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Perceptions and Challenges of Female Workplace Mediators and How They Overcome Them

Gaedria B. Goodwin
gag15b@acu.edu

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Dr. Joey Cope, Dean of the College
of Graduate and Professional Studies

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Dissertation Committee:

(signature)

_____

Dr. Matthew Basham, Chair

(signature) Colleen P.Ramos. Ph.D.

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Dr. Colleen Ramos

(signature)

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Dr. J. Scott Self

Abilene Christian University

School of Educational Leadership

Perceptions and Challenges of Female Workplace Mediators and How They Overcome Them

A dissertation in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Gaedria B. Goodwin

June 2020

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved grandmothers Helen P. Brown and Rosemary W. London. Thank you for instilling your values in me, stressing the importance of an education, and encouraging me to have a relationship with God. To my favorite son, Malcolm K. Goodwin. You became my inspiration from the day you were born. Thank you for loving me, supporting me, and making me proud that you call me mom.

Acknowledgments

To my twin, Michael Love, there are no words that can express my gratitude for the countless hours of love, togetherness, and devotion that you have demonstrated towards me over the years. You have stood with me, cried with me, and inspired me to press on day and night, no matter what you had going on in your personal life.

To my Abilene Christian University cohort and doctoral sisters whom have completed this journey before me, thank you for paving the way, and for your prayers and support. To Dr. Elisa Jolls, thank you for handing me the doctoral baton. Now that my portion of the race is complete, I will pass it on to Glenda Gill for the next lap!

Abstract

This holistic case study with embedded units was conducted to understand and describe the perceptions of female workplace mediators and if they encounter stereotypes, bias, and other challenges as mediators in the state of Texas. Ten female workplace mediators in Texas participated with in-depth, semistructured interviews and an open-ended survey response describing a unique experience they had while mediating workplace disputes. A cross-case synthesis analysis of the results was then conducted with journal notes, literature on gender inequality, mediation, alternative dispute resolution, and Goffman's theory of stigma. The results of this qualitative research can provide additional alternative dispute resolution techniques for female leaders and mediators as they provide workplace conflict management interventions.

Keywords: mediators, female workplace mediators, gender inequality, mediation, alternative dispute resolution, theory of stigma, workplace conflict

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Today, in the United States, workplace, organizational leaders' use of mediators to resolve complex workplace issues is becoming prevalent. Mediation is the process of allowing a neutral third-party to help resolve a conflict between parties (Caputo et al., 2019). The mediator facilitates discussions without deciding who is right or wrong or issuing a decision (Liebmann, 2000) and provides aid to leaders of organizations as they resolve workplace conflict (Saundry et al., 2018). There is a myriad of scenarios where mediators, especially alternative dispute mediators, are used. For example, mediators are employed for negotiating labor contracts, economic strikes, and labor arbitrations (Colvin, 2012). Other researchers echoed this by identifying the use of mediators for resolving employee relations matters (Grenig, 2016; Lipsky et al., 2016; Roche et al., 2019; Stipanowich & Lamare, 2014) as well as settling complex workplace disputes between diverse team members (Fowler et al., 2019; Francis, 2018; Omisore & Adiodun, 2014). Thus, there is a need to research the processes used in mediation, especially alternative dispute mediation methods.

Prior studies have shown that the relationship between gender and the mediator is an important area of investigation, but the research on performance issues and gender in mediation is mixed. For example, some research has shown women to have higher ethical standards than men (Kennedy et al., 2017), but other research has also shown women, in general, were thought to be more deceptive when advocating for others (Kouchaki & Kray, 2018). Mazei et al. (2015) found that when negotiating in similar circumstances, women received worse performance rating results than men. Conversely, in a meta-analysis of 185 studies, and 23,016 participants from 30 countries, there was no significant connection between gender differences and the negotiator's performance (Shan et al., 2019). Although this study covered a vast number of participants,

Bollen et al. (2016) and Bollen and Euwema (2013) stated there is not a great deal of prior research on workplace mediation despite being an effective way to resolve workplace disputes.

Although some authors focused on gender ethics and performance, Coleman and Carmichael (2018) and Devinatz (2018) advised the perceptions, challenges, and processes of the mediator are also important factors to examine. Overall, although prior research has included males and females, Almas (2018) pointed out that women potentially perceive the presence of gender bias and stereotypes while addressing workplace conflict disputes. Therefore, Del Gobbo (2018) concluded the likelihood of reaching an agreement improves when women understand how gender influences workplace mediation. For this reason, additional research is needed on the perceptions, challenges, and processes of female mediators while implementing workplace conflict.

The most recent research on female mediators shows the challenge faced by their experiences as they work to reach an agreement. Almas (2018) described how female alternative dispute professionals suggested the presence of gender bias and stereotypes while addressing workplace conflict disputes is also troublesome for them. The presence of gender inequality in the workplace forced female mediators to move beyond traditional methods to resolve workplace conflict (Del Gobbo, 2018). Additionally, Almas (2018) informed women, more than men, demonstrated strategies related to coaching, framing communication positively, and self-reflection. Consequently, the focus of this research is to describe the experiences of female mediators when implementing workplace conflict interventions (Almas, 2018). Furthermore, Almas recommended conducting a future study with only female conflict resolution professionals to understand their experiences further while implementing workplace conflict techniques. This research may build upon the suggestions for future research in the most recent

studies of Almas (2018) and Del Gobbo (2018) to help understand the perceptions, stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, of female mediators in Texas and how they overcome them.

Workplace Mediation

The use of workplace mediation is not new. Workplace mediation in the United States dates back as early as the late 1800s when several states created statutes for mediation and a follow up public report (Barrett, 2016). The Federal Erdman Act of 1898 followed, and this law authorized mediation as an option for railroad disputes. In 1913, President Taft signed into law the Department of Labor as the first permanent governmental mediation agency. Equally important, signs of workplace mediation were associated with union labor-management disputes until the early 1950s. In general, most of the cases focused on resolving "collective bargaining disputes in railroads" (Barrett, 2016, p. 551).

Additionally, a bibliometric analysis of conflict management studies from 2007-2017 showed a decline in unions and collective bargaining contributed to the rise of mediation internationally, including the United States (Caputo et al., 2019; Dix et al., 2009). As a result, mediation grew as a form of resolving workplace disputes without litigation (Caputo et al., 2019). Although the landscape of the workplace changed, the information yielded by such studies shows that the United States also embraced the use of mediation. Thus, this development has aided in the growth of workplace mediation as an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) method within the United States.

There is a necessary mediation process used to resolve workplace disputes. Bollen et al. (2016) informed that the workplace mediation process aims to resolve organizational "regulations, roles, and relations" disputes (p. 4). Bollen et al. asserted that organizational

workplace mediation is focused on using mediation conflict management along with the conflict philosophy within society and the organization to align with a third-party mediator. All parties usually meet at the beginning before separating to allow the mediator to flow between all parties while carrying messages between them (Liebmann, 2000). The mediator then employs styles, strategies, and tactics to drive toward an outcome (Bollen et al., 2016). Once an agreement has been reached, the disputing parties meet again to sign the final agreement (Liebmann, 2000). These are the basic components of the workplace mediation process. However, even when the same basic process is followed, the specific techniques of workplace mediators may vary based on individual conflict circumstances.

Female Mediators

While the research on gender differences in mediation has been mixed, some of the research has tended to show women cannot simply follow the traditional approaches to mediation; they must modify their conflict resolution techniques to overcome various barriers arising from culture and gender stereotypes (Del Gobbo, 2018). For example, female mediators, unlike males, are not expected to behave competitively (Craver, 2013). As a result, women negotiators have tended to be viewed as behaving emotionally, caringly, and passive (Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Kennedy et al., 2017; Kray & Thompson, 2004; Spence et al., 1975; Williams & Best, 1990). In addition, in a study of female third-party dispute facilitators, which investigated their dispute resolution behavior, women felt pressured to operate through traditional gender stereotypes to facilitate acceptable outcomes for all parties (Benharda et al., 2013; Craver, 2013). Therefore, researchers have said female mediators may benefit from having ADR methods in their toolbox to help them collaborate within today's complicated workplace (Del Gobbo, 2018;

Kray & Kennedy, 2017; Lu et al., 2018) and overcome perceived stereotypes of their gender by males.

Statement of the Problem

This qualitative holistic case study was designed to explore, understand better, and describe what perceptions, stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, are faced by female workplace mediators and how they overcome them. Almas (2018) explored the strategies and practices of female and male ADR professionals to identify the challenges they faced, and their approaches used while implementing workplace conflict strategies. Almas pinpointed the three significant challenges faced are "lack of stakeholder engagement, resistance, and opposition, and resource constraints" (p. 109). As a matter of fact, 60% of the participants commented on the leader's detached behavior, 33.3% on the cynical and doubtful behavior by participants, and 33.3% on the limited time and money for implementation (Almas, 2018).

Additionally, female mediators are challenged to facilitate acceptable outcomes and adjust their techniques based on how the organization viewed women (Benharda et al., 2013). Thus, female mediators face the dilemma of deciding what is the best approach to overcome the challenges encountered in the workplace while implementing conflict resolution techniques. Therefore, further research is needed on the experiences and issues faced by female workplace mediators.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this holistic case study was to understand and describe the perceptions of female workplace mediators and if they encounter stereotypes, bias, and other challenges as mediators in the state of Texas. At this stage in the research, challenges (situations presented by conflict-related issues within the workplace) was generally defined as stereotypes, bias, gender

bias, and how female workplace mediators overcome those challenges, if they exist. In this study, I used a holistic case study with a variety of female workplace mediators from throughout Texas, serving as individual embedded units. The female workplace mediators' experiences were examined through the lens of Goffman's (1963) theory on stigma and the contextual models of gender inequality and workplace mediation.

Research Questions

The research, particularly of Almas (2018) and Del Gobbo (2018) called for a need to study further challenges faced by female mediators and how they overcome them. With this study, I explored what challenges and barriers may be experienced by female workplace mediators (Almas, 2018; Del Gobbo, 2018). The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: How do female workplace mediators in Texas describe stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, that are experienced while mediating?

RQ2: How do female workplace mediators in Texas overcome stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, that are experienced while mediating?

RQ3: What processes do female workplace mediators in Texas employ to overcome stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, that are experienced while mediating?

These questions were selected to explore the circumstances, the conditions further, and the processes of female workplace mediators based on the potential of experiences with workplace stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, and how they overcome them. The research results could enable women to have more ADR methods as they seek to mediate workplace disputes (Almas, 2018; Del Gobbo, 2018; Kray & Kennedy, 2017; Lu et al., 2018).

Definitions of Key Terms

  Alternative dispute resolution (ADR). Any means of resolving civil disputes between two parties without resorting to litigation, for example, lawsuits (Legal Information Institute, n.d.). ADR methods include mediation, arbitration, negotiation, conciliation, early neutral evaluation, and summary jury trial. The most common ADR method is mediation.

  Arbitration. A form of ADR which permits conflicting groups to solve their dispute outside the legal courtroom (American Bar Association, 2015).

  Arbitrator. An individual who is chosen to settle a dispute, hear the facts of the disagreement between the two parties, and make a final decision (American Bar Association, 2015).

  Bias. The consequence of an individual inaccurately applying a similar decision process that was effectively used in the past to a different context to decide the future (Bazerman & Moore, 2012; Stanovich & West, 2008).

  Conflict. In the context of this study, conflict is defined as a mental struggle between two or more opposing needs, goals, or demands which arise at the same time (Conflict, n.d.).

  Conflict management. The process of managing workplace conflict by altering the severity and form of workplace conflict to maximize its benefits and minimize its negative consequences. The process can include collaboration, accommodation, competition, compromise, avoidance, or by securing an objective outside party in an attempt to de-escalate the workplace conflict (Wienclaw, 2018).

  Gender Bias. The favor of one gender over the other. In the workplace, it is usually demonstrated against women in the form of purposely, deliberately, and excluding, hindering, abusing, damaging, or discriminating against women in some way (Batara et al., 2018).

Mediation. An informal and confidential way for people to resolve disagreements with the help of a trained mediator (Liebmann, 2000). The purpose of mediation is to minimize the harm coming from conflict and to prevent the areas of dispute from interfering with the process of seeking a compromise or mutually agreed upon outcome.

Mediation processes. Steps taken by a mediator to assist conflicting parties in reaching a mutually acceptable agreement (Abdi & Mason, 2019). These steps include multiple and interconnect points of a procedure design, which allows the opposing parties to contribute while working toward an agreement.

Mediator. A neutral third party who facilitates discussions and does not decide who is right or wrong or issue a decision (Liebmann, 2000).

Parties. Individuals or groups which have a common interest and who take part in the mediation process (Beer & Packard, 2012).

Stereotypes. A judgment about a person or group leading to a belief that all persons or members of the group have the same, usually negative, characteristics (Doherty & Guyler, 2008; Zhang et al., 2018).

Stigma. The manifestation of marking, labeling, estrangement, prominence loss, and judgment in the framework in which authority is employed (Livingston & Boyd, 2010).

Stigmatization. The categorization of a specific collection of people or individuals as altered from the social norm (Corrigan et al., 2009; Papagiannaki & Shinebourne, 2016).

Unconscious bias. A hidden bias people are oblivious of and happen outside of their power (Surawicz, 2016).

Workplace mediation. A process facilitated by a third party which includes constructive communication to meet a mutual agreement about the interpersonal conflict between employees,

teams, organizational units, or divisions when tensions arise, at any level, as a part of organizational life (Bollen et al., 2016).

Researcher's Lens

This research study was designed to examine what challenges, if any, may be experienced by female workplace mediators. This research topic was especially interesting to me as a female human resource professional because I have been exposed to stereotypes, biases, and other challenges as a workplace mediator. I often must adjust my approach to influence male leaders successfully. The processes I have used when faced with these challenges have been developed through my trials, errors, and prior training. This research could contribute additional research to the fields of organizational leadership and workplace conflict management. Additionally, this study could help female workplace mediators, and leaders develop additional conflict resolution and negotiation techniques when addressing workplace disputes (Almas, 2018; Del Gobbo, 2018; Kray & Kennedy, 2017; Lu et al., 2018). This topic was especially interesting to me because the results may have a direct impact on how I approach my work as a female human resource professional.

