the transformational leader qualities above, she instead described a task-oriented leadership approach rather than an approach focusing on social or employee betterment. The effectiveness of this leader could be attributed to an androgynous orientation; researchers attributed higher leader effectiveness to leaders who display both transformational and task orientation (Ayman & Korabik, 2010).

Because Ludeman and Erlandson (2006a) defined alphas in four distinct categories (visionary, commander, strategist, and executor) and the present research did not look at the type of veteran alpha female leader interviewed, it is quite possible the alpha type could influence the experience differently than what the participants from the current study expressed. Furthermore, the veteran alphas in the present study provided their perceived accounts of their experience; therefore, others could identify this type of leader differently than the leader assumes. Research has explored differences among alpha leaders and nonalpha leaders, but no research has explored the diversity differences between alpha leaders who manage others and those who do not. To gain a better perspective of these differences among alpha females, further research could explore variations between successful alpha leaders who have direct reports and those alpha leaders who do not manage others as well as the variances across management duties and alpha type.

Leader presumption. Ludeman and Erlandson (2006a) suggested that alpha leaders may exhibit the qualities of anger and impatience; although veteran alpha female

leaders noted that others have perceived them as "bossy," "aggressive," or "confident," they did not mention characteristics of anger or impatience. The leader's presumption that others perceived her assertive characteristics as "bossy" is similarly aligned with Ward's (2009) findings, which indicated a dichotomy between the alpha advantage of accomplishment and the disadvantage of being unjustifiably labeled. All the women in this study were veteran leaders with 10 or more years of leadership experience. It is possible that time in leadership influenced the female alpha experience and therefore, the experience of anger and impatience found in Ludeman and Erlandson's (2006a) research could ultimately result in qualities that minimize over time. These findings indicate that the alpha female leader, over time, faces similar challenges to those of the newer alpha but that time is not likely to influence resolve.

A quantitative study or a longitudinal study that explores the effect of leader duration on the alpha leader could better assess whether personality factors attributed to the alpha personality evolve over time. Another notable difference between this study and others is the distinctiveness of the veteran experience. To better understand alpha leader differences, research that explores veteran alpha female leaders of various ethnicities and nonalpha leaders among the different alpha categories or research that explores veteran alpha female leader self-perceptions in comparison to others' perceptions of the alpha leader could all be areas of future exploration.

Leader display. The participants discussed the experience of their perception that others viewed them as overly assertive or particularly leader adept. Although Ayman and Korabik's (2010) literature on gender and culture does not make distinct reference to

alpha female leaders, their research does contend that many gender-based studies have isolated a distinct group of women who have been successful in leadership based on their ability to meet majority expectations. Parallel to Ayman and Korabik's findings, the strong need to display these particular characteristics of strength could relate to the perception of the veteran alpha female leader that others expect confidence, courageousness, and tenacity, and therefore this leader may then feel more pressure than the nonveteran alpha female leader to exhibit these specific characteristics. However, further research on differences between the alpha leader and the nonalpha female leader would be needed to better explore this concept.

The veteran alpha female leader's need to display confidence, courageousness, or tenacious perspicacity supports research on self-monitoring. The majority of leaders in this study expressed an acute awareness of how their affect influenced others and the need to monitor their mood, external display, or delivery, for the betterment of their employees. As previously noted, New (2007) suggested that alphas who displayed human qualities increased their popularity as alpha leaders. Parallel to the literature, the women in this study expressed the importance of reflecting a positive attitude for the benefit of employees' well-being. The success of veteran alpha female leader could be attributed to the leaders' internal sense to display particular characteristics of effectiveness in an effort to convey a strong image to others.

Day, Schleicher, Unckless, and Hiller (2002) correlated self-monitors and leadership promotion. Self-monitoring research has attributed the disproportionate number of women leaders (in comparison to men) to research findings that suggest that

male leaders rate higher in self-monitoring capabilities (Day et al., 2002) and therefore possess a better likelihood of leadership promotion (Ellis & Cronshaw, 1992). As noted in Chapter 2, Ward et al. (2010) attributed alpha female leaders higher levels of masculine qualities than nonalpha leaders; these findings suggest that the veteran alpha female leader could possess higher levels of self-monitoring than the nonveteran alpha female leader, but further research on self-monitoring and veteran alpha leaders is warranted to further explore this explanation.

Time. In exploring the influence of leader duration, participants described their experiences of developing in various ways over time in leadership. The research findings showed that veteran alpha female leaders developed in four different ways: internal satisfaction/leader resolve, maturation or self-confidence, the desire to establish/facilitate balance, and the cultivation of self-analysis. This study included only alpha female leaders with 10 or more years of experience and found development to be the most influencing factor of the veteran alpha female leader experience. The women referred to the word *always* (and its synonyms) 268 times, most often when talking about work and life influences (122 references) or the alpha experience (85 references). The various references to the word were important because this study specifically explored alpha veteran leaders, and the reference of *always* (based on the parameters defined for this study) is defined, for the purposes of this study, to be at least 10 years of leadership.

The word *always* was least referenced among the participants when leadership duration was specifically explored. Participants instead referenced leadership growth, internal satisfaction, and comfort in the leader role as processes that were not *always;*

rather, they spoke of these attributes as characteristics that occurred over time. I considered this incremental period of development as significant because it indicated that although veteran alpha female leaders might have fixed personality characteristics ideal for top leadership positions, some necessary talents needed for success occur over a span of time or might need to be individually nurtured for success.

Influences of the Minority Identity

Research findings revealed motivation and perception of outcomes influenced the minority identity of veteran alpha female leaders. Although participants spoke of gender based challenges, none of the leaders in this study identified areas in which they felt inadequate to their male counterparts. In contrast, the women leaders did reference working harder to meet their perceived challenges, which in turn catapulted their success in leadership. Although within the experience the attributes of confidence, courageousness, and tenacious perspicacity varied, these feelings were described as being innately inherited or increasingly developed over time. These particular qualities were common among all of the participants and seemed to live inside of the leaders as an obliged necessity.

Leader motivation. The uniqueness of this study is grounded in the diversity of the participants. I purposely recruited diverse women leaders to include variation in ethnicity, culture, leader occupation, and years of experience. I anticipated that diversity among participants would be more representative of the progressing melting pot of the United States. Among the 12 participants, the theme of motivation emerged as unique to the leader experience. Research on ethnic identity theory (Cokley, 2005) found that the

integration of one's culture and self helps construct one's overall identity. The additional influence of cultural or racial experiences supports ethnic identity theories (Chen & Francesco, 2000; Cokley 2005; Miroshnik, 2002) and further supports that these experiences influence one's leadership style and priorities.

Because of gender difference in leadership, all of the participants in the study were considered to be of a minority identity status; however, the research also uncovered motivational differences between alpha veteran women leaders of color and alpha veteran women leaders who were not of color. An explanation of the differences in motivational influences among the participants could result from stereotyping that specifically impacts women of color (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Brown (2007) found that women who are not of color have faced stereotypical misperceptions solely about their skillset; in contrast, women of color tend to experience misperceptions about their skillset because of their minority identity (gender) in addition to misperceptions about their ethnic identity.

The women involved in this study that were not of color seemed to either feel unthreatened or were oblivious to any perceived risk related to their culture or ethnic or racial identity experience. In this study, African American participants in particular described an acute awareness of dual workplace bias as a result of their race/ethnicity (being Black) and minority identity (gender) experiences. These findings suggest that just as women of color may have more motivational influences as a result of their multiple minority identity statutes; women of color, in particular, are more inclined to experience additional workplace challenges than women who are not of color.

Only one participant involved in the current study denied any direct influence as a result of her minority identity experience; conversely, she instead specified only an indirect influence of her minority identity on her character. A particular identifying reason for the discrepancy for this participant is unknown, but several possibilities exist. Penny was employed by a governmental agency, and the diversity of the military along with the uniform policies of such an agency could help Penny bypass some of the minority identity influences that those living in a civilian unstructured environment face. Fernandez (1991) argued that Asian Americans face negative stereotypes of being too smart or too passive, which can also limit their success. Because Asian Americans have higher degrees of success than nonAsian Americans, Penny who is Asian American, could be acting within her perceived social role and therefore not experience the influence of the racial, ethnic, cultural, or gender identity reported by the other participants. Eagly and Karau (2007) found that just as women face leadership challenges when they go against the gender role perception, Asian women who act contrary to their socially perceived role can limit leader success. Alternatively, Penny was adopted into a European American home, which could indicate an inherited privilege indicative of her adoptive parents' European status rather than the privilege that would be commonly assigned to Penny's ethnic identity.

Although these explanations do offer a potential rationale behind one not having a motivation influence, they fail to explain the discrepancy between this participant and the others who have had at least one influence related to their minority status (i.e., minority experience of being a woman in leadership). A final possible answer for the discrepancy

could be lack of comfort. The participant and I did not know each other prior to the interview, and therefore it is possible that shame and embarrassment could have altered the authenticity of her response. Thus, it is possible that the participant did not feel comfortable revealing the ways her minority identity influenced her experience.