Organization of the Study

The remainder of this study includes four added chapters. The scholarly peer-reviewed literature presented in Chapter 2 is a review of gender inequality, mediation, ADR, and Goffman's (1963) theory of stigma. The literature presented supports the justification of this study. Chapter 3 is a review of the holistic case study with embedded units of the research methodology used in the study. In Chapter 4, I present the analysis of the data in the study. I conclude this dissertation with Chapter 5, an overview of the study and the discussion of the results, implications of the study, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This holistic case study with embedded units research was designed to capture the circumstances and conditions surrounding the perceptions, challenges, and processes of female workplace mediators when the perceptions, stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, are faced (Almas, 2018; Del Gobbo, 2018). Literature pertaining to women in the workplace has generally focused on showing that gender inequality exists. Also, research on workplace mediation is minimal. This research study is different because I focused on what lessons are provided when perceptions, stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, are faced by female workplace mediations and how they overcome them.

Although women are underrepresented in leadership roles, it was important to focus on female workplace leaders and mediators. Women are underrepresented in leadership roles, as women represented only 27.8% of newly appointed board directors within Fortune 500 firms in 2017 (Heidrick & Struggles CEO & Board Practice, 2017; Thams et al., 2018). As a lower status group in the workplace, women may develop different techniques to overcome their stigmatized workplace identity (Dozier, 2017). Moreover, it is important to understand whether the methods used by women to manage barriers can lead to ADR methods, which can aid women in negotiating formally and informally throughout their careers (Seligman et al., 2018).

Research Methods

A variety of search methods were used to gather current and relevant sources for this literature review. Google Scholar was used as a search engine because it provided advanced searching by year of publication, type of source, keywords, and author. The keywords and phrases searched included workplace gender inequality, women in the workplace, mediators, gender workplace stigma, female leaders, leading global organizations, ADR, women mediators,

and organizational conflict. From these, sources were further narrowed to those from journals published from 2012 to the present. Additional materials from prior years were included because they contained a comprehensive look into the history, procedures, and practices which remained appropriate for use in this study. If the source were accessible to the public, a link would be provided. Clicking on the link would typically first display the abstract for the source. The full source was accessed if the abstract contained information, further suggesting it was relevant to this dissertation topic.

In addition to Google Scholar, the OneSearch search engine through the Abilene Christian University Library was used for similar advanced searching. If a journal frequently appeared throughout the results listed in OneSearch, the locator in the Abilene Christian University Library was accessed to do an independent, narrowed search of journals. When a full journal article was not available but had an appealing abstract, an interlibrary loan request was made to obtain the article. Additionally, the topic of conflict resolution and mediation is talked about a great deal in law and legal circles. Law journals also provided a good source of information and were included. Finally, articles read for the literature review were mined for other potential sources. Any citation containing relevant information for this dissertation taken from a source published in or after 2012 in a recognized peer-reviewed journal or book was searched for in either Google Scholar or OneSearch. Some of the specific articles came from publications such as Academy of Management Journal; American Psychological Association; The International Journal of Human Resources Management; Journal of Alternative Dispute Resolution; The Leadership Quarterly; Human Resources Management Journal; Journal of Evolutionary Studies in Business; Journal of Business Diversity; Dispute Resolution Journal; Industrial Relations Journal; Organizational Behavior; and Human Decision Processes.

Gender Inequality

  Despite the promise of improvement, workplace gender inequality continues to negatively impact the entry of women into leadership roles (Ganiyu et al., 2018). Although women make up 44.7% of the population of S&P Fortune 500 companies, they still only represent 4.8% of CEOs and 21.2% of board members (Catalyst, 2020). The underlying prejudices women face have hindered their ability to obtain senior leadership roles (Ganiyu et al., 2018). Conscious and unconscious biases, desire to pursue a leadership role, minimal mentors or role models, lack of workplace policies to support work-life balance, the inability to balance work and life demands, selecting to not focus on career advancement, and the lack of networks, opportunities, and resources (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017). In the end, gender inequality continues to plague female leaders.

  Gender inequality exists in all types of workplaces and industries. Howe-Walsh and Turnbull (2016) demonstrated how women who work in university science and technology departments are still encountering gender inequality at every stage of their careers. Wagner (2018) documented gender equality trends within universities in the United States by focusing on female employees and concluded that women still lag males in tenure, salary, and obtaining leadership roles. Merrill and Nash (2017) confirmed that, although more than half of law school alumni are women, women are only 36% of American attorneys.

  Likewise, because gender inequality exists within universities, female grant applicants are less successful than males, despite having higher application scores (Morgan et al., 2018). For example, Kurniawan et al. (2018) also concluded that female engineers in Indonesia experienced gender inequality around pay and treatment. Another study of professional vector control leaders—employed to reduce or eliminate vector-borne diseases—identified gender

inequality existed in their profession (Devine et al., 2019). Another study by Hayden et al. (2018) showed that women primarily failed to receive equal job opportunities because women lacked knowledge of job openings. Even in the world of neurosurgery, gender inequality exists. Shaikh et al. (2019) outlined how women are underrepresented in executive leadership committee positions in Asia, Europe, and North America. Despite these regions being densely populated with neurosurgeons, women are still marginalized in comparison to the rest of the world. Women also experience underrepresentation in law firms. Although the first woman graduated from law school in the United States in 1869, women are still underrepresented in law firms (Merrill & Nash, 2017). This is important because, although women make up more than half of law school alumni, their existence in the legal arena is low, with women representing 36% of American attorneys (Merrill & Nash, 2017). Therefore, regardless of the efforts made in the past, it is still very discouraging to understand workplace gender inequality still exists.

There is also evidence of unconscious gender bias in the workplace (Surawicz, 2016). In a study of the perceptions and treatments of qualified female students conducted by Moss-Racusin et al. (2012), unconscious gender-biased attitudes caused faculty to favor male students when both applied for a laboratory manager position at a university. In this study, leaders selected male candidates when equally qualified resumes—one with a female name and another with a male name—were presented for consideration for the laboratory manager role (Moss-Racusin et al., 2012). Likewise, a qualitative study of 15 female leaders in the Philippines working for international organizations illustrated how women felt companies preferred them to work in human resources, data management, or community leadership roles (Batara et al., 2018). Although unconscious bias will always exist, leaders within organizations can lessen their effects

by individually acknowledging them and receiving diversity and inclusion training (Surawicz, 2016). Women are also impacted by unconscious bias in the workplace.

The experiences of women in the workplace can be impacted by gender inequality. In explaining gender inequality in the workplace between women and men, most of the literature details how women continue to face barriers despite the passing of legislation aimed at driving equality (Batara et al., 2018). Some challenges currently faced by women include unequal pay (Qazi et al., 2018), underrepresentation in leadership and board roles (Hyun et al., 2016), and the unwillingness of individuals to break from socialization norms (Deggans, 2018; Lewis, 2018). Women who were at the forefront of seeking gender equality in the workplace after the passing of Title VII of the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964 expressed, there is still reason to be concerned about the lenses of gender inequality used by individuals to justify gender discrimination, despite the ups and downs of the past years (Foster, 2015). This research will further the body of knowledge on workplace gender inequality and elaborate on the role the potential perception of gender unequally plays in the experiences of female mediators while developing approaches and coaching methods to workplace conflict management interventions.

Unequal Pay

Women are not on the same playing field as men when negotiating salary in the workplace. For example, in a study of Pakistan women working in the telecom sector, even when there was a gender wage gap, women did not often negotiate for a higher salary (Qazi et al., 2018). Furthermore, Kurniawan et al. (2018) discovered that women performing the same domestic jobs as men are paid less. The assumption is that women are not the primary breadwinner for the family.

Additionally, women in Indonesia earned 34% less than men who performed the same job while working in banking and financial services, legal, oil and gas, and the entertainment industries (Kurniawan et al., 2018). Likewise, the states of California, Illinois, New York, and Massachusetts have implemented pay equity legislation to combat the continued pay gap issue where men earn up to 20% more than women in the United States (Causevic, 2017). Similarly, when companies use prior salary history to make employment salary offers, previous gender pay inequality is continued because female candidates previously earned less than males (Watkins, 2018). As a result, women struggle to negotiate the same salary as males.

Furthermore, in the modern-day workplace, women face barriers as they seek to obtain equal pay as men. For example, Bishu and Alkadry (2017) conducted a systematic review of 98 prior articles of literature that investigated the gender pay gap within private, public, and nonprofit workplaces in the United States and across European countries. Four significant themes and drivers of the gender pay gap were identified: (a) despite steady deterioration the gender pay gap is recurrent in all types of workplaces, (b) lack of women in workplace authoritative roles, (c) gender-based subjective appraisals and hiring and promotion practices, and (d) the shortage of women in leadership roles (Bishu & Alkadry, 2017). In contrast, in a study of full-time employed postgraduate students in Turkey, female participants reported higher pay satisfaction over males despite concerns about the gender pay gap (Ataay, 2018). Consequently, women who are in leadership roles have been more inclined to aid other women negotiating for higher compensation, having noted woman will often fail to negotiate (Artz et al., 2018; Cohen & Broschak, 2013; Quintana-Garcia & Elvira, 2017). In the end, to understand the different variables which contribute to gender inequality, it is important to note, women often must wrestle with negotiating higher salaries.

Underrepresentation of Female Management

Organizations continue to lack senior female leaders and board members despite prior studies showing their presence enhances corporate social responsibility levels (Cook & Glass, 2018). For example, Cohen and Broschak (2013) conducted a study of the number of leadership roles created in advertising agencies in New York City over a 13-year period. These researchers found, despite advertising agencies having historically been female-friendly work environments where creating new jobs are fertile, the gender of the persons holding the higher-level hiring authority directly affected the gender of the persons being hired (Cohen & Broschak, 2013). Also, in a meta-analysis of 20 studies of 3,097 companies, there was no significant connection between female board members and the financial performance of the company (Pletzer et al., 2015). Baker (2016) provided a chronologized personal narrative of experiences of a female international business lawyer to show how, despite juggling career and professional obligations, women are often overlooked for partnership roles in law firms. Therefore, despite the underrepresentation of women in these roles, company leaders should focus on obtaining more female board members by fostering more gender diversity (Pletzer et al., 2015).

Gender Social Norms

Women often grapple with traditional social views in male-dominated workplaces. Women suffer from intimidation in male-dominated work environments, which causes them to become discouraged and consider quitting the organization (Howe-Walsh & Turnbull, 2016). Men often make unfavorable decisions about women based on their social identity and gender stereotypes (Ganiyu et al., 2018). Dixon et al. (2019) explained, because of societal influences, women often believe their primary role is to care for and rear their children, which leads to them

doing most of the housework and family duties associated with childcare, despite working outside the home.

Strategies to Address Gender Inequality

To minimize or eliminate workplace gender inequality, researchers have recommended a wide range of strategies should be implemented to include fostering change in individuals, organizational policies, and society (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017). For example, Wagner (2018) argued for universities to implement gender equality task forces to track, monitor, and focus on creating and advancing best practices in employment for female faculty. Additionally, women should be encouraged to accept the challenging roles, responsibilities, and assignments presented to them, so they can receive additional experience and exposure to prepare them for leadership roles (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017). During a summary of a leadership development program designed to develop female leaders for a nonprofit music camp for girls, leaders outlined how they used social learning strategies to help the women focus on leadership qualities, identify themselves as leaders, and develop strategies to enhance their leadership abilities (Kelinsky & Anderson, 2016).

Additionally, creating zero-tolerance policies against workplace sexual harassment has been identified as a way to eliminate the barriers restricting women in organizational leadership roles (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017). Another study of professionals employed in vector control roles explained, although training on gender discrimination has been helpful, female leaders can benefit from having gender-specific protective equipment and job protection during pregnancy (Hayden et al., 2018). Also, over half of the participants in a study of female medical students interested in neurosurgery believed they could benefit from having a mentorship by either gender (Dixon et al., 2019). Surawicz (2016) outlined a three-prong approach to include offering

encouragement and alerts of opportunities, providing more leadership opportunities, mentoring, requiring diversity, and including radiology and radiation oncology leaders. Conversely, some argue, since women are nearly 50% of the workforce, leaders of organizations should focus more on racial, ethnicity, age, and disability equality when considering employment relations issues (Rubery & Hebson, 2018). These strategies can be used to develop specific intercessions targeted at addressing workplace gender inequality.

Modifications of Female Leaders Because of Gender Inequality

Women's experiences with workplace gender inequality are dynamic and lead to them making modifications. For instance, many women seek mentors willing to help guide their careers (Wagner, 2018). Additionally, women in current leadership positions are often the driving force for recruiting plans and equal salary changes, which encourage more female leaders (Brieger et al., 2019). Almas (2018) concluded strategies related to coaching, framing communication in positive ways, and self-reflection were used more by women than men. Schneider (2017) informed women negotiators' framed requests addressing workplace disparities by advocating to improve the shared vision of the organization for all women. Female leaders make modifications to address the roadblock of workplace gender inequality.

Mediation

Mediation is an informal and confidential way for people to resolve disagreements with the help of a trained mediator. The purpose of mediation is to minimize the harm from a conflict and to prevent the areas of dispute from interfering with the process of seeking a compromise or mutually agreed on the outcome (Liebmann, 2000). Surma (2018) defined mediation as a very effective way of allowing conflicting parties to work together to resolve their conflict. Mediation has also been defined as "a process for resolving disputes where an intermediary help conflicting

parties have a conversation to resolve their concerns jointly" (Beer & Packard, 2012, p. 3). The aim of mediation is often to establish mutual trust between the parties as they move toward signing an agreement and avoiding litigation (Cheng, 2015).