Davis, Aronson, and Salinas (2006) found a correlation between racial identity and stereotype effect, and such an effect has been found less likely among those who retain solid racial identities. This finding is consistent with the research referenced in Chapter 2, which found members of African American and Latino cultures have the strongest ethnic identity compared to members of other cultures (Charmarman & Grossman, 2010). The current findings revealed that women of color experience more motivational influences than European American veteran alpha female leaders; findings indicated increased influence from ethnic, racial, and minority identity among veteran alpha female leaders of color. Additional studies that specifically study identity and cultural differences among veteran alpha female leaders could provide insight on leader satisfaction and effectiveness and their influence on ethnicity.

Leader perception of outcomes. Perceptions were instrumental to the minority identity experiences of veteran alpha female leaders. The participants in this study described their minority identity status as a catalyst towards particular perceptions that were biased by their minority identity status experience. Two particular perceptions that seemed prevalent to the minority identity status experience were as follows:

1. The perception of ostracism or feeling inadequately recognized. Participants described ostracism as a direct influence of their ethnic, racial, cultural or gender minority identity statuses.

2. The perception that capability was not fully recognized, which was also experienced as a direct influence of the minority identity status. Participants referenced their perceptions of the need to work harder to meet challenges based on their awareness between an incongruence between the appropriate recognition for their accomplishments and their perceived skillsets.

The result of the incongruence between skill and recognition created an internal awareness of the leaders towards the need to prove their value to others. The current and previous findings seemed to be consistent; therefore, the findings suggest race, duration, and experience are likely to influence the leadership characteristics noted in alpha female literature (leadership style, leader identity, ambition, attitude, etc.).

Despite the consistency in the literature, Ward et al. (2009) defined the alpha woman as a woman who specifically felt her authority among other women. The current research did not find this. The women in this study spoke about wanting more female representation and striving to create such an atmosphere by mentoring others or pushing women to strive harder to succeed. None of the participants mentioned embracing their authority over either gender. As in the Ward et al. (2009) study, the women in the current research did present a confidence that went beyond proving one gender superior; however, current findings revealed a particular drive from the veteran alpha female leaders specifically for female-leader success. Concurrent with Eagly and Carli's (2007) research

that attributed corporate success to the characteristics involved in a mentoring relationship, the current findings suggest that over time the notable superiority feature found in the college alpha may evolve in the veteran alpha female leader as more of a desire to mold or mentor other women.

Hewlett and Luce (2006) research support the current study's findings. Their research suggested that successful women creatively integrated their home and work responsibilities so they could efficiently balance their employment and family responsibilities and constructively manage their time. Other parallel researchers described two common features among successful leaders: a skillset for multitasking and adaptability (Frone, 2003; Halpern & Cheung, 2008; Hewlett & Luce, 2006). Women who were equally committed to work and family responsibilities and able to alter their concept of work as helpful toward the sustainability of their family (versus a mechanism of separation from their families) experienced overall life contentment and less internal guilt (Friedman & Greenhaus 2000; Livingston & Judge, 2008). Concurrent with these findings, the veteran alpha leaders demonstrated skillsets necessary for leader sustainability and success. Despite the multicultural differences of participants in this study, all veteran alpha female leaders seemed to adopt a collectivist attitude; sacrificing for career advancement seemed to be viewed as an expense for the greater good (i.e., the family, the community, advocating, etc.) rather than self-serving.

Consistent with the theme of duration, Ward et al.'s (2009) findings revealed a universal theme of efficacy in all areas but personal relationships. In contrast, the current study findings showed that although confidence was a reported attribute that all of the

women involved in this study possessed, it was also an attribute that occurred for some over time. Those who reported initially feeling diffident found that others saw their capability despite their own self-concept and, as a result, internal confidence seemed to eventually align with external display. Current findings suggested that although alpha qualities could manifest at an early age, internal confidence might develop later. Despite the strong personality characteristics of the veteran alpha female leader, who might present as autonomously capable, pairing a high potential leader with a mentor or an encouraging partner could be instrumental in eliciting top performance.

The Influence of Duration

Leader efficacy and external support were influenced by the work and life experiences of the veteran alpha female leader. Although many leader studies have indicated the importance of family support, this study's findings suggest that though family served as a foundation as well as support from an early age, ongoing support from others was as important for continued success. A common occurrence among the leaders was the importance of continuous learning and its value to the participants. All participants described the ways in which learning influenced their experience. Although these ways seemed to overlap, all of the women leaders described how learning influenced their overall experience in leading effectively, learning from their challenges, and giving (emotionally or physically) to others.

Self-efficacy. The current study found that alpha female women across ethnic identities sought education, asked questions to clarify new responsibilities, or welcomed mentoring from others. Fassinger's (2005) research found a correlation between self-

efficacy and success, whereas Madsen (2007) found a commonality among efficacious

leaders and their desire for continuous improvement and propensity to encourage others.

In congruence with the literature, the women in this current study expressed the

importance of learning and growing. All participants described the ways learning

influenced their leadership proficiency. Cheung and Halpern (2010) suggested a

relationship between increased education and efficiency. The current research supports

these findings. Internal confidence in the leader's overall capabilities, whether inherited

or developed, seemed to help participants conquer any inhibiting apprehension that might

have prevented them from initially taking on the challenge of leadership.

External support. The importance of support was universal to the women in this

study despite their various ethnicities, religious backgrounds, and family backgrounds.

Some were raised in two-parent homes, some in one-parent homes, and some by

extended families. The source of support seemed inconsequential to their experience, but

encouragement and mentoring from others was described as an influential influence

toward leader success. Cheung and Halpern (2010) found that households maintaining

more egalitarian views and living outside of traditional roles expressed more marital

satisfaction and appreciation. Cheung and Halpern's research findings suggested that

successful relationships resulted from spouses who were confident and unthreatened by

their wives' success. The women in this study had differing relationship statuses, but

struggles with intimate relationships were not a consistent theme among the 12 study

participants, in contrast to Ward et al.'s (2009) research. Some of the current participants

discussed very satisfying long-term relationships; the difference between the two findings could indicate that early alphas may demonstrate relational skills that improve over time.

Concurrent with Ward et al.'s (2009) findings that suggested precursor contributions influenced alpha success, the women in this study also deemed support as instrumental. Whereas Ward et al. suggested the importance of a specific type of support, primarily the mother or the parents of the alpha, the alpha women in this study found they could create their support mechanisms from people outside of a primary (e.g. mother, father), biological source such as siblings, spouses, mentors, and bosses. These findings suggest that veteran alpha leaders demonstrate resilience, creating support mechanisms where initially one may not have been perceived as available. Thus, this study's findings suggest that though family and early support have served as a foundation for the leader, ongoing support from others was deemed as important for continued success.

Limitations

To maintain the trustworthiness of the study, I conducted the research in the manner described in Chapter 4, and no identified limitations to trustworthiness emerged. I made no adjustments (i.e., transferability, creditability strategies, consistency strategies of dependability, or strategies in conformability) to the trustworthiness procedures. I had a preconceived notion of the alpha female prior to the start of the research; however, to help minimize unconscious bias, I used the AFI (Ward et al., 2009) to identify alpha female leaders and found veteran alpha female leaders who were different from what I initially presumed.

Although I made no trustworthiness amendments to the research study, the text-word inquiry used during the data analysis had its limitations. During the text-word inquiry, I examined the word and its synonyms; therefore, the use of the word could have been referenced out of context. Further, the number of questions varied for each research subquestion; therefore, I am uncertain whether the percentage of references to a particular word was due to its importance to the participant's experience or demonstrated the varying number of questions asked in relation to a subquestion. Each of these factors could have skewed the data, and therefore the results of the text-word query were not used as an exclusive method to qualitatively establish themes.

A final limitation noted is that research on top leaders supporting the current findings is limited. Because currently the number of male to female top leaders is markedly imbalanced, a female study could have skewed results when the results are attributable to one's worldview since the comparison to male-leader counterparts would naturally be skewed. Until the numbers of male and female leaders balance, it is unclear if comparative findings can indicate the same results when compared to male leaders or alpha male counterparts.

Recommendations

The experiences of the veteran alpha female leader support other leadership research; however, the study does not represent the experiences of all veteran alpha female leaders. The research study instead provides insights and guidelines for working with alpha women and serves as a tool to better understand the alpha female personality.

It offers an additional foundation to define the alpha female leader, but more research is necessary to gain a thorough understanding of this type of leader.

This study explored the experiences of veteran female alpha leaders who had been in a leadership position for at least 10 years, but the study does not answer whether these experiences are comprehensive to the alpha female leader or if the leader role shapes the experience. Further research on the differences between alpha female leaders with direct reports and those leaders without could help further define alpha differences. Additional research could also provide insight on the specific effects of duration on the veteran alpha female leader longitudinally. A longitudinal study would better assess the impact of time on the alpha leader and the ways the alpha personality evolves over time.

The current research involved the recruitment of 12 veteran alpha women from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities. Results of this showed minority status perception of the veteran alpha female leaders were influenced by ethnicity, race, culture, and or gender. Veteran alpha female leaders of color expressed more than one area in which they were influenced by their gender, race, and culture whereas veteran alpha female leaders of who were not of color only described being influenced by gender. Ludeman and Erlandson (2006a) found four specific types of alpha leaders; however, the limited research on alpha and culture makes it unclear if those categories are distinct to the personality, culture, or ethnicity. Ward et al. (2009) described differences between the alpha female leader and the traditional female leader, but this study was also limited in its participant diversity; therefore, a case study or quantitative method that examines racial, cultural or multiethnic variances among alpha female leaders would enhance insight on the topic.

Although such a wide mix of participants is more indicative of the U.S. melting pot, I used no definitive number of participants for each ethnic or cultural group. Having a representative sample of each ethnic group would help to clearly identify cultural or ethnic differences among veteran alpha female leaders. The minimum acceptable number of participants for qualitative work suggested by Morse (1994) is five, which was deemed an effective sample for qualitative research. The current study does not have at least five participants in any specific racial or ethnic group, and therefore I recommend further research that includes at least five participants of each ethnicity to explore potential cultural or ethnic differences in the veteran alpha female leaders. Because this study was qualitative in nature, it only explored the experiences of the veteran alpha female leader; however, it did not consider potential shame, guilt, or distortions that might impact these experiences. Future research that also explores the perceptions of subordinates or superiors in contrast to the veteran alpha leader perceptions of the experience could also provide a more complete picture of the alpha experience and ways to improve workplace fulfillment for the alpha.

Implications

Despite very little literature on the alpha female and no research on alpha women of varying ethnicities or veteran alpha women who have been long-term leaders, this study provides social change impact by adding to the body of literature on alpha female literature. The study increases awareness of a specific type of women leader about whom little is known. This study facilitates the implications for social change by creating a foundation on which to expand the view of women leaders. With a fuller understanding

of the alpha female leader, her influences, and the role her ethnicity plays, employers and recruiters will be able to better match alpha leaders with positions suited to their alpha personalities.

The understandings gained from this study could be useful in assisting executive coaches with the creation of improved strategies to train alpha leaders. Findings offer additional insights about the characteristics of a veteran alpha female leader and consequently help novice alpha leaders better navigate their leadership experiences which can help promote growth in female leadership representation. Adhering to the recommendations noted in the study could circumvent or help minimize the barriers for alpha women and consequently assist towards increasing organizational success. Employees of alpha female leaders could use the results of this study to gain an enhanced understanding of their employer. The overall implications of this study suggest that improved understanding of the veteran alpha female leader could benefit coaches, employees, employers, and other alphas to facilitate in creating improved occupational alignment and overall help to expand the general acceptance of alpha women in leadership roles.

Conclusions

Alpha has traditionally been an adjective used to describe men, and the word *alpha* compounded with *female* has often been perceived a negative paring because the *alpha female* concept challenges gender role perceptions (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Eagly & Karau, 2002). Ludeman and Erlandson (2006a) dubbed the alpha man as explosive and impulsive whereas traditional female leaders have been socialized to be cognizant of their

gender-determined success ceiling. The alpha woman's experiences of support in the face of challenge and her internal push to succeed may be factors that contribute to her obliviousness to messages of gender preclusion. As women are currently being nominated for presidential elections, children are being instilled with more messages that promote equality between the genders. The alpha female leader uses a hybrid leadership style, integrating leader qualities such as confidence, assertiveness, and decisiveness with innate relationship-oriented skills (democratic leadership, fairness, and mentoring) needed for employee effectiveness. As the world widens, so does its acceptance of a woman's capability to take on higher positions of leadership.

Gender-based stereotypes are being reconstituted, and cracks in the glass ceiling are gradually beginning to surface. The confidence and drive that the alpha woman possesses to conquer adversity and her genderless ability to blend into active leadership not only contribute to female leadership visibility, but also maintain her sustainability in leadership without some of the challenges faced by her female counterparts. An alpha woman meets adversity by facing it and seeks knowledge to eliminate inadequacy. She regards herself as limitless and seizes opportunity; she is likely to create a better path rather than resigning to privation. The androgynous approach of the alpha female leader, coupled with her inherent masculine and feminine leadership qualities, enables her to bypass gender role incongruence perceptions and reach higher places in leadership than the traditional female leader.

The offspring of the gender-biased are being raised with genderless perceptions, and the cycle repeats with each generation assimilating gender-neutral messages. Thus, as

the country progresses, the alpha female personality is nurtured and becomes increasingly likely to flourish. Therefore, understanding this type of personality becomes progressively essential for organizational sustainability. Since culture and gender are influential factors in leadership that impact leader outcome and behaviors (Ayman & Korabik, 2010), a qualitative study that reflected ethnic and cultural differences was necessary to be more demonstrative of the developing United States. The results of this research study expand the concept of female leadership and offer a better understanding of the experience of the veteran alpha female leader and her leadership influences.

References

Auster, E. R. (2001). Professional women's midcareer satisfaction: Towards an explanatory framework. *Sex Role, 44*(11/12), 719–750.

Ayman, R., & Korabik, K. (2010). Leadership: Why gender and culture matter. *American Psychologist, 65*, 157-170. doi:10.1037/a0018806

Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: Freeman.

Barlow, C., Jordan, M., & Hendrix, W. H. (2003). Character assessment: An examination of leadership levels. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 17*(4), 563-584.

Bartol, K. M., & Martin, D. C. (1986). Women and men in task groups. In R. D. Ashmore & F. K. Del-Boca (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of the Female-Male Relation* (pp. 259-310). Orlando, FL: Academic Press.

Bass, B. M., & Bass, R. (2008). *The Bass handbook of leadership: Theory, research, and managerial applications* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Free Press.

Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1994). *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Berry, P. (2010). Communication skills for women in the world of corporate business: Getting it right and moving up. *American Journal of Business Education, 3*, 83-89.

Bogdan, R., & Taylor, S. J. (1975). *Introduction to qualitative research*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.

Bongiorno, R., Bain, P. G., & David, B. (2014). If you're going to be a leader, at least act like it! Prejudice towards women who are tentative in leader roles. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 53,* 217–234.

Brown, D. (2007, November 29). *The leader's edge: Focus on women of color.* Paper presented at the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association Diversity Forum, Philadelphia, PA.

Bruckmüller, S., Ryan, M. K., Haslam, S. A., & Peters, K. (2013). Ceilings, cliffs, and labyrinths: Exploring metaphors for workplace gender discrimination. In M. K. Ryan & N. R. Branscombe (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of gender and psychology* (pp. 450–465). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Bruckmüller, S., Ryan, M. K., Rink, F., & Haslam, S. A. (2014). Beyond the glass ceiling: The glass cliff and its lessons for organizational policy. *Social Issues and Policy Review, 8*, 202–232. doi:10.1111/sipr.12006

Budworth, M. H., & Mann, S. L. (2007, January). *Modesty, gender, and income: The feminine modesty effect and income of unionized employees*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of Academy of Management, Philadelphia, PA.

Budworth, M. H., & Mann, S. L. (2010). Becoming a leader: The challenge of modesty for women. *Journal of Management Development*, *29*(2), 177-186.

Burke, R. J., & McKeen, C. A. (1993). Correlates of mentoring in organizations: The mentor's perspective. *Psychological Reports, 72,* 883-896.

Catalyst.org. (2004). *Women and men in U.S. corporate leadership: Same workplace different realities.* Retrieved from http://catalyst.org/publication/145/women-and -men-in-us-corporate-leadership-same-workplace-different-realities

Catalyst.org. (2005). *Women "take care," men "take charge": Stereotyping U.S. business leaders exposed.* Retrieved from

http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/titles/title.php?page=lead_stereo_wtcmtc05

Catalyst.org. (2011). *Turnover and retention.* Retrieved from

http://www.catalyst.org/publication/242/turnover-and-retention

Catalyst.org. (2012). *High potentials in the pipeline: Leaders pay it forward.* Retrieved from http://www.catalyst.org/file/636/high_potentials_in_the_pipeline _leaders_pay_it_forward.pdf.

Charmarman, L., & Grossman, J. M. (2010). Importance of race and ethnicity: An exploration of Asian, Black, Latino, and multiracial adolescent identity. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 16*(2), 144-151.

Chemers, M. M. (2000). Leadership research and theory: A functional integration. *Group Dynamics: Theory and Research, 4*, 27-43.

Chen, Z. X., & Francesco, A. M. (2000). Employee demography, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions in China: Do cultural differences matter? *Human Relations*, *3*(6), 869-887.