Additionally, there are several principles internationally accepted by parties who have elected to engage in mediation (Surma, 2018). First, participation in mediation is voluntarily. This means participants have participated of their own free will as they have worked on obtaining a mutual agreement. Second, the information obtained and presented in the mediation process has remained confidential. Finally, all disputing parties have been required to conduct themselves as equals, despite their positions outside of the mediation process (Surma, 2018). These principles are an important part of the mediation process.

The use of mediation in the workplace began to take form as a way of negotiating workplace conflict. In the mid-1900s, mediation in the United States primarily focused on labor-management mediation (Barrett, 2016). The majority of the cases focused on resolving railroad industry disputes. With the creation of the Department of Labor by President Taft in 1913, mediation cases began to grow (Barrett, 2016). Before the use of workplace mediation, U.S. courts were flooded with workplace litigation (Cooper et al., 2000). Additionally, with the increasing cost of civil litigation, more disputing parties started to explore the use of mediation (Liebmann, 2000).

The use of mediation in the workplace has grown over the past few years. Workplace mediation can be defined as the process used to settle employee conflicts involving disagreements about business activities, equality, and interpersonal conflict (Bollen & Euwema, 2013). The majority of the research on workplace mediation has focused on why mediation should be used, but failed to demonstrate the effectiveness of workplace mediation (Bollen &

Euwema, 2013). The literature reviewed explained the short-term outcomes of workplace

mediation included disputing parties being satisfied with the process, outcome, and mediator

(Bollen & Euwema, 2013).

Workplace mediation can have both short term (within a month) and long-term

impressions on the workplace (Kalter et al., 2018). Gilin Oore et al. (2015) synthesized several

research articles on how mediation has been used to reduce the stress and strain from short-term

workplace conflict. For example, they complied with research by Bollen and Euwema (2013)

and Dolan (2014) to demonstrate when mediation was used, the participants were more satisfied

with the results and experienced less stress and strain (Gilin Oore et al., 2015). This shows

workplace mediation is a current and useful technique. Moreover, during a study of the

effectiveness of long-term mediation, 41 participants in hierarchical labor conflicts in the

Netherlands shared through a survey how mediation is an effective tool in the workplace (Kalter

et al., 2018). There was also a 14-year study of self-reports, hospital records, and administrators'

behavioral observations to break down the workplace conflict between hospital employees in the

southwestern United States (Boss et al., 2018). Boss et al.'s results demonstrated the long-term

benefits of third-party facilitation (such as mediation) to resolve workplace conflict. For

example, by using a third-party mediator, the disputing parties were able to work together more

effectively and perform better at work. The observers of the workplace conflict were also able to

experience the benefits of mediation because they also worked more effectively together (Boss et

al., 2018).

It is valuable for business leaders to understand and consider using mediation to respond

to workplace challenges. A study of 36 practicing mediators at 22 universities in North England

illustrated how human resources professionals who acted as mediators were not viewed as

impractical (T. Bennett, 2014). Additionally, Latreille et al. (2012) evaluated the experiences of organizations that used workplace mediation to resolve employee disputes in the United Kingdom. The researchers explored the use of workplace mediation and the attitudes of 500 managers of small- and medium-sized enterprises about workplace mediation. The results showed, when managers had experience using workplace mediation, they had better attitudes about the process (Latreille et al., 2012). Organizational leaders should remain open to the possibility of mediation to resolve workplace conflicts.

Conversely, some have found, instead of using a third-party mediator, more informal techniques should be used to resolve workplace conflict. Diener and Khan (2016) highlighted the challenges the mediation process has experienced because of social justice, individual, and structural flaws. Specifically, during the mediation process, equality and vulnerability can be sidelined when mediation fails to resolve the root cause of the conflict despite reaching a mutual agreement. The privatization of mediation agreements is also a flaw because confidential agreements may allow parties to escape punishment for law violations (Diener & Khan, 2016). Also, because mediation is privatized, Zhang et al. (2018) explained, the informal approach of peacemaking in the workplace can be preferred to resolve peer disputes. More specifically, this conflict management technique is preferred over using a third-party mediator because it uses coworkers who were often more approachable and offers intervention techniques in a more harmonious way (Zhang et al., 2018). Leaders have also been encouraged to create a fair and supportive work environment designed to deter negative behavior by increasing employee engagement (Coetzee & van Dyk, 2018). Furthermore, Turk (2017) used a meta-analysis of 23 studies to demonstrate how peer mediation can be an effective conflict resolution method.

Formal mediation can also be supported by informal processes such as using others to explain the mediation process or terminology used or writing an informal report (Abdi & Mason, 2019).

Benefits of Mediation

Mediation offers several advantages. For example, García-Raga et al. (2017) found many students believed the mediation process was valuable for several reasons: it assisted in conflict resolution, it helped them understand others in society, and they can use mediation techniques to resolve future conflicts. Additionally, during mediation, subjects are not cross-examined, which can minimize the emotional stress associated with facing adversarial parties (Cooper et al., 2000). Often, after the resolution of a workplace dispute, the parties must continue to work together. The mediation process was also created to minimize the risk of employment relationships becoming permanently damaged so that the resolution parties can continue their professional working relationship (Cooper et al., 2000).

Moreover, during a study of 160 graduate students majoring in psychology, it was illustrated, when mediation was used to dispute intergroup conflict where the parties were able to view the situation from the other's perspective, hostility was significantly decreased (Boca et al., 2018). McKenzie (2015) also found mediation was beneficial in the workplace because it encouraged the parties to talk directly to each other with the use of a mediator. Mediation has also yielded greater satisfaction and been a beneficial tool to resolve workplace conflict.

Reduced Costs. The expenses associated with paying lawyers and lost workplace production supports the use of mediation. When leaders of organizations seek out opportunities to use mediation, they can circumvent pricey settlements and costly litigation (Bultena et al., 2018). Take, for example, the 2014 case of Converse (owned by Nike); the company sued 31 other companies to stop selling imitation shoes (Molineux, 2018). For the two years the case

took to litigate, Converse lost a significant amount of sales from retailers (Walmart, Sketchers, and Highline United) and experienced significant litigation fees, only to end up with a partially favorable ruling (Molineux, 2018).

Additionally, during a study in the United Kingdom, small organizations (less than 10 employees) had managers who believed workplace mediation is a costly way to resolve employee disputes (Latreille et al., 2012). However, during the same study, managers with experience using workplace mediation suggested the benefits outweighed any barrier associated with cost. When mediation is not used, the cost of resolving confit can become amplified.

Inclusiveness. The ability for everyone within the workplace to freely take part in the mediation process has encouraged leaders to use this process. Employees appreciate the inclusiveness of the mediation process. Researchers interviewed 25 individuals who had participated in workplace mediation in the United Kingdom about their experiences (Saundry et al., 2018). Participants revealed when they were in mediation; there may exist a balance of power absent outside the mediation room. The disputants themselves had a positive view of the mediation process, which encouraged them to take part and enabled them to transition past their differences and return to work (Saundry et al., 2018).

Additionally, Chang and Cheng (2018) outlined how humans enjoy the mediation process because individuals take responsibility for their words and actions and demonstrate problem-solving skills. Mediation is also designed to support a confidential environment where the victim can reveal information privately to avoid the impact on their marriages, family, or future employment opportunities (Cooper et al., 2000). Thus, mediation would only be appropriate if the disputing parties enter the process willingly (Liebmann, 2000).

Reduced Time to Resolve Workplace Conflict. The use of mediation early in the resolution process of workplace construction disputes has helped to keep costs down and has demonstrated the desire for early settlement (S. C. Bennett, 2018). Additionally, in cases of workplace sexual harassment, victims can receive quick justice and resume employment without embarrassment and with minimal diversion from ordinary business (Cooper et al., 2000). Mediation is also designed to allow the mediator to develop a trustful relationship between parties to quickly resolve conflicts (Cheng, 2015).

Styles of Mediation

There are many different modes of mediation. Compulsory mediation, for instance, takes place when each party and their attorneys are positioned in separate rooms, and both have an opportunity to provide confidential information to the mediator in the hopes of winning a dispute (Bultena et al., 2018). There are three significant types of mediation: evaluative, facilitative, and transformative (Bingham, 2004; McKenzie, 2015; Nabatchi et al., 2010). The evaluative mediation style is intended to allow a mediator to provide their view to evaluate the legal and applicable merits of a claim to provide the parties information on the strengths and weaknesses of their case (McKenzie, 2015). Facilitative mediation takes place when a facilitator leads the involved parties through problem-solving techniques in hopes of reaching a settlement (McKenzie, 2015). Mediators who facilitate mediation are also neutral and impartial as they often must set aside their views on a topic to ensure ethical concerns and values are maintained (Chang & Cheng, 2018). S. C. Bennett (2018) defined this process as one in which negotiation takes place with the help of a mediator who does not provide an opinion. Transformative mediation is the type of mediation party's use to work with each other to communicate their frustrations, objectives, and options to better understand the other party's position so they can

resolve their conflict (McKenzie, 2015). A mediator should be prepared to use any of these typestyles.

Strategies and Techniques of Mediation

Almost 100 techniques and strategies were identified for mediators to use during a review of empirical, conceptual, and theoretical scholarly literature about mediation from 2000 to 2012 (Wall & Dunne, 2012). These techniques often overlapped, and Wall and Dunne suggested these strategies should be compiled into six major categories: pressing, neutral, rational, analytic, clarification, and multifunctional. When pressing, the mediator gently nudges a disputing parting to reduce their aspirations and limits. The neutral strategy allows the mediator to set an agenda and gather and transfer information to seek clarification while noting the opinions and feelings of the parties. The relational strategy focuses on improved communication between the disputing, while clarification seeks to identify the root cause for the dispute (Wall & Dunne, 2012).

Moreover, a mediator who uses a combination of strategies is using a multifunctional technique (Wall & Dunne, 2012). Additionally, strategic planning, engaging with stakeholders, and building a consensus were also identified as techniques used by mediators (Almas, 2018). These are all techniques used by mediators within the mediation process.

Mediators

Mediators create an environment to facilitate the development of a solution to a problem (Cheng, 2015). McKenzie (2015) confirmed a mediator needs to understand how to navigate interpersonal situations frequently involving personal emotions. It is also essential for a mediator to remain ethical in how they address potential inequalities and discrimination issues between parties (McKenzie, 2015). Mediators must also be able to create an environment of trust by

maintaining a high level of confidentiality (Cheng, 2015). The mediator must be a neutral party who meets the predefined requirements of a mediator (Surma, 2018).

Additionally, it is vital for a mediator to remain impartial toward all disputing parties by not allowing their personal views and biases to intervene in the mediation process (Surma, 2018). When a mediator is unable to remain neutral, it is important they reveal any direct or indirect connections with the disputing parties (Diener & Khan, 2016). To avoid the perception of bias or partiality, a mediator must also be mindful of the amount of time they spend with each disputing party (Diener & Khan, 2016).

Female Mediators

Women can take on many different peacemaking roles in the workplace, including trainers, coordinators, organizers, and mediators (Abdi & Mason, 2019). Additionally, women are also more interested than men in conflict avoidance techniques to enhance mutual relationships at work (Dobrijević, 2014). Women have also been found to be more inclined than men to work toward reaching a mutually beneficial agreement when working through negotiations (Petkeviciute & Streimikiene, 2017). Female negotiators will change their approaches based on what they have experienced in the workplace and society (Craver, 2013; Schneider, 2017). Thus, women have the skills to be workplace mediators.

Style of Female Mediators. Women focus more on building relationships while negotiating workplace conflict disputes (Dobrijević, 2014). Specifically, a literature review analyzed theoretical and empirical information on gender negotiation, followed by a survey of 200 workers in Belgrade and Serbia, Dobrijević showed women were more sensitive to the age and gender of the parties involved in the conflict. Women usually demonstrate having more empathy than men while negotiating by doing a better job of showing how they understand

where a person is coming from, even when they do not agree with their point of view (Schneider, 2017).

Female Mediators and Gender Inequality. Female mediators have experienced gender discrimination. For example, Petkeviciute and Streimikiene (2017) distributed questionnaires to 85 Lithuanian business employees, although the women usually yielded mutually beneficial results, almost 73% expressed concerns that parties held them in less regard than their male partners. Furthermore, the researchers reported women negotiated less critical, national, one-time agreements while men obtained international and robust cases (Petkeviciute & Streimikiene, 2017). During a study on the gender of third-party managers, workplace disputes resolved by women were perceived as having to be more governed by the stereotypes of their social roles with or without authority within the workplace (Benharda et al., 2013).

Alternative Dispute Resolution

ADR comprises several techniques to resolve disputes without going to court. Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code (2009) defined an ADR system as an informal forum in which mediation, conciliation, or arbitration is used to resolve disputes among individuals, entities, and units of government, including those having an ongoing relationship such as relatives, neighbors, landlords and tenants, employees and employers, and merchants and consumers.

Stipanowich and Lamare (2014) compared a 1997 survey of Fortune 1000 companies' corporate lawyers to a second survey conducted in 2011 in the United States of America to show approximately 83% use alternative dispute methods to resolve complex workplace disputes. Mediation is the most common form of ADR because it is a less adversarial process (McKenzie, 2015). Likewise, as more individuals seek to use the principled negotiation model, more ADR methods will be needed (Fisher et al., 2011).

Goffman's Theory of Stigma

The theoretical framework used for this study included Goffman's (1963) theory of stigma. This theory, developed in 1963, has been used to study sociology, psychology, criminology, and health sciences (Bos et al., 2013). The term stigma was derived from the practice of *stigma* in ancient Greece where unusual signs would be branded into the body of slaves, criminals, and/or traitors so these individuals could be publicly exposed and shunned (Goffman, 1963). Goffman (1963) found individuals within a society can absorb stereotypes and expectations formed within groups. Later, the meaning of stigma evolved to include having physical differences not accepted by society in a social setting (Bos et al., 2013). There are four significant stigma elements: first, it is a social perspective; second, individuals manage stigma by developing strategies to cope with being socially stigmatized; third, this use of stigma is historically purposeful; and finally, stigma is used to socially control others (Goffman, 1963; Tyler & Slater, 2018).

It is helpful when leaders understand stigma. The functional representation of stigma can also show up in several different forms within the workplace: by oppressing a group, by including a group, or by excluding a group (Bos et al., 2013). Additionally, because stigma is associated with social settings, leaders can find themselves downplaying, playing into, or blending into a social stigma (Lynch & Rodell, 2018). One example is a qualitative study of women's interaction experiences while working in a male-dominated environment (Wright, 2016). The women interviewed in Wright's (2016) study revealed a pattern of having to overcome the challenge of not having other women within the workplace to engage with, which encouraged them to desire to fit into the male-dominated workplace. Indeed, as more women enter the workplace, leaders should be conscious of understanding how stigma impacts women.

It is also helpful to know the different types of stigma and how they can interconnect. Goffman (1963) explained society could take on many broad social stigmas with a common theme. For example, women interviewed for a study on how they managed gender stigma in the workplace explained; they are stigmatized by their appearance and clothing choices (Dozier, 2017). The four major types of stigma are "public stigma, self-stigma, stigma by association, and structural stigma" (Bos et al., 2013). Thus, multiple types of stigma can occur in the workplace.

Public Stigma

Public stigma takes place when the larger general population potentially socially devalues the attributes of and acts against a smaller group of stigmatized individuals (Bos et al., 2013; Brown et al., 2018). For example, because of their perceived public stigma, individuals in a society are burdened with the stress of self-disclosure (Brown et al., 2018). Furthermore, formal and informal social male networks have been reluctant to help others—not like their group—to advance in their careers (Howe-Walsh & Turnbull, 2016). Therefore, public stigma can harm the workplace.

Several studies provide information on how women are impacted by public stigma. For example, during a study of female mentally-ill college students, the authors described how the women struggled to willingly disclose their mental illness because they understood the social risk of publicly doing so, which promoted more perceived stress (Brown et al., 2018). High public stigma can also be tied to congruent and incongruent personal perceived stigma. For instance, the results of a study on the levels of depression caused by stigma in rural women showed, younger more educated participants had higher levels of public stigma (Simmons et al., 2015). Additionally, a study of college students in the United States revealed, because of the public stigma associated with certain male-dominated professions, female students experienced

more gender harassment, which discouraged them from going into these professions (Dresden et al., 2018).

Self-Stigma

This type of stigma is internalized by an individual and restricts them because they believe the negative discrimination presented to them (Oexle et al., 2018). Individuals can struggle with self-identity. An important factor associated with this type of stigma is an individual's willingness to work hard to avoid displaying their stigma, even though it does not disappear, to fit in with the larger population (Goffman, 1963). This was displayed in a 2-year longitudinal study of individuals with mental illness, Oexle et al. (2018) showed people with higher levels of self-stigma experienced greater barriers. These barriers also slowed their recovery over the evaluated period (Oexle et al., 2018). Additionally, Newheiser et al. (2017) examined, via two studies, how concealing one's stigmatized identity to blend into the workplace can affect one's self-perception. The findings of this study showed when an individual is not completely honest about their identity; it can harm the workplace, job satisfaction, and the success of the organization.

Women are also impacted by self-stigma. For instance, women are not sure how to address workplace gender stigma because some individuals think no further actions are needed to address workplace gender inequality because of current women empowerment messages—#metoo (Deggans, 2018) and Lean In (Kim et al., 2018). Furthermore, women often lack the self-confidence to dispute thoughts of workplace inequality (Howe-Walsh & Turnbull, 2016). In sum, women must constantly understand and work on improving their self-stigma.

Stigma by Association

The third type of stigma focuses on how those linked with the stigmatized population will have the same effects as the stigmatized group (Bos et al., 2013). Workers who experienced unfair treatment such as humiliation and discrimination are often afraid to speak up because they do not want to place themselves, or others associated with them, at risk of being deported or developing chronic stress brought on by economic constraints (Kurniawan et al., 2018).

This was demonstrated in a study of masculine women who rejected professional roles because they did not want to be associated with the stigma of the other women within the professional environment (Dozier, 2017). Additionally, women who worked in male-dominated environments are discouraged from developmental relationships with other women for fear they will be stigmatized as not willing to fit into the male environment (Wright, 2016).

Structural Stigma

This type of stigma is demonstrated by institutional conditions brought on by society to constrain the lives of the stigmatized (Bos et al., 2013). Structural stigma is demonstrated as laws, institutional policies and procedures, conditions, and community actions to constrain or deny some, or fail to protect others, from enjoying the same rights (Hatzenbuehler, 2016; Pachankis & Bränström, 2018). Structural stigma can change depending on where you live. For example, there are some laws in certain parts of the world designed to restrict or constrain the rights of women in the workplace, while other parts of the world offer a great deal more freedom (Hatzenbuehler, 2016; Pachankis & Bränström, 2018). Therefore, structural stigma happens in social environments (Bos et al., 2013).

When structural stigma is present, it closes the door for leaders of organizations to create teams to embrace diversity and inclusion. Therefore, to prepare future leaders to work in diverse

and inclusive global organizations, The American Library Association created a list of structural reference materials, scholarly journals, organizations, and websites for emerging leaders to familiarize themselves with as they work to understand the modern-day impact of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 on the workplace (Grissom, 2018). Additionally, with the implementation of the Equal Pay Act of 1963 in the United States, it became illegal to make pay decisions based on gender (Watkins, 2018). In addition to this, in the United States, companies interested in working with the federal government as a contractor are required to work with Affirmative Action laws to ensure they have planned to embrace women in the workplace (Ng & Sears, 2017; Salancik, 1979). Furthermore, administrative leaders throughout the United States had addressed gender inequality when they implemented workplace diversity policies.

Leaders have supported these policies and created workplace environments and strategies to embrace women. For example, Scarborough et al. (2019) analyzed data from 1,862 individuals familiar with or affected by workplace policies designed to reduce gender inequality to show their beliefs about these workplace policies. This study revealed the respondents of the survey widely supported workplace policies aimed at reducing gender inequality. These policies included targeted recruitment, mandatory training, formal hiring policies, and diversity goals (Scarborough et al., 2019). In addition to implementing policies to combat structural stigma, organizations have created policies to produce an inclusive environment for female workers. Surawicz (2016) recommended leaders of companies and organizations allow for a flexible work schedule to help women manage their work-life integration. Several organizations have also enforced an anonymous job application process as a strategy to address gender inequality. Foley and Williamson (2018) conducted semistructured interviews with 30 hiring managers in Australia to understand how leaders rationally perceived and considered the anonymous job

application process. Although the results were mixed about how effective managers perceived this type of strategy, when implemented, the organization signals to all applicants, they are sincere about addressing gender inequality (Foley & Williamson, 2018).

Wheeler (2017) published an article in the Saint Louis University Public Law Review advising, although the Equal Pay Act of 1963, the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 were all adopted to address discrimination against women in the workplace, more laws and policies are needed to address the limits female workers face in the workplace. For example, President Obama amended the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by signing the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which was written to reverse the prior ruling requiring wage discrimination cases be presented within 300 days of the decision (Bible, 2007; Wheeler, 2017). Fodor and Glass (2018) analyzed data from 2008 and 2012 from Bulgaria, The Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia to explore how economic growth and state welfare policies contributed to the gender gap in Central and Eastern Europe. The researchers were able to demonstrate female workers experienced positive employment rates when regional social policies provided early access to childcare (Fodor & Glass, 2018). Consequently, along with the gender appropriateness of jobs and prior employment history, social policies impacting the amount of paternal leave given and access to public nurseries and kindergarten programs should be evaluated (Fodor & Glass, 2018). Therefore, policies are still needed to reduce how structural stigma has impacted women all over the world. Additionally, leaders of organizations who create workplace policies can create environments and strategies to embrace women.

Summary

The role of a mediator is not an easy one. Coleman and Carmichael (2018) advised that mediators should spend just as much time preparing before the mediation, as they spend within mediation. The "pre-mediation process should include being prepared substantively, emotionally, attitudinally, and cooperatively" (Coleman & Carmichael, 2018, p. 1) to help shift the parties' attitudes from being ready to fight to be prepared to cooperate. The literature shows women experience inequality and stigma issues throughout their careers. Therefore, it is important to explore further what perceptions, challenges, and processes may be experienced by female mediators when the potential of dealing with stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, while implementing workplace conflict interventions (Almas, 2018; Del Gobbo, 2018). This research may enable women to use more ADR methods as they mediate workplace disputes.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this holistic case study was to understand and describe the perceptions of female workplace mediators and if they encounter stereotypes, bias, and other challenges as mediators in the state of Texas. In alignment with Almas (2018), Del Gobbo (2018), Kray and Kennedy (2017), and Lu et al. (2018), the results from this study were designed to help female workplace mediators and leaders have additional conflict resolution and negotiation techniques when addressing workplace disputes. Benharda et al. (2013) stated women are often conscious of how they may experience gender bias and stigma when resolving organizational disputes. Almas (2018) pointed out that female ADR professionals experienced gender bias, more than males, during their conflict management work. Therefore, it is important to understand the experiences of women who resolve conflict in the workplace. This chapter includes information on the research method, a holistic case study with an embedded unit approach, population, the sample of participants, materials, a case study with integrated unit analysis procedure, limitations, delimitations, followed by a summary.

A qualitative case study design was appropriate for this study for several reasons. First, a case study was right for contextually exploring experiences of female mediators within the state of Texas. Second, Creswell (2014) informed, qualitative research is used to understand the significance individuals or groups credit to a problem. A qualitative design is used to understand the *what* in researching (Patton, 2015) and is appropriate for this study. Third, qualitative research methods are used to gain more details to help provide a deeper understanding of the contextual phenomenon (Terrell, 2016). Therefore, for all these reasons, the qualitative method was appropriate for this study.

Research Questions

The following research questions govern the present study:

RQ1: How do female workplace mediators in Texas describe stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, that are experienced while mediating?

RQ2: How do female workplace mediators in Texas overcome stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, that are experienced while mediating?

RQ3: What processes do female workplace mediators in Texas employ to overcome stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, that are experienced while mediating?

Research Method

The problem explored in this qualitative holistic case study with embedded units was to understand better and describe the circumstances and conditions surrounding how perceptions, stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, are faced by female workplace mediators and how they overcome them (Almas, 2018; Del Gobbo, 2018). In alignment with the recommendations for future studies by Almas (2018), Del Gobbo (2018), Kray and Kennedy (2017), and Lu et al. (2018), the results from this study help female workplace mediators and leaders with techniques when addressing workplace disputes. I used the holistic case study with embedded unit method. This method is designed to explore and understand the context of events through multiple methods of data collection and analysis (Scholz & Tietje, 2002).

Although prior quantitative and qualitative research has been used to establish the case study, the research questions, methodology methods, data collection, and analysis were strictly qualitative. Multiparadigm interplay was used for this holistic case study with embedded units. The different research paradigms of positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, and constructivism were considered. However, positivism did not fit with this research because it

focuses on a traditional objective scientific worldview (Creswell, 2014). Additionally, post-positivism was dismissed because this paradigm seeks to identify the reasons that influence the outcome of an experiment (Creswell, 2014).

On the other hand, critical theory and constructivism paradigms align with this case study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated a critical theory paradigm is a value-based approach. This paradigm requires dialogue between the researcher and the subjects, which transforms into an informed consciousness with subjugated knowledge (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Moreover, constructivism emphasizes subjective interpretations between the facilitator and the participants by engaging in reconstructing prior thoughts about the phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) said although different, considerable overlaps exist between critical theory and constructivism. Therefore, the minor differences between the two lead to the possibility of accommodating several views within the single conceptual framework of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

There were several advantages to using the multiparadigm approach when researching management and organizations. First, Dooley (2002), Tumele (2015), Wiebe et al. (2010), and Yin (2018) recommended using multiple research paradigms because of the supple characteristics of using different types of data to analyze multiple units that are not connected. Second, Tumele (2015) recommended the flexible paradigm approach to allow me to adjust the research where needed and provide a comprehensible approach to the paradigm. Finally, I identified the common themes that reoccur in and between the units. The multiparadigm approach allowed me to reflect the many-sided nature of the different units, in alignment with Wiebe et al.'s (2010) recommendation to use this approach to avoid narrowing the case study to a single-research paradigm by making the research fit into one paradigm. This allowed me to

analyze all the data and use the best approach to develop descriptive similarities from different circumstances, conditions, and processes that have been used in the past by the participants.

Holistic Case Study with Embedded Units Approach

With this single-case study, I utilized the embedded units' research strategy (Scholz & Teitje, 2002). This approach aligned with this research because it allowed exploration of the vocational world of workplace mediation throughout Texas with embedded subunits of different workplaces (Yin, 2018). Thus, unlike a pure case study, the participants in the sample shared everyday experiences, had a common background and made a group, per se, but none of the participants knew one another. This is important because as Yin (2018) stated, the embedded units belong to, or are a part of, one case study. Yin (2013) further explained holistic case-study research focuses on providing lasting value by demonstrating information on decisions made by the research participants instead of verifying or confirming a theory or hypothesis.

Additionally, Scholz and Tietje (2002) said a holistic case study with embedded unit research is designed to explore multiple participants who have had the same experience to understand research situations but do not know each other. Furthermore, the holistic case study with the embedded unit approach was appropriate because it allowed me to describe the circumstances and conditions of how perceptions, stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, are faced by female workplace mediators and how they overcome them. Therefore, the holistic case study with embedded units approach aligned with the focus of my research.