Cheung, F. M., & Halpern, D. F. (2010). Women at the top: Powerful leaders define success as work + family in culture of gender. *American Psychologist, 65*, 182-193. doi:10.1037/a0017309

Chin, J. L. (2010).Introduction to the special issue on diversity and leadership. *American Psychologist, 65,*150-156.

Chiu, C. (1998). Do professional women have lower job satisfaction than professional men? Lawyers as a case study. *Sex Roles, 38*(7/8), 521–538.

CNN. (2008, August 13). Minorities expected to be majority in 2050. Retrieved from http://articles.cnn.com/2008-08-13/us/census.minorities_1_hispanic-population -census-bureau-white-population?_s=PM:U.S.

Cokley, K. O. (2005). Racialized identity, ethnic identity, and Afrocentric values: Conceptual and methodological challenges in understanding African American identity. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*, 517–526.

Colaizzi, P. (1978). Psychological research as the phenomenologist views it. In R. Valle & M. King (Eds.). Existential phenomenological alternative for psychology (pp. 48-71). New York: Oxford University Press.

Cook, A., & Glass, C. (2014). Do minority leaders affect corporate practice? Analyzing the effect of leadership composition on governance and product development. *Strategic Organization.* doi:10.1177/1476127014564109

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design choosing among five traditions*. London, UK: Sage.

Davis, C., Aronson, J., & Salinas, M. (2006). Shades of threat: Racial identity as a moderator of stereotype threat. *Journal of Black Psychology, 32*, 399-417. doi: 10.1177/0095798406292464

Day, D. V., Schleicher, D. J., Unckless, A. L., & Hiller, N. J. (2002). Self-mentoring personality at work: A meta-analytic investigation of construct validity. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 87*, 390-401. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.87.2.390

Dobbins, G. H., & Platz, S. J. (1986). Sex differences in leadership: How real are they? *Academy of Management Review, 11*(1), 118-127.

Eagly, A. H. (1987). *Sex differences in social behavior: A social role interpretation*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Eagly, A. H., & Carli, L. L. (2003). The female leadership advantage: An evaluation of the evidence. *Leadership Quarterly, 14,* 807-834.

Eagly, A. H., & Carli, L. L. (2007). Women and the labyrinth of leadership. *Harvard Business Review, 85,* 62-82.

Eagly, A. H., & Johannesen-Schmidt, M. C. (2001). The leadership styles of women and men. *Journal of Social Issues, 57,* 781-797.

Eagly, A. H., & Karau, S. J. (1991). Gender and the emergence of leaders: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 60*, 685–710.

Eagly, A. H., & Karau, S. J. (2002). Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders. *Psychology Review, 109,* 573-598.

Eagly, A. H., Johannesen-Schmidt, M. C., & van Engen, M. (2003). Transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles: A meta-analysis comparing women and men. *Psychological Bulletin, 108*, 233-256.

Eagly, A. H., Karau, S. J., & Makhijani, M. G. (1995). Gender and the effectiveness of leaders: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 117*, 125–145.

Eagly, A. H., Makhijani, M. G., & Klonsky, B. G. (1992). Gender and the evaluation of leaders: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 111*, 3–22.

Eden, D., & Levianthan, U. (1975). Implicit leadership theory as a determinant of factor structure underlying supervisory behavior scales. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 60,* 736-741.

Ellis, R. J., & Cronshaw, S. F. (1992). Self-monitoring and leader emergence: A test of moderator effects. *Small Group Research, 23*, 113-129.

Elsesser, K. M., & Lever, J. (2011). Does gender bias against female leaders persist? Quantitative and qualitative data from a large-scale survey. *Human Relations, 64*(12), 1555-1578.

Embry, A., Padgett, M. Y., & Caldwell, C. B. (2008). Can leaders step out of the gender box? An examination of leadership and gender role stereotypes. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies, 15*(1), 30-45.

Emerald Publishing Group. (2008). More than ever before, the world needs women leaders. *Strategic Direction, 24*(3), 27-29.

Evans, D. (2011). Room at the top: Advancement and equality for women in the business world. *Nation Civic Review 100,* 62-64.

Fagenson, E. A. (1990). At the heart of women in management research: Theoretical and methodological approaches and their biases. *Journal of Business Ethics, 9,* 267-274.

Fassinger, R. E. (2005). Theoretical issues in the study of women's career development: Building bridges in a brave new world. In W. B. Walsh & M. L. Savickas (Eds.), *Handbook of vocational psychology* (3rd ed., pp. 85-124). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Fernandez, J. P. (1991). *Managing a diverse workforce: Regaining the competitive edge.* Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Fibuch, E. E. (2011). Failure of senior leadership: Is this your problem in your hospitals? *Physician Executive, 37*(2), 46-50.

Friedman, S. D., & Greenhaus, J. H. (2000). *Work and family--Allies or enemies? What happens when business professionals confront life choices.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Frone, M. R. (2003). Work-family balance. In J. C. Quick & L. E. Tetrick (Eds.), *Handbook of occupational health psychology* (pp. 143-162). Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

Furst, S. A., & Reeves, M. (2008). Queen of the hill: Creative destruction and the emergence of executive leadership of women. *The Leadership Quarterly, 19*, 372-384.

Galanaki, E., Papalexandris, N., & Halikias, J. (2008). Revisiting leadership styles and attitudes towards women as managers in Greece 15 years later. *Gender in Management: An International Journal, 24*, 484-504.

Goodman, J., Fields, D., & Blum, T. (2003). Cracks in the glass ceiling: In what kinds of organizations do women make it to the top? *Group and Organization Management*. *28*(4), 75-102.

Goodstein, R., & Ponterotto, J. G. (1997). Racial and ethnic identity: Their relationship and their contribution to self-esteem. *Journal of Black Psychology, 23*, 275–292.

Gough, H. G. (1990). Testing for leadership with the California Psychological Inventory. In K. E. Clark & M. B. Clark (Eds.), *Measures of Leadership* (pp. 355-379). West Orange, NJ: Leadership Library of America.

Guba, E., & Lincoln, Y. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publication.

Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiments with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods, 18,* 59-82.

Haccoun, D. M., Sallay, G., & Haccoun, R. R. (1978). Sex differences in appropriateness of supervisory styles: A nonmanagement view. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 63*(1), 124-127.

Halpern, D. F., & Cheung, F. M. (2008). Women at the top: Powerful leaders tell us how to combine work and family. New York, NY: Wiley/Blackwell.

Hazucha, J. F. (1991). *Success, jeopardy, and performance: Contrasting managerial outcomes and their predictors*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN.

Heffernan, M. (2002). The female CEO. *Fast Company, 61*, 58-64.

Heilman, M. E. (2001). Description and prescription: How gender stereotypes prevent women's ascent up the organizational ladder. *Journal of Social Issues, 57*, 657-674.

Hewlett, S. A., & Luce, C. B. (2006). Extreme jobs: The dangerous allure of the 70-hour work week. *Harvard Business Review, 84,* 49-59.

Hogan, J. (1978). Psychological dynamics of leadership. *Journal of Research in Personality, 12,* 390-395.

Hogan, R., Curphy, J., & Hogan, J. (1994). What we know about leadership: Effectiveness and personality. *American Psychological Association, 49,* 1-33.

Hollander, E. P., & Julian, J. W. (1969). Contemporary trends in the analysis of leadership processes. *Psychological Bulletin, 71*, 387-391.

House, R. J., Hanges, P. J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P. W., & Gupta, V. (2004) *Culture, leadership, and organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Jamieson, K. (1996). *Beyond the double bind: Women and leadership.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Kenny, D. A., & Zaccaro, S. J. (1983). An estimate of variance due to traits in leadership. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 2*, 678-685.

Khurana, R. (2002). *Searching for a corporate savior*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Kim, B. S. K., Atkinson, D. R., & Umemoto, D. (2001). Asian cultural values and the counseling process: Current knowledge and directions for future research. *Counseling Psychologist, 29,* 570–603.

Kim, S. (2005). Gender difference in the job satisfaction of public employees: A study of Seoul metropolitan government, Korea. *Sex Roles, 52*(9/10), 667-681.

Kindlon, D. (2006). *Alpha girls: Understanding the new American girl and how she is changing the world*. New York, NY: Rodale.

Kinni, T. (2006). Are you an alpha leader? Review of the *Alpha male syndrome: Curb the belligerence, channel the brilliance*, by K. Luderman & E. Erlandson. *The Conference Board Review*, *60*(12), 67-69.

Kulich, C., Ryan, K., & Haslam, S. A. (2007). Where is the romance for women leaders? The effects of gender on leadership attributions and performance-based pay. *Applied Psychology: An International Review, 56*(4), 582-601.

Kwawkami, C., White, J. B., & Langer, E .J. (2000). Mindful and masculine: Freeing women leaders from the constraints of gender roles. *Journal of Social Issues, 56*(1), 49-63.