Population

Several steps were taken to identify the specific population for this study. First, an initial investigation started by exploring the general population of workplace conflict resolution

professionals. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019) reported in the *Occupational Outlook Handbook,* arbitrators, mediators, and conciliators are individuals who negotiate between parties to resolve their conflict without going to court. A search for individuals working within these professions took place by reviewing the websites of the American Arbitration Association® (2020), Association for Conflict Resolution (2020), Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services (2020), and the National Academy of Arbitrators (2019).

Second, the general population in this study was female mediators throughout Texas who have used mediation while implementing workplace conflict interventions. This group was obtained from women registered as mediators with the Texas Mediator Credentialing Association (2020) and the Texas Association of Mediators (2020). Additional participants were sourced from women registered to attend the conference of the Texas Association of Mediators (2019), the Labor and Employment Relations Association (2019) Annual Meeting, the State Bar of Texas (2019) Annual Meeting, the American Bar Association (2019a) Advanced Mediation & Advocacy Skills Institute Annual Training, and the American Bar Association (2019b) Section of Dispute Resolution Spring Conference.

The state of Texas was selected because of the proximity to me. I live in a major metroplex in Texas. Additionally, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported the state of Texas employed approximately 450 arbitrators, mediators, and conciliators in May 2018 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2019). Texas employed the second largest population in the United States, which is second only to the state of California.

Finally, the sample population come from female mediators throughout the state of Texas who:

- have completed 40 hours of classroom training in ADR;

- have a minimum of three years of experience as a mediator in the private, public, or educational sectors; and

- have continuously worked as a mediator throughout Texas without any gaps over the past three years.

These inclusion criteria were used because the Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code (2009) requires workplace mediators to have a minimum of 40 hours of classroom training in ADR. Additionally, the Texas Association of Mediators (2019) requires members to have "experience in a field other than mediation of either two (2) years with a graduate degree or four (4) years with an undergraduate degree" and "one hundred (100) hours of documented mediation experience" (para. 2). Requiring a minimum of three years of experience without any recent gaps is designed to ensure the participants have recent experiences with workplace mediation.

Sample

The purposive sampling strategy was the best fit for participant recruitment. Purposive sampling can be an effective strategy when recruiting a select group of participants (Valerio et al., 2016). The purposive strategy first focused on finding participants who meet the criteria followed by a recruitment process of this group to take part in the research (Patton, 2015). Terrell (2016) recommended using purposive sampling to aid in finding a small detailed population. Valerio et al. (2016) advised that by using purposive sampling, I found female mediators within the state of Texas who were willing to participate and who met the selected specifications to be a part of the research study. This process allowed the experiences of the sample group to provide information on the larger group (Patton, 2015). Therefore, since I wanted to identify a specific group of participants, the purposive sampling strategy worked best for this research.

The initial participant list was obtained from female registered mediators within the state of Texas and women who attend 2019 conferences for mediators. Once approved by Abilene Christian University and the Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A), a recruitment letter was sent to possible participants (see Appendix B). If enough participants were not identified, the selection criteria would have enlarged by using one or two neighboring states such as Oklahoma or Louisiana. Oklahoma employed approximately 100 and Louisiana 130 arbitrators, mediators, and conciliators in May 2018 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). With the addition of one or both of these states, an appropriate sample amount of 10 would have been reached.

I planned to recruit 20 female workplace mediators initially for the study with a final goal for the sample size of 10. Seidman (2013) recommended a sample size of 10 to allow for enough participants to provide adequate information about their experiences, without allowing over saturation of the same information. Furthermore, snowballing sampling was also employed as a subset of purposeful sampling to ensure that 10 participants were obtained. Terrell (2016) recommended using the snowballing technique to allow referrals from potential participants until the sample size is obtained. For this study, I obtained a sample size of 10 to achieve saturation (Seidman, 2013).

Materials

As recommended by Carter et al. (2014), three forms of methods or data sources were used: a demographic data form, in-depth semistructured interviews with transcribed interview checks, and an open-ended survey. First, data were obtained through a demographic data form (see Appendix C). This form was emailed to the participants during the first interview and was designed to obtain historical information and establish the identity of the participants. Englander (2012) recommended the use of a demographic data form to collect information and establish if

the participant meets the inclusion criteria. Second, in-depth semistructured interviews were

conducted as the primary source of data for this research. I transcribed the interviews, which

enabled what Lincoln and Guba (1985) termed "prolonged engagement with the raw data" (p.

308). Bashan and Holsblat (2017) asserted that in-depth semistructured interviews are an

effective research tool to capture the experience of the participants. Third, participants were

given an open-ended survey to describe their most unique experience conducting workplace

mediation (see Appendix D). Yin (2018) described open-ended survey questions as an effective

way to capture the experiences of research participants.

The primary data came from one-on-one, in-depth, semistructured interviews with each

participant. First, with the interviews I sought to build upon and explore the participant's

experiences on a certain topic (Seidman, 2013). Second, I wanted to find the "transitory nature of

human experiences" (Seidman, 2013, p. 16). Finally, the interviews allowed the female

participants to share their experiences and how they described the perceptions, stereotypes, bias,

gender bias, and other challenges if any, and how they overcome them while implementing

workplace conflict interventions (Almas, 2018; Del Gobbo, 2018). The questions tied to prior

research were adjusted after testing. The interview questions were developed to obtain additional

information about the experiences of female mediators (see Appendix E).

The interviews were scheduled individually with each participant and lasted between 30

and 90 minutes. The interviews took place between February 1, 2020 and March 4, 2020, after

receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board. Terrell (2016) advised that the

interviews should be conducted in the same order with no changes in the way the questions are

asked. An online digital recorder, and the voice memo application on my cell phone were used to

record the interviews. This was in alignment with Creswell's (2014) recommendation that

interviews are recorded and transcribed as part of the interview protocol. This allowed me to capture accurate information as the participants provided descriptions about their lived experiences.

The three-interview series method was used. Once the female participants were identified as possible participants, the first interview was conducted as an intake interview and focused on the life history of the female participants (Seidman, 2013). First-round interviews were conducted via phone. This interview allowed the participants to share information about themselves and to obtain a description of the context (Seidman, 2013). Before this initial intake interview, participants were sent the informed consent form by email (see Appendix F). They were also emailed an open-ended survey where each participant was asked to provide a written description of the phenomenon (Yin, 2018). The participants were asked to complete the open-ended survey within two days to avoid any expense to the participant. This allowed the participants to dwell on this question so they could provide a richer description and have a shorter second interview (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The second interview was conducted via Zoom. These interviews were held at least 3 days apart in alignment with Seidman's (2013) recommendation to allow time between the interviews to review data. Additionally, by allowing a few days between interviews, I was able to clear my mind of any thoughts from the previous participant before approaching the next interview. The second interview focused on documenting the lived experiences of female participants concerning the topic and is the most important (Seidman, 2013). The third interview was used to allow the participants to review their transcribed responses and to have a first look at the meanings to validate accuracy (Seidman, 2013). The completed transcript was emailed in a locked portable document format (PDF) before this meeting to each participant. This allowed the

participant time to review the data before the interview. During the third interview, I made corrections and finalized their responses. Only one participant requested changes to their transcription. Although minor, the changes were made, and the transcription was then approved.

Case Study With Embedded Units Analysis Procedure

Various types of analysis approaches were reviewed. Yin (2018) recommended linking data to propositions, time series analysis, explanation building, pattern matching, logic modes, and cross-case synthesis as techniques for analysis of case studies. Data analysis of this holistic case study with embedded units research followed the cross-case synthesis analysis procedure. Yin (2018) recommended this analysis procedure when there are several units within one case study that do not know each other. This process, as suggested by Ridder (2017), provides a powerful analysis of the data across subunits.

The cross-case synthesis analysis procedure includes several steps. First, I read and reread the researched data in entirety to understand the holistic case. Second, a deeper understanding was developed from a review and synthesis of qualitative data (Scholz & Tietje, 2002). This provided a deeper understanding of the case study. Third, fieldwork took place via the use of interviews, documents, and data provided by the participants (Scholz & Tietje, 2002). Fourth, as Baxter and Jack (2008) said, a rich analysis of the data took place within and between the units. Yin (2018) stated this process is used to establish common descriptions of the phenomenon. Baxter and Jack (2008) explained by identifying common themes and categories between the units, and by returning to the global issue of the case study, a rich illumination of the study would take place. Finally, an explanation of the descriptions of the circumstances, conditions, and processes of how perceptions, stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other

challenges, if any, are faced by female workplace mediators and how they overcome them was provided.

The fieldwork for this research took place between February 2020 and March 2020 within the state of Texas. I kept an interview journal as a way of noting personal reflections, ideas, and nonverbal experiences of the participants (Ngozwana, 2018). I used interviews, data from prior qualitative and quantitative research covering workplace gender inequity, mediation, ADR, and the open-ended survey responses from each participant. Furthermore, data validity took place by using multiple sources of evidence and allowing the participants to review the descriptions as recommended by Yin (2018) to substantiate the data of the case study. Goffman's (1963) theory of stigma did not govern the collection of data. However, knowledge of this theory was used after the data were collected and analyzed to communicate the results. All these steps were appropriate ways to analysis data provided for a holistic case study with embedded units.

Methods for Establishing Trustworthiness

I focused on the four qualitative factors to establish trustworthiness. The actions of this study were aligned with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) recommendation of establishing trustworthiness in qualitative studies by focusing on credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility. To establish credibility, I conducted a preliminary pilot study with other students at Abilene Christian University to assess the interview protocol. I allowed the participants to review their responses as a form of member checking (Yin, 2018). Terrell (2016) recommended using this approach to demonstrate the believability of the research results to the participants. Additionally, I personally transcribed each interview, which provided prolonged

engagement with the research material, as recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The credibility of the study was addressed by using prolonged engagement and member checking.

Transferability. As recommended by Terrell (2016), transferability was achieved by providing a detail description of the research methodology. This took place by providing a thick description of the research results. For this research, a literature review with a copious amount of information supplied a detail description of the phenomenon. Furthermore, detailed descriptions of every aspect of the research and the results were provided. Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended providing a detailed description as a way of obtaining external validity and transferability.

Dependability. Dependability took place by ensuring that I followed the outline of a quality case study design. Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended using an inquiry audit by allowing a researcher that is not involved in the study to examine the process and products of the research. This was achieved by keeping a daily journal of the inquiry, critical incidents, and interview notes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Confirmability. As recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985), data triangulation was used to establish confirmability. Data triangulation took place through the review of the literature, the transcribed semistructured interviews, and the open-ended survey responses. Yin (2018) recommended using this process to show agreement and evidence of different viewpoints and to validate the data. Fusch et al. (2018) pointed out that data triangulation also provides aid in revealing unique findings, challenges or integrates theories, and gives a clearer understanding of the problem.

Ethical Considerations

For this study, I displayed a high standard of ethics. Since participation in this study was voluntary, the identity as a participant remained confidential during and after the study. As recommended by Seidman (2013), the name, affiliated organization or any personally identifiable information was not reported. Instead a pseudonym from a *generic organization* was used to protect the participant's confidentiality. Additionally, I demonstrated ethical consideration by protecting the confidentiality and privacy of all participants through the reporting of data in aggregate form (Terrell, 2016).

Moreover, participants were reminded they could leave the study at any time (Terrell, 2016). Likewise, since I explored the perceptions, stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, that are faced by female workplace mediators, if participants raised any concerns that were outside the scope of this research, they were encouraged to contact the local governing authority to document and investigate the situation. Moreover, to demonstrate complete ethics, I obtained the approval of the Institutional Review Board to ensure this study met their ethical standards before the research was conducted (Terrell, 2016). Collectively, these efforts validated the participants were informed and comfortable with the study.

Researcher's Lens

As a qualitative researcher, I studied the relation between lived experiences and the contextual phenomena, not the lived experiences of female mediators to be empirically generalized (Englander, 2019). As more leaders of organizations begin to use ADR methods to resolve workplace conflict, I feel my research will be beneficial in aiding women to navigate the gender stereotypes female mediators' face in the workplace (Del Gobbo, 2018). This required me to view myself in several ways.

First, as a workplace mediator, I have experienced situations throughout my career, where I changed my technique because of my potential perception of gender inequality and stigma. For example, I was the only woman in a boardroom of 23 leaders engaged in a spirited strategic business planning session. During this meeting, it was acceptable for everyone to raise their voices when they had conflicting views occasionally. However, because I potentially perceived gender inequality and stigma may have existed if a woman communicated in a raised tone to a room full of men, I chose to always communicate with a soft voice and tone, or not at all. Seidman (2013) stated that pressing too hard to draw out and obtain information for the participants should be avoided. Therefore, I allowed the participant time to reflect on their own experiences and remember not to take the ebbs and flows of the interviews personally (Seidman, 2013).

Second, as a female working in a male-dominated environment, I must remain open-minded as some female participants were representing predominantly female environments. Throughout my career, I have worked in many different industries. For a total of eight years of my 26-year human resources career, I have worked in male-dominated environments. Frequently, in these environments, I have been expected to handle the traditional gender-related items when attending team meetings. For instance, while at one organization, I was expected to arrive early for team meetings, which was a challenge for me in the first place, to make sure the room was set up.

On the other hand, my male co-workers did not have to share in this responsibility. When conducting my research, I kept an open mind, as a woman working in a female documented environment may not have experienced similar situations. Seidman (2013) recommended I keep an open mind by limiting the sharing of my own experiences to ensure that I am not distracting

the participants from sharing their own experiences. Therefore, as a researcher, I limited my talking and sharing of my personal experiences and remained open-minded to receive the participant's experiences (Seidman, 2013).

Third, I understand the experiences and workplace language of the participants. I have investigated many workplace situations, directly addressing gender diversity and inclusion. These investigations covered inconsistencies between men's and women's salaries, working conditions, performance reviews, and treatment by their workplace leaders. My prior exposure to investigating workplace conflict was helpful during the interview process to understand the language used by the participants as they described the circumstances, conditions, and processes they used in the past (Seidman, 2013).