Lickona, T. (1991). *Educating for character*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.

Livingston, B. A., & Judge, T. A. (2008). Emotional responses to work-family conflict: An examination of gender role orientation among working men and women. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 93*, 207-211. doi 10.1037/0021-9010.93.1.207

Livingston, R. W., Rosette, A. S., & Washington, E. F. (2012). Can an agentic Black woman get ahead? The impact of race and interpersonal dominance on perceptions of female leaders. *Psychological Science, 23*, 354-358.

Lombardo, M. M., Ruderman, M. N, & McCauley, C. D. (1988). Explanations of success and derailment in upper-level management positions. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 2,* 199-216.

Lord, R. G., De Vader, C. L., & Allinger, G. M. (1986). A meta-analysis of the relationship between personality traits and leadership perceptions: An application of validity generalization procedures. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 2,* 199-216.

Lord, R., & Emrich, C. G. (2001). Thinking outside the box by looking inside the box: Extending the cognitive revolution in leadership research. *Leadership Quarterly, 11(4),* 551-579.

Lord, R. G., Foti, R. J., & De Vader, C. L. (1984). A test of leadership categorization theory: Internal structure, information processing, and leadership perceptions. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 34*, 343-378.

Lowe, K. B., Kroeck, K. G., & Sivasubramaniam, N. (1996). Effectiveness correlates of transformational and transactional leadership: A meta-analytic review of the MLQ literature. *The Leadership Quarterly, 7,* 385-425.

Ludeman, K., & Erlandson, E. (2006a). Taming alpha leaders. *Leadership Excellence, 23*(12), 13.

Ludeman, K., & Erlandson, E. (2006b). *Alpha male syndrome*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Ludeman, K., & Erlandson, E. (2007). Channeling alpha male leaders. *Leader to Leader*, 38-43.

Madsen, S.R. (2007). Women university presidents: Career paths and educational backgrounds. *Academic Leadership, 5*, 11-16.

Marcia, J. E. (1966). Development and validation of ego identity status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 3,* 551–558.

McCall, M. W., & Lombardo, M. M. (1983). *Off the track: Why and how successful executives get derailed (Tech Report No. 21)*. Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.

Miroshnik, V. (2002). Culture and international management: A review. *Advance Management Journal, 43*(2), 33-43.

Morrison, A., & Von Gilinow, M. A. (1990). Women and minorities in management. *American Psychologist, 45,* 200-208.

Morse, J. M. (1994). Emerging from the data: the cognitive process of analysis in qualitative inquiry. In J. M. Morse (Ed.), *Critical Issues in Qualitative Research Methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenology research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Munhall, P. (1989). Philosophical ponderings on qualitative research methods in nursing. *Nursing Science Quarterly, 2*(1), 20-28.

Negy, C., Shreve, T. L., Jensen, B. J., & Uddin, N. (2003). Ethnic identity, self-esteem, and ethnocentrism: A study of social identity versus multicultural theory of development. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology, 9,* 333–344

New, C. (2007, March/April 15). "Take me to your leader": The ABC's of alpha behavior. *Psychology Today*, 15.

O'Laughlin, E. M., & Bischoff, L. G. (2005). Balancing parenthood and academia. *Journal of Family Issues, 26*, 79-106.

Oplatka, L., & Mimon, R. (2008). Women principals' conceptions of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction: An alternative view. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 11*(2), 135-153.

Pahl, K., & Way, N. (2006). Longitudinal trajectories of ethnic identity among urban Black and Latino adolescents. *Child Development, 77*, 1403–1415.

Patton, M. Q. (2001). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Petty, M. M., & Lee, G. K. (1975). Moderating effects of sex of supervisor and subordinate on relationships between supervisory behavior and subordinate satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 60*, 624-628.

Petty, M. M., & Miles, R. H. (1976). Leader sex-role stereotyping in a female dominated work culture. *Personnel Psychology, 29*, 39-404.

Phinney, J. S. (1989). Stages of ethnic identity development in minority group adolescents. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 9,* 34–49.

Phinney, J. S. (1992). The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure: A new scale for use with diverse groups. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 7*, 156–176.

Phinney, J. S., & Ong, A. D. (2007). Conceptualization and measurement of ethnic identity: Current status and future directions. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 54*, 271–281.

Phinney, J. S., Cantu, C. L., & Kurtz, D. A. (1997). Ethnic and American identity as predictors of self-esteem among African American, Latino, and White adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 26*, 165–185.

Piirto, J. (2004). *Understanding creativity.* Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.

Powell, G. N. (1999). *Handbook of gender and work.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Prime, J. L., Carter, N.M., & Welbourne, T. M. (2009). Women "take care"; men "take charge": Managers' stereotypic perceptions of women and men leaders. *The Psychologists-Manager Journal, 12*, 25-49.

Quinn, R. P., Mangione, T. W., & Baldi de Mandilovitch, M. S. (1973). Evaluating working conditions in America. *Monthly Labor Review, 96*, 32–42.

Richards, L., & Richards, T. (1991). The transformation of qualitative method: Computational paradigms and research processes. In Nigel G. Fielding & Raymond M. Lee (Eds.), *Using Computers in Qualitative Research* (pp. 38-53). London, UK: Sage.

Rosen, B., & Jerdee, T. H. (1973). The influence of sex-role stereotypes on evaluations of female and male supervisory behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 57*(1), 41-48.

Rosener, J. B. (1990). Ways women lead. *Harvard Business Review, 68*, 119-125.

Rosener, J. B. (1995). *America's competitive secret: Utilizing women as management strategy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Rosette, A. S., & Tost, L. P. (2010). Agentic women and communal leadership: How role prescriptions confer advantage to top women leaders. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 95*, 221-225.

Roussell, C. (1974). Relationship of sex of department head to department climate. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 19*, 211-220.

Rudman, L. A., & Glick, P. (2001). Prescriptive gender stereotypes and backlash toward agentic women. *Journal of Social Issues, 57,* 743–762.

Rush, M. C., Thomas, J. C., & Lord, R .G. (1977). Implicit leadership theory: A potential threat to internal validity of leader behavior questionnaires. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 20*, 93-100.

Ryan, M. K., & Haslam, S. A. (2005).The glass cliff: Evidence that women are over-represented in precarious leadership positions. *British Journal of Management, 15*, 1-10.

Ryan, M. K., & Haslam, S. A. (2007). The glass cliff: Exploring the dynamics surrounding women's appointment to precarious leadership positions. *Academy of Management Review, 32,* 549-572.

Ryan, M. K., & Haslam, S. A. (2008). The glass cliff: Differences in perceived suitability of men and women for leadership positions in succeeding and failing organizations. *Leadership Quarterly, 19*, 530-546.

Sabogal, F., Marín, G., Otero-Sabogal, R., Marín, B. V., & Pérez-Stable, E. J. (1987). Hispanic familism and acculturation: What changes and what doesn't? *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 9*, 397-412.

Schwartz, F. N. (1989). Management women and the new facts of life. *Harvard Business Review, 67*(1), 65-76.

Seaton, E. K., Scottham, K. M., & Sellers, R. M. (2006). The status model of racial identity development in African American adolescents: Evidence of structure, trajectories, and well-being. *Child Development, 77*(5), 1416-1426.

Sharpe, R. (2000). As leaders, women rule: New studies find that female managers outshine their male counterparts in almost every measure. *Business Week, 74.* Retrieved January 12, 2011, from http://www.businessweek.com/ common_frames/ ca.htm?/2000/00_47/b3708145.htm.

Sousa-Poza, A., & Sousa-Poza, A. A. (2000). Taking another look at the gender/job-satisfaction paradox. *Kyklos, 53*, 135–152.

Stainback, K., & Kwon, S. (2012). Female leaders, organizational power, and sex segregation. A*nnals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 639*(1), 217-235.

Stedham, Y., & Yamamura, J. H. (2000). Gender and salary: A comparative study of accountants in the U.S. and Australia. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources, 38,* 104–116.

Steele, C. M., & Aronson, J. (1995). Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African-Americans. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 69*, 797-811. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.69.5.797

Stogdill, R. M. (1974). *Handbook of leadership*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Tarnopol, L. (1958). Personality differences between leaders and nonleaders, *Personnel Journal, 37*, 57-59.

Tharenou, P., Latimer, S., & Conroy, D. (1994). How do you make it the top? An examination of influences on women's and men's managerial advancement. *Academy of Management Journal, 37,* 899-931.

Turner, K. L., & Brown, C. S. (2007). The centrality of gender and ethnic identities across individuals and contexts. *Social Development, 16*, 700–719.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2005). *Labor force statistics derived from the current population survey: A data book* (Vol. 1: Bulletin 2472). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2014a). *Labor force statistics derived from the current population survey: Annual report: Labor force characteristics by sex, race and ethnicity.* Washington DC: Author.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2014b). *Labor force statistics derived from the current population survey: Women in the labor force: A databook.* Washington DC: Author.