Finally, I positioned myself as a self-contentious and engaged, but distinct from the participant's researcher. This was accomplished by keeping a researcher's self-reflective journal to record my experiences as a researcher, which allowed me to deal with my reactions and assumptions or biases that may arise. Lub (2015) recommended sharing my perspective as a researcher about the case, personal experiences, and training relevant to the subject to avoid presumptions about me as a researcher. I will share my initial beliefs and experiences as a female workplace mediator. However, by keeping a self-reflective journal, this data may be incorporated into the analyses or set aside if not needed. Untimely, although I understand the language of the participants, I will keep a self-reflective journal as an ongoing record of my experiences as a self-contentious researcher.

Limitations

This study had several limitations because I used a single case study with the embedded unit approach. The participants of this study may have a difficult time expressing their

experiences. The members of the embedded units had to focus on what experiences the participants remembered, or they were willing to share (Yin, 2018). Additionally, Scholz and Tietji (2002) stated business case studies with embedded units allow participants to share information from different organizations, which may contribute to unique working conditions and limit the experiences of the individuals. All of this could be potential weaknesses beyond my control.

There were also other limitations to this study. This research could lead to female mediators and leaders having techniques when addressing workplace disputes. Furthermore, my prior work experiences were limitations because many times I altered my approach to conflict management because I was working in a male-dominated environment where I perceived gender inequality and stigma existed. Another barrier was keeping the sample size to female workplace mediators within the state of Texas because this was the chosen geographic area of study. All of these were limitations to this research.

Delimitations

The features of this research study offer several delineations. First, the research problem concentrated on only women and does not include males. Specifically, the research problem of this study focused on the circumstances, conditions, and processes female mediators are more likely to experience, instead of males, based on their experiences with perceptions, stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, and how they overcome them. This research focused on women only. Second, the case study with the embedded unit approach was used to understand the perceptions of female workplace mediators and if they encounter stereotypes, bias, and other challenges as mediators in the state of Texas and how they overcome those challenges, if they exist. I did not apply theory; instead I was only interested in the experiences

of the participants. Finally, the participants reside in the south-central time zone of the United States. This region was selected because of the large number of reported arbitrators, mediators, and conciliators employed in this area: the state of Texas alone employed approximately 450 arbitrators, mediators, and conciliators in May 2018, the second-largest amount in the United States (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019).

Summary

The goal of this holistic case study with embedded units research was to understand the perceptions of female workplace mediators and if they encounter stereotypes, bias, and other challenges as mediators in the state of Texas and how they overcome those challenges, if they exist. This required me to have an open mind when collecting data from the participants. Interviews, open-ended survey data, and demographic data forms were used to collect data from female workplace mediators. This collected data were then reviewed without interpreting to establish meanings. The interviewees and I worked together to establish the themes. The results described the experiences of female mediators when the potential of dealing with workplace gender inequality and stigma exists while implementing workplace conflict interventions. Furthermore, as suggested by Almas (2018), Del Gobbo (2018), Kray and Kennedy (2017), and Lu et al. (2018), this study may reveal additional conflict resolution and negotiation techniques to help the female workplace mediators and leaders when addressing workplace disputes.

Chapter 4: Results

This holistic case study with embedded units research was designed to capture the circumstances, conditions, and processes of female workplace mediators based on the potential of experiences with workplace stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, and how they overcome them. Several steps were taken to establish data triangulation. First, a review of the literature on gender inequality, mediation, ADR, and Goffman's (1963) theory of stigma was conducted. Second, semistructured interviews were conducted and transcribed, followed by a thorough review of the results and my notes. Finally, data from one open-ended survey question were collected, and the results were reviewed. Afterwards, a cross-case synthesis analysis across subunits was conducted to establish common descriptions of the themes and categories between the units. This chapter was organized into six major sections. The first section demonstrates the data collection process. The second section provides the demographic data of the participants. The third section offers a rich illumination of the data from the open-ended survey responses and the three research questions asked during the in-depth, semistructured interviews. In this section, I discuss the cross-case synthesis analysis across subunits' findings. The fourth section reviews the results. The fifth section speaks to the evidence of trustworthiness. The final section summarizes the findings.

Data Collection

Various approaches were used to identify participants. Emails were sent to female mediators in the state of Texas that I connected with on LinkedIn (Johnson, 2019). Emails were also sent to individuals that I networked with while attending the Texas Association of Mediators Professional Development Conference in February 2020. I also inquired with professors of Southern Methodist University (2020) Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management Graduate

Studies program, and Abilene Christian University (2018) School of Professional Studies

program. Through these different recruiting methods, 13 individuals agreed to participate in the

study.

Steps were taken to qualify each potential participant. Individual consent forms with their

full name and date of consent were obtained. Demographic data forms were also collected. In

this form, each person created a pseudo name for use throughout the research to protect their

identity, confirmed they lived in Texas, and provided their sex and ethnicity. For further

demographic classification, each participant supplied their highest-level degree achieved,

confirmed completion of the 40 hours of alternative dispute mediation training, and completed a

self-assessment of their overall mediation skills. Potential participants were also asked to

confirm they had prior mediation experience implementing workplace conflict interventions. The

types of mediation previously facilitated, years of mediation experience, and years they mediated

workplace conflict was also provided.

The completed demographic data forms revealed that all individuals were female

mediators throughout the state of Texas who have completed 40 hours of classroom training in

ADR, have a minimum of three years of experience as a mediator in the private, public, or

educational sectors, and have continuously worked as a mediator throughout Texas without any

gaps over the past three years. The decision was made to eliminate a female mediator that did not

have experience implementing workplace conflict interventions within the workplace

environment, during this qualifying process. Furthermore, two individuals failed to commit to

scheduling their semistructured interviews, which disqualified them as participants. This

qualifying exercise yielded the 10 participants needed to complete this study.

Demographic Data of Participants

The selected participant's demographic data revealed specific information. Participants ranged in age from 30–69, with the majority of them between 50 and 59 years of age. One was between 30 and 39, none were between 40 and 49, six were between 50 and 59, and three were between the ages of 60 and 69. They most identified with three selected Black, five selected White, one Hispanic, and one Black and Hispanic, when asked to provide the ethnicity. All participants identified as females and provided a pseudo name to protect their identity. All of the participants had obtained a college degree, two received bachelor's degrees, five had master's degrees, and three had earned doctorate degrees. Table 1 shows demographic data for the participants.

Table 1

Demographic Data of Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Ethnicity	Gender	Highest Level of Education
Neisha Johnson	37	Black	Female	Bachelor's
Caroline Francis	59	White	Female	Master's
Katie Rogers	57	White	Female	Doctorate
Michelle Wallace	63	White	Female	Master's
Manuela Martinez	58	Hispanic	Female	Doctorate
Debra Davis	62	Black	Female	Master's
Karen Scott	57	Black	Female	Master's
Lisa Gray	58	White	Female	Bachelor's
Susan Smith	63	White	Female	Doctorate
Gail Greene	53	Black and Hispanic	Female	Master's

Note. Information from participants' demographic data forms.

Additionally, when asked to provide a self-assessment of their overall mediation skills, six rated themselves as *well above proficient,* and four selected *somewhat above proficient*. All participants had completed 40 hours of ADR training and had prior experience implementing workplace interventions. This information is listed in Table 2.

Table 2

Training, Self-Assessment, and Prior Workplace Conflict Intervention

Pseudonym	Completed 40 hours of Alternative Dispute Mediation Training	Self-Assessment of Mediation Skills	Prior Experience Implementing Workplace Conflict Interventions
Neisha Johnson	Yes	Well above proficient	Yes
Caroline Francis	Yes	Somewhat above proficient	Yes
Katie Rogers	Yes	Well above proficient	Yes
Michelle Wallace	Yes	Somewhat above proficient	Yes
Manuela Martinez	Yes	Well above proficient	Yes
Debra Davis	Yes	Well above proficient	Yes
Karen Scott	Yes	Well above proficient	Yes
Lisa Gray	Yes	Somewhat above proficient	Yes
Susan Smith	Yes	Somewhat above proficient	Yes
Gail Greene	Yes	Well above proficient	Yes

Note. Conflict resolution information obtained from participants' demographic data forms.

Cross-Case Synthesis Analysis

In addition to the demographic data form, each participant was asked to provide details about one unique workplace experience they had while implementing workplace conflict intervention and the techniques used to manage the situation. They were instructed to describe

what it was like to be in this situation and include specific details in a way to aid the reader in believing they were with them. Their responses, along with literature review and transcribed interviews, were synthesized to help develop a rich analysis of the data within and between the units (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Additionally, three interviews were conducted with each participant. During the interview, the participant's pseudonym was used to protect their identity. The initial interview was an intake interview. Prior to this interview the participants were emailed the informed consent form, demographic data form, and the open-ended survey where each participant was asked to provide a written description of the phenomenon. During this telephone interview, the requirements of the study were reviewed, participants were given an opportunity to ask questions, and an appointment was set for the one-on-one, in-depth, semistructured interview. The second interview was conducted via Zoom, was recorded, and took from 30 minutes to 45 minutes. I initially planned to allow three days between each interview in alignment with Seidman's (2013) recommendation to allow time to review data. These times were not always feasible, because I had to accommodate the schedule of the participants. The recorded interviews were then personally transcribed, which provided what Lincoln and Guba (1985) termed, "prolonged engagement with the raw data" (p. 308). I then sent a PDF of the transcribed interview to each participant for member checking as recommended by Yin (2018). The third meeting was an opportunity for the participant to advise if changes were needed for the transcription. The primary source of data for this research was the one-on-one, in-depth, semistructured second interview, which consisted of three research questions.

As recommended by Ridder (2017), after the transcription of the interviews was approved by the participants, the data were read and read to identify matching patterns and

generalizations. Several reoccurring themes then emerged with rich descriptions of the holistic case, enabling a better understanding of how female workplace mediators throughout the state of Texas described what perceptions, stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, are faced and how they overcome them.

The coding process used to convert the raw data into themes and patterns consisted of several cycles and simultaneous coding. Saldaña (2015) advised that simultaneous coding allows for two or more codes within a single datum that helps interrupt interconnected parts of a larger group. The first cycle consisted of listening to the recorded interviews multiple times, reading and rereading the transcribed interviews, and repeatedly reviewing field notes and the open-ended survey responses. During the second cycle, large sections of data were synthesized, as recommended by Scholz and Tietje (2002). Upon review of the cross-case synthesis data, several themes started to emerge between the units (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Scholz & Titje, 2002; Yin, 2018). Finally, the coding process concluded with themes that were cross analyzed with the literature review, until clear, concise themes emerged.

Results

The data were analyzed within and between the different cases in detail to demonstrate the below descriptions to the research questions. Table 3 portrays the themes that emerged across the datum to Research Question 1.

Research Question 1

All participants were asked how female workplace mediators in Texas describe stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, that are experienced while mediating.

Table 3

Frequently Occurring Themes to Research Question 1

Theme	No. of Participants This Theme	
	Did Not Occur	Occurred
Non-attorney stigmatization	2	8
Gender stereotypes	5	5
Gender inequality by male attorneys and clients	2	8

Note. Number of participants who described in semistructured interviews and opened-ended survey knowledge of, or personal experience in this area.

Non-Attorney Stigmatization. Eighty percent of the participants are mediators but are not attorneys (see Figure 1). Although only two of the participants are attorneys, 80% of them described non-attorney stigmatization toward non-attorney mediators.

Figure 1

Non-Attorney Participants

Non-attorney Participants
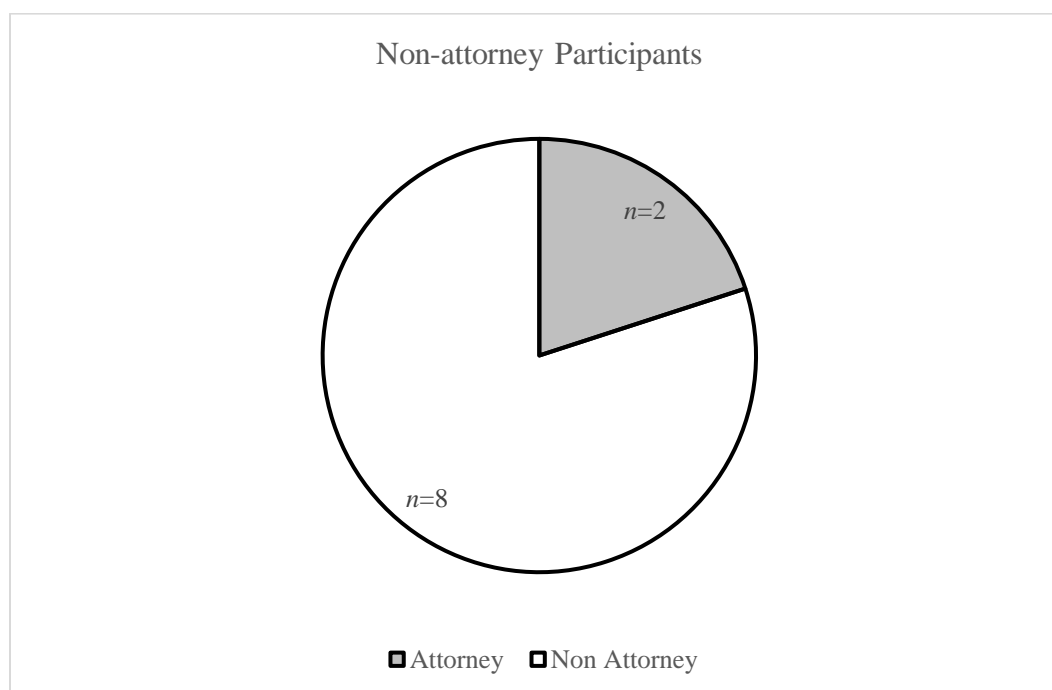
For example, Katie Rogers replied,

When I was in one county in Texas, there were a great deal of really good attorneys, and

they all saw the process as very, very important. Ironically, that is where I've also seen

the bias against non-attorney mediators in some instances.