Umana-Taylor, A. J., Backen Gonzales, M. A., & Guimond, A. B. (2009). Latino adolescents' ethnic identity: Is there a developmental progression and does growth in ethnic identity predict growth in self-esteem? *Child Development, 80*(2), 391-405.

Ward, R. M., DiPaolo, D. G., & Popson, H. C. (2009). College student leaders: Meet the alpha female. *Journal of Educational Leadership, 7,* 100-117.

Ward, R. M., Popson, H. C., & DiPaolo, G. D. (2010). Defining the alpha female: A

    female leadership measure. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies,*

    17(3), 309-320.

Wiley, M. G., & Eskilson, A. (1982). Coping in the corporation: Sex role constraints.

    Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 12(1), 1-11.

Willams, J. E., & Best, D. L. (1990). *Measuring sex stereotypes: A multi-nation study*.

    Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Yoon, E. (2011). Measuring ethnic identity in the ethnic identity scale and multi-group

    ethnic identity measure--revised. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority*

    Psychology, 17(2), 144-155.

Zaccaro, S. J., Foti, R. J., & Kenny, D. A. (1991). Self-monitoring and trait-based

    variance in leadership: An investigation of leader flexibility across multiple group

    situations. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 76*, 308-315.

Appendix A

Study Inquiry Flyers

I'M SEEKING RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS!!!!

I am conducting dissertation research on a specific type of female leader about her life and leadership experiences. In effort to conduct this type of research, I am looking for 12 women leaders who are willing to be interviewed about their experience.

The ideal participant will be a female leader who has participated in a leadership capacity for at least 10 years. This participant would be volunteering her time but would maintain the option to withdraw from the study at any time. The participant would also be willing to sign her consent and complete a brief telephonic survey. Note, not everyone who takes the survey will be asked to interview, but the female leader asked to interview will be expected to describe her experience in comprehensive detail, during a 1-1.5 hour, confidential, audio recorded interview.

If you or someone you know would be interested in participating, please contact me as soon as possible.

Danielle Moncrief, MA (***-***-****)
Researcher
.******@gmail.com

Appendix B

Recruitment Letter

January 2014

Hello!

My name is Danielle Moncrief, and I am a student in the Organizational Psychology program at Walden University. The purpose of my correspondence is because I am conducting leadership research on a particular type of female leader, and I am interested in your experience. I am contacting you specifically because based on your leadership endeavors, I believe that you may meet the requirements to be included in my research study.

The research I am conducting will include interviews of 12 participants, and I am hoping that you would consider becoming 1 of the participants. The ideal participant is a female leader who has participated in a leadership capacity for at least 10 years. The desired candidate would also be able to describe her experience in comprehensive detail during a 1-1.5 hour, confidential interview. You were chosen for the study because you are an adult female leader and you have the required amount of experience to be included in the study.

If you decide you would like to participate upon our initial telephone conversation, I would initiate a brief telephonic survey. If the survey score indicates you are this specific type of leader and you have at least 10 years of leader experience, you will then be asked to become 1 of the 12 participants interviewed. If you choose to participate, your identity and the information you provide will be kept completely confidential. Although your interview would be audio recorded, you would be assigned an alias to protect your identity. To ensure your privacy all identifying information would be stored in a secured environment and destroyed after 5 years. During and after the study, the researcher would have the only access to any identifying information.

If you consider yourself a leader and you meet the ideal participant criteria, I sincerely hope that you would consider sharing your experience with me. The number of participants interviewed for this type of study is limited, therefore I humbly request that you please contact me either way to inform me about your decision to participate in the study. Thanks in advance for your time and consideration.

Educationally Yours,
Danielle Moncrief, MA (***-***-****)
Researcher
*********@gmail.com

Appendix C

Consent Agreement

CONSENT FORM

This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part. You are invited to take part in a research study that is examining the experience of a specific type of veteran (i.e., seasoned) leader. There are two parts to this study--completion of the telephonic survey and being interviewed. Unfortunately, not everyone who participates in the study will be interviewed. Signing the consent and taking the telephonic survey does not guarantee participation in all facets of this research study, meaning that there will be some who complete the telephonic survey that will not be interviewed. Women leaders who been in a leadership capacity for at least 10 years will be recruited to participate in this study, but only 12 participants will be invited to be interviewed about their experience. The researcher will make the final determination on who will be selected for the study and will immediately inform the potential participant whether or not she will be interviewed. This study is being conducted by a researcher named Danielle Moncrief, who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to better understand the leadership influences of a specific type of veteran (experienced) female leader.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following:
- Review and sign **Consent Form** that explains the research, its purpose, and details your participation expectations. Signing the form indicates your understanding of the aforementioned items.
- Complete telephonic survey (5-10 minutes).
- Review and sign **Information Sheet** which provides demographic information about you to the researcher.
- Participate in a 30 min-90 min audio recorded interview about your leader experience.
- Review and provide feedback on the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations of the experience (review short (1-2 pg.) document, 30-60 min/feedback 30-60 min).

Voluntary Nature of the Study
Your participation in this study is voluntary. This means that everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you want to be in the study. No one will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind during the study. If you feel stressed during the study, you may stop at any time. You may skip any questions that you feel are too personal.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

You are being asked to talk about your leadership experiences over time and the ways in which you were influenced by your life and leader experiences. It is possible that exploring past and present events related to your experience could stimulate unpleasant emotions. If during the interview any question(s) arouse unresolved concerns or compromising distress, you may choose to take a break from the interview, choose not to respond to the question, or at any time you may withdraw completely from the research study. Although you may not benefit directly, you could find it enriching to share your experience with others. You may also benefit from knowing that your ability to share your experience has helped to make others better understand the overall experience and enabled you the ability to contribute to psychological science.

Compensation:

There is no monetary compensation for participation in the study.

Confidentiality:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your information for any purposes outside of this research project. The researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in any reports of the study. For the purpose of this study in effort to maintain confidentiality, all corresponding documents preceding this informed consent will be signed with an assigned alias.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via phone (313-258-1809) or email (ms.moncrief@gmail.com). If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 1-800-925-3368, extension 3121210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 01-31-14-0077211 and it expires on January 30, 2015. The researcher will give you a copy of this form.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By typing my name below, I am indicating my agreement to the terms described above.

Typed Name of Participant   Date of Consent

_____   _____

Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Legally, an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically.

Appendix D

Alpha Female Inventory

Read the following statements and rate your agreement with them according to the

following scale:

1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree Somewhat, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree Somewhat, 5-Strongly Agree

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neutral	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree
I like to lead group projects*	1	2	3	4	5
I consider myself to be more introverted (r)***	1	2	3	4	5
I consider myself tough**	1	2	3	4	5
I am assertive in what I want and believe*	1	2	3	4	5
I look forward to challenges*	1	2	3	4	5
I'd rather be behind the scenes as opposed to the forefront (r)***	1	2	3	4	5
I am just a girl, so I don't consider myself that strong (r)**	1	2	3	4	5
My friends know me as the leader*	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy athletics and physical activity**	1	2	3	4	5
In social settings I am usually quiet (r)***	1	2	3	4	5
I am a dominant force in my areas of interest*	1	2	3	4	5
I consider myself rather shy (r)***	1	2	3	4	5
I look forward to challenges*	1	2	3	4	5
I am stronger than most girls I know**	1	2	3	4	5

Note. Scoring: To be categorized as an alpha female, the participants must score 24 or higher on the AFI-L (leadership), 16 or higher on the AFI-S (strength), and 11 or higher on AFI-LI (low introversion). To be categorized as a nonalpha female, the participant must score 23 or lower on the AFI-L, 15 or lower on the AFI-S, and 10 or lower on the AFI-LI. r indicates reverse scoring, * indicates AFI-L, ** indicates AFI-S, *** indicates AFI-LI.

Note: From "Defining the Alpha Female: A Female Leadership Measure," by R. M. Ward, H. C. Popson, and G. D. DiPaolo, 2010, *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies, 17*(3), pp. 309-320. Adapted with the permission of the authors.

Appendix E

Survey Request

From: Danielle Moncrief ms.moncrief@gmail.com
Date: Wed, Jan 25, 2012 at 1:24 PM
Subject: AFI-S
To: wardrm1@muohio.edu, popsonhc@muohio.edu, dipaoldo@udmercy.edu

Hello!

My name is Danielle Moncrief. I reside in Michigan, and I am a dissertation student at Walden University majoring in Organizational Psychology. I have read your study on the alpha female and am highly interested in conducting some research investigating the alpha female. I am conducting a qualitative study and I was wondering if I could have permission to use your "Alpha Female Inventory" to conduct my research? Is it possible to have a copy of the scale you created so I can contribute additional research in this area? Your help would be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions please feel free to email me or contact me by phone. Thanks for your time and consideration.