Neisha Johnson also recalled during a mediation, "The attorney said, you are not an attorney, and

you don't know anything about FMLA. I don't think this is going to go anywhere." She also

advised that it was her perception that, "Some attorneys feel that if you are a non-attorney

mediator, you are not the most adequate person to conduct the mediation." This was further

corroborated by Lisa Gray when she responded,

I believe that when I was doing court-appointed mediations, I had attorneys reply to

replace me simply because I am not an attorney. So, the judge would replace me. Then,

they would appoint their attorney buddies to mediate the case. I believe they did this

because I am a non-attorney mediator.

Participant Gail Greene also advised that she experienced the non-attorney stigmatization

because she is not an attorney when she stated,

I think they posture toward me like this because I'm not an attorney, and I believe that it

is because I am a woman. I also believe that there is a certain arrogance that some

attorneys have because they have that JD behind their name. Let me add another piece to

it for you. It is also about the amount of the settlements these attorneys receive. A big

piece of it is because of that also, as they want to be able to advertise that they have been

able to get settlements for this or that amount. If you follow the money, you will also see

who has the bigger attitudes. A great deal of them take cases on contingency so they are

pushing for a bigger settlement so they can get a bigger check. I know this because when

we do the settlement agreement, the attorney will ask me to document that we need two

checks. They will instruct me to send X amount of dollars to the firm and pay X amount

to their client. There have been cases where the attorney has received a larger percentage

of the settlement than the client. This is another reason why the attorney is seeking such a

large settlement.

Moreover, Michelle Wallace stated, "At times, people who are attorney mediators can come

across as pushy in the mediation, and I don't like that." Likewise, Debra Davis also expressed

how non-attorney stigmatization occurred when she explained,

I've been doing this for a long time, and I trained a great deal of those attorneys that are

now mediators, so it doesn't intimidate or bother me. At first it did because I was not an

attorney, but once I came out with a law school degree, I saw that as long as you have the

knowledge, the subject matter expertise, and the ability to stay within the parameters of

the mediation format, there shouldn't be any intimidation for any reason.

Interestingly enough, Manuela Martinez, who is an attorney, commented on people behaving

differently when she is mediating because she is a judge when she stated,

Even though I tell them that I'm not here to make any judicial decisions, I think people

still perceive that my experience as a judge will still have an effect on them. Even the

lawyers for the clients tell me that it helps with mediation when the clients are aware that

I'm a former judge, or a current visiting judge. The lawyers have said their clients behave

better than they normally behave because I am an attorney.

At the same time, Susan Smith, who is an attorney said,

Currently, they emphasize mediation in law school. There are actually law school

mediation competition teams. These law school teams do mediations, and at the end there

are judges to decide the competition. Personally, I have never mediated with a non-attorney mediator. I think people bring a different perspective when they don't have the legal side. I think the mediators who aren't lawyers are probably just as successful as ones who are, but I think sometimes you need a lawyer in there to start talking to the lawyer when they need someone to talk to them like a lawyer. Otherwise, I think if you are in a really complex case, it could be a problem.

Gender Stereotypes. Five participants commented on how they perceived being labeled in a category with all women that either helped or hindered the mediation process. One of the five is an attorney-mediator. Susan Smith gave an example of her experience with a male attorney and female client when she shared,

> I can think of one situation where one male lawyer was concerned that I was beginning to persuade his female client to rethink the matter when I was talking to both of them. I think he felt compelled to intervene, but I don't think that was necessarily a gender thing. I think that was more of a lawyer having their own idea about how they wanted something to go, and he did not want me to intervene through a connection he thought I shared with his female client.

Another participant, Michelle Wallace, who is not an attorney, described the women she has encountered in the mediation process as manipulative when she replied,

> I do tend to find a great deal of times that women will try to manipulate me like I'm part of "the sisterhood." Therefore, I should support them regardless of what they want or what they might have done. They don't really express this, it is more of an interpretation or perception when they talk to you that you should understand where they are coming from, and you need to help them fight back against these men.

Neisha Johnson described her perception with gender stereotypes while mediating when she said,

> I feel that as a female mediator, some challenges occurred just because people are unsure
>
> of what to expect from me as a female. I feel that I have to be a little bit more as the
>
> young people say, "EXTRA" which translates to me feeling like I have to be a little better
>
> or do a little more.

Furthermore, Katie Rogers replied that during the mediation process, she experienced challenges

with female attorneys when she said, "Ironically, I have not experienced this by male attorneys,

but I have by female attorneys." Moreover, participant Karen Scott acknowledged that she

perceived female parties are glad to have a female mediator because they think that she would

better understand their point of view.

      Gender Inequality by Male Attorneys and Clients. In this research, eight of the

interviewed participants described their experience or knowledge of unprofessional verbal and

nonverbal discriminatory communication from males while mediating. Nisha Johnson informed

of one example,

> In my workplace, we conduct several telephonic mediations, which is mediation by
>
> phone. There was a time when I was in my private caucus with an attorney that was
>
> representing the company side. He said to me, all right little girl, what do you think is
>
> going to happen today?

Caroline Francis stated,

> Discrimination against women in mediation would show up as a comment, side
>
> comments, looks, tone of voice, any offensive remarks. I suppose, if you are in a private
>
> caucus with somebody, one-on-one, maybe it would be described as some kind of
>
> physical approach. For example, I did a mediation recently where the approach I was

taking was actually more facilitation. I was working with a business organization, and the approach I was taking initially was met with resistance. The participants were all males. When I started the facilitation mediation, they said, no, we're not going to do that. We're guys and that's not going to work for us.

Michelle Wallace said, "Men will sometimes try to push me. In other words, they may feel like this lady is going to knuckle under if I'm a little forceful with her, and I can get what I want." Manuela Martinez stated,

I belong to a women's group on Facebook, and they have complaints on there all the time about mediators being treated poorly because they are female. Some have reported that they are being called honey and being treated in a less than respectful manner. So, I know that it happens. I personally experienced this when I first became a lawyer. I was treated differently than my male counterparts. For instance, even though I was one of the most experienced criminal law attorneys in the area, a less experienced White male would tend to be hired in cases.

Lisa Gray replied,

There is one case where the party would not give me his name. So, I just went ahead and mediated, and I made a joke of it throughout the entire mediation. I did this by referring to him as "Mr. What's His Name." I don't know what his motive was; it could have been because I was a female. I don't know why he would not give me his name. He was being very difficult towards me. He was being an Archie Bunker type of person, which Archie Bunker did treat women differently.

Susan Smith described an experience with gender inequality while mediating when she noted,

As a mediator, I was a volunteer mediator, and this male counsel underestimated me. This counsel representing one of the parties was thinking that I was going to try to strong-arm him into doing something. At some point, he said, "well, we're not going to do that." Then, I said, "well, okay." Then he said, "well, I'm just going to go home." Then, I said, "well, you know, that is your right. However, at the beginning of all this, you said you wanted to settle it, but if you want to take your client and leave, I can't stop you. Now, if you want to try to settle it, you can let me try this other approach, then maybe we can get somewhere." It did look like he was being dramatic. It didn't look like they were really getting to a settlement. However, he looked like he was saying, I'm a big boy, and I'm going to take my ball and go home. Well, we actually got it settled because when I went in and he said he wanted to do something, then I came back and said, "if you do that, I would do this, so if you want it resolved, let us try this." He then said "okay," and we got it solved.

Furthermore, Debra Davis stated, "There have been times when an attorney came into a mediation and addressed me as if I'm the client. Then, I had to tell them, no, I am the mediator." Additionally, "Being a female mediator has afforded me a great opportunity to challenge the notion that a mediator has to be a male attorney." Gail Greene also said,

Oftentimes, by the time my services have been enlisted, the employee has hired an attorney. The attorney is usually a male. Some of these male attorneys feel because we are in the presence of an attorney, and that their client is present, they need to be very aggressive. They feel they need to posture up and kind of show off in the presence of their client.

Table 4 is the data triangulation of the themes for Research Question 1.

Table 4

Data Triangulation Per Major Theme for Research Question 1

Theme	Described in		Research's Notes	Literature
	Semistructured Interviews	Open-Ended Surveys		
Non-Attorney Stigmatization	Yes	Yes	Wow, I had no idea that this existed (journal notes).	The categorization of a specific collection of people or individuals as altered from the social norm (Corrigan et al., 2009; Papagiannaki & Shinebourne, 2016).
Gender stereotypes	Yes	Yes	Really stressed this point (journal notes).	Women must modify their conflict resolution techniques to overcome various barriers arising from culture and gender stereotypes (Del Gobbo, 2018).
Gender inequality by male attorneys and clients	Yes	Yes	Lisa Gray called the client, "Mr. What's His Name, when he did not want to give her his name (journal notes).	Women suffer from intimidation in male-dominated work environments, which causes them to become discouraged and consider quitting the organization (Howe-Walsh & Turnbull, 2016).

Note. Described in semistructured interview and/or opened-ended survey knowledge of, or personal experience in this area.

Research Question 2

The participants were also asked, how do female workplace mediators in Texas overcome stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, that are experienced while mediating? Table 5 portrays the themes that emerged across the data to Research Question 2.

Table 5

Frequently Occurring Themes to Research Question 2

Theme	No. of Participants This Theme	
	Did Not Occur	Occurred
Reduce self-stigma with positive self-talk	3	7
Remain neutral	3	7
Changing approach based on verbal and nonverbal communication	2	8

Note. Number of participants who described in semistructured interviews and opened-ended survey knowledge of, or personal experience in this area.

Reduce Self-Stigma With Positive Self-Talk. Seven of the participants described using positive self-talk to reduce self-stigma. Neisha Johnson described that she uses positive self-talk to prepare for some mediation when she stated, "I have to deal with some of the same attorneys on a regular basis. There are some attorneys that I know going into the mediation that I have to prepare myself mentally for the situation." Caroline Francis commented how she used positive self-talk when she said, "I just believed in myself." Additionally, another participant, Karen Scott responded,

> I have to give myself a pep talk in advance because as mediators it is so very important to maintain your emotions. You can be compassionate, but we have to be able to maintain our own emotions. You know, that affirmation self-talk that you give to yourself before going in becomes vitally important.

Debra Davis replied,

When I think about all the trials and tribulations African American people have had to go

through, I am catapulted to do more and be better. As well as, you just need to believe

that you can do the best job.

Gail Greene also said, "I remind myself and the parties that I have lived all over the world, so I

have experience with a great deal of different cultures. Therefore, nothing should surprise me."

Additionally, Michelle Wallace replied, "I remind myself to be very objective and not turn

myself loose." Likewise, Katie Rogers also informed how she spoke confidently to herself when

asked to step in for a mediator that did not arrive for a scheduled mediation.

Remain Neutral. Seventy percent of the participants described how they remained

neutral to overcome stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges that were experienced

while mediating. Debra Davis responded, "I do what I do because I love what I do. I love the fact

that I can hear both sides of an issue and help the parties use their own self determination to

resolve their conflict." Additionally, Neisha Johnson stated, **"**Remember to stay neutral and if

you're unable to stay neutral, then you need to remove yourself from the situation." She then

went on to describe in her survey.

I feel that being in any situation that involves a person's emotions you have to be able to

connect with the complaining party or the responding party. Please keep in mind that I

am specifically speaking about employment discrimination cases. You have to connect

with both parties on some level while remaining neutral. Once you have that connection

and understanding between the parties, then in my opinion, it is easier to help them

realize some things about their situation and reach an agreement.

Caroline Francis responded,

Have no judgment and no opinions. Don't say, I'm not going to like these people because they don't like the way I work. Some of the best advice I got in my mediation training overall from my different professors and mentors who said, as the mediator, we are the least important and the most patient person in the room. It is a way of making sure we don't put ourselves as more important than the parties or the issues they brought to the table. I did not make it about my process. I made it about them.

Michelle Wallace said,

I use the more facilitative type of mediation, because I see mediators as facilitators. I think that when the conversation is over, and there is an agreement, both sides really feel like this is what they wanted to do, and you have done your job. Whereas, I think the style that a great deal of lawyers use is kind of bullying people into an agreement. When this happens, I don't think that when people walk away with an agreement, they feel like it was a good agreement for them. I would rather them walk away with no agreement than to feel like they have been pushed into something that is not what they wanted.

Susan Smith noted,

To me, when you're working as a neutral it doesn't really matter where you worked before, because it's not my clients sitting in the other room. It's another party all together, and I don't really have a dog in this hunt.

Gail Greene described,

They will get really aggressive towards me while I remain neutral. I do face-to-face mediations, and I do telephonic mediations. This happens when I conduct both types of mediation, but especially when they're face-to-face with me, or when we are doing a round table discussion. I must maintain neutrality. I'm not in favor of the employer, or

the employee. I am on nobody's side. I maintain strict neutrality and I state that in my

opening statement.

Karen Scott replied, "They felt that I would be impartial and neutral to them, since I did not

have, as they described "a female that would put a female's presence first" attitude."

Changing Approach Based on Verbal and Nonverbal Communication. Female

workplace mediators in Texas described listening to verbal and nonverbal communication as a

successful technique to aid when working through workplace conflict. Thereafter, they have

changed their approach based on communication. For example, Neisha Johnson mentioned she

perceived some parties as thinking that she does not have a great deal of experience because she

is constantly told how young she sounds on the phone. While working in a room of males to

resolve their workplace conflict, Caroline Francis also said,

> I got a few smirks and comments like, "well, okay fine let's just do this." They acted like
>
> they wanted to say, let's just entertain her, we'll just do this because this is what we have
>
> to do. I do believe that had I not been a woman, the initial process would not have been
>
> scoffed at. I think they did it because I am a woman.