Best Regards
Danielle Moncrief, Researcher

From: Ward, Rose Marie Dr. wardrm1@muohio.edu
To: Danielle Moncrief <ms.moncrief@gmail.com>,"popsonhc@muohio.edu" <popsonhc@muohio.edu>, dipaoldo@udmercy.edu dipaoldo@udmercy.edu
Date: Wed, Jan 25, 2012 at 1:28 PM
Subject: RE: AFI-S mailed-bymuohio.edu

Danielle,

Thank you for your interest in our scale. You are more than welcome to use it. I have attached a word document with the scale and scoring. Please let me know if you need anything else.
Dr. Ward

From: Danielle Moncrief ms.moncrief@gmail.com
To: "Ward, Rose Marie Dr." wardrm1@muohio.edu
Date: Wed, Jan 25, 2012 at 10:18 PM
Subject: Re: AFI-S mailed-bygmail.com

Dr. Ward.
Thanks so much for the scale. I really appreciate it and think the scale will be a great tool for my research.

Appendix F

Guideline Questions

In this group of questions I will be asking about your leadership experiences.

1. Please describe any work experiences in which you believe defined you as a leader.
2. How would you describe your leadership style, and why has this approach worked best for you?
3. Please describe any experience you had in which you most felt your ethnic, racial, or minority identity directly or indirectly influenced your leadership decisions. Give details on what it was like to have this experience.
4. What are the ways you have found that the attitudes of others have directly or indirectly influenced the way you relate to people?

Now I would like to know more about your experience of your family on your career choices. You may define family as you choose, but be specific about your definition.

5. Please describe any direct or indirect influence of family on your experience as a leader in your career?

In this next group of questions I will be asking about your experience over time as a leader.

6. Explain (if any) the ways in which you feel you have evolved in your career.
7. Explain (if any) the ways in which you feel you have regressed in your career, describing what the experience was like.
8. Please describe any experience in which you feel (or have felt) you have remained stagnant in your career (i.e., you have not experienced any career growth or the level of growth has not met your expectations).
9. Please describe any changes you feel you have made in your attitude or approach to being a leader.

In this final group of questions, I will be asking about your experience as an alpha female.

10. What does alpha female mean to you, and in what ways do you feel you could fit into the definition?
11. Describe what it is like for you to grow up with such defining characteristics. What has your experience been like?
12. Please describe specific ways in which you feel your personality has past or presently contributed to your decision making? What has this experience been like for you?

13. What part do you feel your personality plays into your leadership, work decisions, other life experiences? What has this experience been like for you?
14. What specific incident(s) in your professional and personal life do you attribute to the development of your personality? What was that experience been like for you?
15. Please describe the ways in which your personality helps and/or hinders your work.
16. Please describe any experience you had in which you most felt your ethnic, racial, or minority identity directly contributed to your personality. What has this experience been like for you?
17. Is there anything else that you wanted to share that you feel could better elaborate upon your experience?

Appendix G

Information Sheet

***Please note that the information on this sheet will not be published and will only be seen by the researcher. Any information used will be used as collective data only and will not be shared. Per the guidelines outlined in the informed consent agreement, the data collected is confidential; the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in any reports of the study

_____   _____   _____   _____
Name   Age   Email address   Phone #

Race_____   Bio Mother's Race _____   Bio Father's Race _____

Current Occupation_____   Years in current position? _____

Do you consider yourself a leader? _____

Years in leadership _____

If you feel you need to elaborate upon any of the information provided above, please

elaborate below.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix H

Interviewing Protocol

Research Question: How is the experience of being a veteran alpha female leader influenced by minority identity, leadership experience and duration?

Research Sub 1: What is the experience of the veteran alpha female leader?

Related Interview and Probe Questions for Subquestion 1:

   A.   Please describe any work experiences you believe defined you as a leader.
>   1. Give additional details on what it was like to have those experiences.
>   2. What are specific examples about the way in which those experiences have defined you and your career choices?

   B.   How would you describe your leadership style and why has this approach worked best for you?
>   1. Please include examples of the ways this approach has benefited you.
>   2. Please include any other approaches used and why they were ineffective.

   C.   In what ways would you define yourself as an alpha female?
>   1. What does "alpha female" mean to you, and in what ways do you feel you fit the definition?
>   2. Elaborate upon your specific defining characteristics

   D.   Describe your experience as an alpha female (i.e., how has it been for you as a leader, a friend, a woman in your family growing up with these defining characteristics?)

Research Sub 2: How does the minority identity influence the alpha female leader and her leadership experience?

Related Interview and Probe Questions for Subquestion 2:

   A.   Please describe any experience you had in which you most felt your ethnic, racial, or minority identity directly or indirectly influenced your leadership decisions?
>   1. What has this experience been like for you?
>   2. Give additional details on what it was like to have this experience.

   B.   Please describe any experience you had in which you most felt your ethnic, racial, or minority identity directly contributed to your alpha personality?
>   1. What has this experience been like for you?
>   2. Give additional details on what it was like to have this experience.

Research Sub 3: How does leader duration influence the alpha female leader?

Related Interview and Probe Questions for Subquestion 3:

A. Explain (if any) the ways in which you feel you have evolved in your career.
    1. Please describe what your experience was like.
    2. Please describe the ways in your career growth was planned or unplanned.

B. Explain (if any) the ways in which you feel you have regressed in your career.
Please elaborate on what the experience was like.

C. Please describe any experience in which you feel (or have felt) you have remained stagnant in your career (i.e., you have not experienced any career growth or the level of growth has not met your expectations).
    1. Please describe what the experience was like.
    2. Why do you think your career may have stalled?

D. Please describe any changes you feel you have made in your attitude or approach to being a leader.
    1. In your opinion, what precipitated the changes?
    2. What was the outcome of those changes?
    3. Describe the duration of those changes (i.e., were the changes all at once or over time?)
    4. Provide specific examples of those changes.

Research Sub 4: How do work and life experiences influence the veteran alpha female leader?

Related Interview and Probe Questions for Subquestion 4:

A. Please describe any direct or indirect influence of family on your experience as a leader in your career?
    1. Please describe how those experiences have affected you as a leader.
    2. How has your family responded to your career choices?
    3. Please describe (if any) any influence from your family you contribute to your success as a leader.
    4. Please describe any influence (if any) from your family you contribute to your failure as a leader.

C. What are the ways you have found that the attitudes of others have directly or indirectly influenced the way you relate to people?
    1. How have those experiences affected you?
    2. Have these attitudes influenced any differences in how you relate to co-workers vs. your friends?
    3. In what ways (if any) have these attitudes influenced differences between how you relate to your family versus your friends or co-workers?

D. Please describe specific ways in which you feel your personality has past or presently contributed to your decision making? What has this experience been like for you?

E. What part do you feel your personality plays into your leadership, work decisions, other life experiences? What has this experience been like for you?

F. What specific incident(s) in your professional and personal life do you attribute to the development of your personality? What were those experiences like for you?

F. Please describe the ways in which your alpha personality helps and/or hinders your work.
    1. Describe any differences you believe would result in your life and work experiences if you had less of an alpha personality.
    2. Describe any benefits you feel you have experienced because of your alpha personality.

Appendix I

Member Checking Summary

In exploring the influence of the leader experience: Leadership was defined as primarily influenced by leadership modality which was described as task oriented or oriented toward social betterment. Overall leadership practices were focused on the importance of establishing and maintaining relationships with others. The shift in motivation (task or people) depended upon having a team to lead (direct reports) or not. Those who had direct reports were more oriented towards social betterment. Although the driving force varied, the focus of maintaining and building relationships was noted as instrumental.

Leadership experiences were also influenced by leader's perceptions. It was found that the leader perceived that others believed her to be overly assertive or particularly leader adept. It was experienced that others misperceived the leader's firmness direction and/or opinionated nature, as characteristic of being "bossy". The leaders experienced that people generally pursued her direction. The leaders described being instrumental in initiating their leader experiences and/or others instinctively entrusted her with pioneering leadership experiences. As a result the leader was essential in implementing new programs, pioneering in the field, or experienced being the first to start a particular procedure or new program. It was further found that within this experience that some described experiencing the dual experience of being perceived as both overly assertive and leader adept.

Leadership experiences were deemed responsible for influencing the leaders outside presentation to others. An internal need to display confidence courageousness or exhibit unrelenting leader perceptiveness was found amongst the leaders. Although within the experience the attributes of confidence, courageousness, and tenacious perspicacity varied, these feelings were described as instinctively experienced and increasingly developed over time as an obliged necessity. The need to display confidence seem to stem from *(1)* the desire to either separate people's beliefs from what was actually effective in leadership, or *(2)* developed from a desire to fit in. The need for courageousness in the willingness to face challenges or to lead in uncharted areas/ventures was mutually experienced amongst the leaders. The leaders revealed a need for courage which facilitated the ability to take leadership risks.

Time seemed to also greatly influence the leader's experience. The leaders described their experience of developing leadership strengths over the duration of serving in a leadership capacity. It was found that over time, leader development resulted in: internal satisfaction/leader resolve, maturation or self-confidence, the desire to establish/facilitate balance, and the cultivation of self-analysis. The experience of regret or growth served as a catalyst to obtain either more for the business, organization, or more personally. Time in the leader position seemed to increase leader satisfaction in leadership achievements or overall efforts to increase internal satisfaction. Time was found to influence internal confidence, and resulted in more freedom to take leadership risks. A continuous process

of learning, growing, and positively evolving in leadership proficiency provided an increased freedom and security in the leader role. Over time, the recognition for a developing need for balance between work and life responsibilities developed. It was also found that tragedy or a traumatic event facilitated a hastier need for balance. Time also cultivated self- reflection on the leader path and/or of those directly impacted (i.e., coworkers, direct reports, family, etc.) and increased a desire to further develop others or further develop oneself. It was revealed that the leader found value over time in self-reflection and the ability to alter ineffective processes or gain additional training, mentorship, or education.

In exploring the influence of the minority identity: Motivational influences were found that were either prompted by gender, racial, and/ or ethnic experiences. It was found that this influence served a as a catalyst for leader success. It was revealed that minority identity challenges either motivated the desire for social change, the awareness of workplace bias, and/or the drive for success. It was found that overall marginal representation influenced a particular sensitivity toward workplace bias which strengthened the desire to improve these conditions. This experience served as a catalyst towards the leader's initiative and leader commitment. Bring a minority pushed more than the desire to improve biased working conditions, but also led to participation in social initiatives that promoted the expansion of female equality. A common experience of needing to overcompensate in the leadership position was directly influenced by the minority status of gender, race, and/or culture. As a result of the minority identity, the need to work harder was further felt as a consequence of success. Because of the lack of ethnicity, racial, and/or gender representation a stronger motivational desire to demonstrate courageousness in the willingness to face challenges or to lead in uncharted areas and/ or ventures was revealed. It was also found that in particular, women of color reported more than one motivational influence (i.e., gender and ethnicity). Challenge and the thrill of getting beyond the challenge as a result of the minority identity status, seemed to be the most referenced motivating factor influencing the drive for accomplishment.

Leader perceptions directly related to the ethnic, racial, and/or minority experience were found to also influence leadership. Two particular perceptions that seemed prevalent to these experiences was the perception of ostracism and of inadequate recognition. It was emphasized that the minority status influenced the ability to receive deserved recognition which matched the leader's ability. Leadership recognition was experienced as limited due to gender bias or prejudiced beliefs about race or culture which were believed to have restricted the success that someone of majority identity (i.e. male leader) status would naturally receive. These perceptions existed early in the leader's career and remained, but decreased its impact toward the leader over time. Paradoxically, despite these restrictions in recognition, leader's success was achieved. It was experienced that these biased beliefs about the minority status contributed to the feelings of resentment, pressure, frustration, and/ or perseverance. Positive or negative association of these experiences also varied, but the perception of limited recognition was experienced mutually amongst the leaders.

In exploring the influence of duration: The importance of learning was found essential to the leader. An appreciation for the ability to learn to face challenges, learn from

experience, or learn from others was experienced. It was described that learning from experiences influenced leader effectiveness. The leader disclosed that gradually she learned to better adapt in leadership and as a result she was able to demonstrate from this knowledge what was most effective. Some found that learning information (i.e., continuous education, mentorships, learning various job functions) helped her leader effectiveness. The ability to learn from the obstacles of experienced challenges was also instrumental.

The majority of the leaders referenced feeling an internal satisfaction in being able to give to others. Giving was reference in relation of being able to mentor, mold, volunteer, and give more to their families or to those financially deficient. Some found that this desire to help others was always embedded whereas others progressively learned the importance of giving. The leaders attributed their overall leader satisfaction and effectiveness to their ability to give.

Finally, it found that essential to the experience was having external support from others. External support varied, meaning that support did not have to come from a two-parent home, nor did it have to come from parents or immediate family. Participants described support from spouses, siblings, children, aunts, and mentors in addition to parents from both one- and two-parent homes. The source of support was inconsequential to the leader's experience, but throughout the leadership reign continual encouragement was experienced as an influencing factor towards the leader's overall success.

Appendix J

Examples of Significant Statements, Formulated Meanings, and Emerging Themes

Category 1 of Key Statements: Influences of Leadership Experiences	
Examples of Significant Statements	*Formulated Meanings and Emerging Themes*
Terry: I see myself as a person who has leadership skills and who is a collaborator. I don't work from the top down, I work from collaboration mode. Yes. As a leader, I think I'm open. I'm a listener I take in the information, and then try to collaborate to come to an agreement. I think one gets further that way, instead of trying to dictate of only one way of doing things.	Leadership is collaborative (transformative). Cultivating relationships with employees vs. dictating to them is an important part of the leader's approach.
Golda: My philosophy is basically as a servant leader. I am there to provide resources for all the nurse practitioners and physician assistants to report up through me. My philosophy is basically as a servant leader. I am there to provide resources for all the nurse practitioners and physician assistants to report up through me.	Leadership is focused toward the other and meeting the needs of others.
Elizabeth: You have to sit there and communicate, and that's one word we have not talked about. I think it is extremely important to communicate with each other, and each one gives a little bit until it becomes right for you and right for me and I think that's really been my theory. My other theory that I was brought up with is to do unto others as you want others to do unto you and I try to remember that all the time.	Leadership is focused on building relationships with employees. Leads by example. Treating others fairly is important.
Suzie: Everybody is treated the same, both male and female. Now, I have to say this: because I'm in a male-dominated field of work, I do push my female employees a little bit more because I want to see them rise. I want to see them attain more and if they're satisfied in what they're doing, I'm not happy about it.	Leadership is focused on social betterment and improving gender bias. Focused is on serving and building relationships with female employees.

Category 2 of Key Statements: Influences of the Minority Identity

Examples of Significant Statements	*Formulated Meanings and Emerging Themes*
Paulette: I always join the women's business synergy team, and I travel throughout the company to go speak in certain events for women's business synergy team because I wanted women to hear and understand and get my advice really know how to move forward, what to do, what not to do, hear my story and then ask a lot of questions, and maybe I could help somebody who was struggling in their situation and give them the right advice to move forward or to advance.	The minority identity motivated the desire to help advance and/or impact other women. Her experiences motivated her desire to improve social outcomes.
Lisa: I think the view is in the Hawaiian culture if you have a gift, you have an obligation to share it with others in your community and the world and if you hide it, then you're not living up to your gift.	The minority identity motivated the desire to guide others. Character attributes described as a direct influence of her ethnic identity
Paulette: I think the other thing, being a woman and always wanting to see my children as I say my children at home and children at the office succeed, I think it did make me more of a teacher in many occasions. If someone came in to me with a proposal that really I just wanted to cry before him because it was so horrible, rather than just okay, the system, I would take the time.	Gender has influenced her leader approach and contributes to her patience and nurturing characteristics.
Jasmine: I try to be for others what they need. Sometimes I feel like a part of it might have something to do with being a female, maybe by nature having the desire to be able to empathize with everybody. A part of me tries to be for others what I feel they need or connect with others in a way that I feel they need a connection.	The minority identity influenced her compassion and empathy (described as a direct result of her gender). Gender has influenced her leader approach.

Category 3 of Key Statements: Influences of Duration

Examples of Significant Statements	*Formulated Meanings and Emerging Themes*
Suzie: I've had it all, you know? I don't want to be the greedy person, so helping other people, scholarship, whatever way I could help somebody else, I do that, and it brings me great satisfaction. I can sleep at night.	Reflective statement of internal satisfaction. Satisfaction developed from helping and doing for others.
Golda: There's plenty of work for anyone, and everyone's just so territorial, and to move, progress forward, I needed a higher leadership position to leverage that change, punch that wall.	Over time developed the need or desire to effect change. Obtaining higher leadership was viewed as a way to influence change and to be more effective as a leader.
Kelly:…And if you allow that to continue or if you choose to stay (in my opinion), you will remain stagnant in that career until you are reflective enough to remove yourself from what you feel is lack of leadership. And that means either leaving that opportunity and placing yourself in a way or area that is different or going out and finding your own level of growth in order to feel that your expectations are being met.	Development over time of internal resolve and self-reflection. Development of internal power/ influence. Career satisfaction more important than career complacency.
Jasmine: I knew I had more to offer as a manager, as a leader than just being passed for insurance purposes. That motivated me; you really need to move on and really become memorable leader, a memorable and spiritual leader that takes specific stride in advancements in your area of expertise so that you can then be seen by those who take you for granted.	Development of personal worth and determination. Self-analysis process influenced her resolve. Desire to be visible by those that failed to see her value.