Katie Rogers described how she changed her approach when she communicated with a female

attorney that initially did not want her to mediate her case when she replied,

> I don't know if this was the attorney's way of posturing for her client or not. I also don't
>
> know if this was her way to have some kind of impact on me, but then she said, "well,
>
> we're here, so we might as well just give it a try." You know, it was kind of dismissive. It
>
> could have been posturing for her client or she really could have believed because I
>
> wasn't an attorney, I would not do a good job. Three and a half hours later, we had an

agreement. Then, when we were cleaning up the room and putting everything back, she

held her hand out and said, "I apologize."

Michelle Wallace also painted a clear description of what she experienced while listening to

verbal and nonverbal communication while mediating with males when she explained,

I do have men that will make aggressive type body language toward me. It is not that

they're threatening me, because they are not. This is their normal behavior a great deal of

times for some of them, especially those in powerful positions in the organization. They

don't like to be questioned, and they don't like to feel like you are telling them they did

something wrong. They may smack the table. They may throw up their hands and make

these big gestures that you know can be intimidating if you allow it to be intimidating. I

believe they're showing their frustration because many times, especially if it is a sexual

harassment type thing, they do feel frustrated or angry because they feel like they will not

win. They do look at things as winning and losing.

Karen Scott described how she changed her approach to draw out communication when she

reported,

If you want the communication to really flow so they can achieve their own outcome, you

can help by giving some type of a safety net and a safe zone for everyone. Sometimes it

works at the beginning, but when it does not, you have to be ready to shift it up.

Susan Smith also advised, "Oftentimes, what is not said is just as important as what is said, if not

more." Likewise, Gail Greene described some nonverbal communication that caused her to shift

her communication when she said,

They will make these demands, and they will insist that they get this and that. They will

raise their voices and say things like, "my client demands that they get this and nothing

else will be acceptable." They act as if they don't know that they are in the mediation

process.

Furthermore, Debra Davis stated,

I came from corporate America and government. I already had that tenacity to be

competitive and to stick with something. I had already learned to be very consistent and

calculated. I know how to put a more positive spin, not a negative calculation, on

something without being calculated from a negative perspective.

Lisa Gray also replied,

I'm a people person. When people look uncomfortable, I try to make them comfortable.

That is my whole modus operandi (M.O.). I think about how I would feel in the situation

and try to make them more comfortable. Usually, at the beginning by going over the

process, or in the forums, or whenever I can tell that they are struggling to deal with a

particular situation. I will tell a joke or something to try to make them more comfortable

with the situation because it can be pretty intense.

Table 6 is the data triangulation of the themes for Research Question 2.

Table 6

Data Triangulation Per Major Theme for Research Question 2

Theme	Described in		Research's Notes	Literature
	Semistruct ured Interviews	Open-Ended Surveys		
Reduce self-stigma with positive self-talk	Yes	Yes	Consistent, confident & focused on skills and abilities (journal notes).	An important factor associated with self- stigma is an individual's willingness to work hard to avoid displaying their stigma, even though it does not disappear, to fit in with the larger population (Goffman, 1963).
Remain neutral	Yes	Yes	This is the reason they are here. They make it appear so natural (journal notes).	Mediators who facilitate mediation are also neutral and impartial as they often must set aside their views on a topic to ensure ethical concerns and values are maintained (Chang & Cheng, 2018).
Changing approach based on verbal and nonverbal communication	Yes	Yes	Pay attention to nonverbal communication.	Almas (2018) concluded strategies related to coaching, framing communication in positive ways, and self-reflection were used more by women than men.

Note. Described in semistructured interview and/or opened-ended survey knowledge of, or

personal experience in this area.

Research Question 3

Additionally, each participant was asked what processes do female workplace mediators in Texas employ to overcome stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, that are experienced while mediating? Several themes emerged from this question as shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Frequently Occurring Themes to Research Question 3

	No. of Participants This Theme	
Theme	Did Not Occur	Occurred
Build Trust	0	10
Change strategy to address the use of power	3	7
Change approach to address verbal and nonverbal communication	2	8
Ask reframing questions	3	7

Note. Number of participants who described in semistructured interviews and opened-ended survey knowledge of, or personal experience in this area.

Build Trust. One hundred percent of the participants described how they used different techniques to build trust while mediating. For instance, Niesha Johnson said,

Most people love people who are straightforward and honest. This is my main approach. When I am mediating, I want to be very straightforward, and transparent. This allows me to build some type of trust. When I am speaking with people, I am able to use the tools of being straightforward and honest to hopefully get through the mediation session and break down those barriers, so we can move forward.

Caroline Francis also responded, "I needed to give them a chance to say no and honor that first. Then it is like, now you are building trust and they can say that I at least heard them." Caroline described more details about this experience in her open-ended survey when she replied,

Setting: Workplace dispute between three Public Works employees on one side, and their supervisor and director on the other, plus the city HR director was present as an observer and to provide policy guidelines around possible solutions to the concerns listed by the employees. When I entered the room, the tension between the parties could be felt. After making introductory comments, I began to present information about the process I use around social-emotional intelligence, which I explained is most often very effective in resolving conflict quickly and helps prevent unnecessary conflict going forward. This was quickly rejected by the parties, one saying, "we're a bunch a guys here - we don't want to learn anything about that." The HR director added, "this isn't what we expected - can we get into the issues?" What they didn't know was that there was another part of the process that I knew would have even less a chance of them being open to, but leading with that would have created more pushback than the initial idea I introduced, and not served their need for resolution. I thanked them for letting me know how they felt about the idea I had presented and said we would not do that. This was showing them respect and meeting their need to be understood, and also was working toward building trust with me as I listened to their request and responded accordingly. I then asked them to describe a specific example of the most significant issue to start. I handed the person who did this a deck of "feelings and needs" cards and asked him to select how he felt what he needed regarding the specific example. He looked at the other men in the room and they all kind of scoffed at my request. I said, "if you want to get through all that you have on your list

today, trust that I know what I'm doing, and that this is the fastest way there." Since I had

already allowed them to choose whether to do the first thing I brought up, and I had

honored that choice, they were more open to this second approach.

Lisa Gray also described how she builds trust to overcome challenges when she said,

Usually, you want to try to loosen people up. That's what I try to do. I go through a

whole procedure, whether it is transformative or facilitate, of how things are going to

proceed. This gives them time to start to calm down and trust me.

Additionally, in the introduction, Lisa Gray has worked on building trust by getting on a first

name basis with everyone. Moreover, one of the participants, Susan Smith, who is an attorney,

reported,

If you're doing an employment mediation. If you don't show empathy towards the person

who thinks they've been wrong things are going to be kind of hard. Even if you don't like

them, which is kind of hard anyway, you got to listen, and you got to work to get them to

trust you. Then, of course, you got to help them. Additionally, in the mediation of a

workplace dispute, the plaintiff's attorney was a self-important male who thought that he

was the smartest person in the room. The parties seemed to be far apart and the attorney

for the plaintiff kept threatening to leave. I was able to persuade him to let me try to help

work on the matter and we were able to resolve the issue when I came up with a different

approach to the resolution. Plaintiff's counsel was both surprised and pleased with the

end result. It seemed to me that he was surprised that I was able to connect with both

sides and help them resolve their issues.

Gail Greene also indicated,

I also try to focus on a technique that I use to gain their trust. I start trying to do that in

my opening. I try to gain trust by telling them a little about me. I tell them a little general

information about myself. I let them know that I am just like them. I have been in HR for

a long time, and I have heard it all. Therefore, especially in an employment mediation, I

want them to know that I have knowledge of dealing with employment matters. I try to

gain their trust by letting them know that whatever they are dealing with is unique, but

they are not the first in the world to have this experience. My goal is to ease their mind

and open them up to talk to me as a person. I assure them that I may not have been

involved in their particular story, but I have been involved with something similar. I want

everyone to feel comfortable sharing information with me so we can get through the

process together, without a great deal of posturing, as I have had knowledge of similar

things before.

Katie Rogers described that despite her efforts to build trust, she was not able to resolve the

conflict in a workplace dispute.

In my most recent workplace mediation experience, there were seven employees, all

female, and the process we used was more facilitation style with everyone in the room at

the same time. Most of the employees obviously did not want to be there, but their

supervisor required them to attend to try to resolve a long-standing conflict within their

office. On the surface, there did not seem to be any hesitation from the employees most

directly involved in the dispute to voice their opinions about what and who had caused

the problem; however, there were so many underlying problems that they didn't want to

discuss that it took a great deal of time to encourage them to open up. Some never would

in open session and were only completely honest in caucus. There seemed to be little to

no interest in truly resolving the problem from one of the employees. She was the

youngest person in the room and seemed to only want the problem to go away. She was

the most resistant to any encouragement to talk completely honestly and openly with the

others. Her defensiveness was a barrier that, given the limited amount of time we had for

the mediation, I felt I was not able to completely overcome.

Michelle Wallace also said in her survey that because she was able to build trust with

participants of an investigation, later, she was called back to mediate their mutual agreement.

I don't know that any situation was especially unique, but one of the more difficult was

the one I did under the oversight of a lawyer (the organization had already engaged the

lawyer after a complaint of racial discrimination). I was engaged to conduct the

investigation, which I did. Basically, the White CEO referred to his African American

male employee as "Buckwheat." Both agreed the statement was made. The employee felt

this was a racial slur (which it was.) The CEO said he had no idea it was a slur and that it

was an expression he had heard that seemed to be OK. I completed my report for the

lawyer/board of directors. Then the lawyer called me and asked if I would mediate an

agreement between the two to resolve the situation. I told her I did not feel that was

appropriate since I had done the investigation, and I had an opinion about the situation. I

didn't feel that either side would believe I was unbiased. She said both individuals had

asked for me to mediate, so I undertook the mediation. I did talk to each of the people

individually and explained mediation and the requirement that I not take sides and asked

them if they felt I would be impartial and if their mediator choice was truly theirs or if

there was any coercion. Both said they asked for me to mediate and both signed the

agreement that they wanted me to mediate. We agreed to the day and time for the

mediation. We hammered out an agreement. I had it typed and printed out for signature when the complainant suddenly decided he wanted the CEO to put in writing that he knew the term "Buckwheat" was derogatory when he used it. The CEO would not agree, and the employee wouldn't move off that demand, so we ended with no agreement, which was discouraging.

Debra Davis responded,

In order to get a resolution to whatever the case may be, you have to touch on and resolve the conflict. The 10 years I spent working with community cases prior to law school helped in that area. It helped me build trust with people, understand them, and resolve their conflict before we went into settling the case. As long as I have mediated in that fashion, I have been very successful.

Manuela Martinez, who is an attorney and a former judge described,

I think because people were concerned about treating me with anything but respect, just in case it might affect their case negatively in some way. Of course, it wouldn't because as you know, even though I always tell them I'm a former judge and an attorney, I cannot give legal advice. However, it does help to know that they trust me.

Karen Scott said, "You have to be able to do little things to make sure that everyone is comfortable while you build trust and maintain control of managing the process."

Change Strategy to Address the Use of Power. For example, Caroline Francis said,

My instincts said don't lead with this, which is more the practical science and some of the stuff that might interest people. Instead, by giving them a choice, or by respecting their request to not go that way, I was not forcing it on them. They needed to be understood in that moment. They just needed to be heard, before being redirected.

Additionally, Neisha Johnson informed,

> In my opinion, I feel firmness is needed. I think that if he sees some type of weakness
> either in my voice or if he thinks I'm not knowledgeable about something, then he'll take
> that and run with it, and he is not coming back from this situation. When I'm getting
> ready to mediate with this particular attorney, I make sure that I'm very on point with my
> knowledge and I put my firm but nice voice on. I deliver myself in a no-nonsense way by
> delivering a good mediator.

Another participant, Karen Scott indicated,

> When I had disputes with people that were being aggressive and things like that, they
> don't need somebody that's going to be demure, but they also don't need someone who's
> going to be controlling. They do need to have people in their presence that will take
> authority in the room not authority over them, as much as just being able to maintain the
> authoritative presence in the room.

She also described in her survey how important it is to not strip away a leader's power when she
said,

> So, one of my conflict interventions is simply—silence. I recall one particular case
> wherein the parties had been in dispute over the employee feeling as though their
> supervisor was not taking them seriously about accusations of workplace bullying. After
> allowing them both to have their say, and preventing interruption; but allowing space for
> questions, I asked, "So where do we go from here?" We all sat there in silence for almost
> five minutes before the supervisor gave a heartfelt apology, which was accepted by the
> employee with their offer to withdraw the complaint and schedule an in-service meeting

regarding workplace bullying. The mediation lasted about our hour. Silence is STILL golden!

Susan Smith also responded,

I think sometimes the lawyers get carried away, and then the clients get carried away or the clients are already too carried away because they're listening to their cousins, brothers, nephews, or sister. Also, they read in the paper that such and such company had to pay some employee they fired $100,000.00. Now they want $100,000.00 for their case. Sometimes, going to mediation works because the lawyer is back there reinforcing what the mediator is telling the party, or the mediator is reinforcing what the lawyer has already said to the client.

Gail Greene replied in her survey

On one occasion, during a telephonic mediation, while I engaged in my initial private caucus with the complainant, his wife—who didn't work for the respondent—chimed in and became very belligerent. During my opening statement, when I had both parties— Complainant and Respondent—in the conference I specifically instructed them that they are only allowed to have legal counsel participate. Even though I cannot physically see them (as these are done via conference call . . . not Skype, etc.), I have to rely on an honor system. Well, her outburst disrupted the mediation. I had to "reiterate" the rules of engagement one final time. I explained that if his wife is going to sit in, she must remain silent, otherwise, I am going to terminate the mediation, because he (the Complainant) worked for the Respondent, and only he can give an account for what he experienced. I had to explain that it would be in their best interest to have their dispute resolved in

mediation, as opposed to being forwarded to investigations, which could take up to 14

months. However, professionalism and protocol will be maintained.

Michelle Wallace replied, "In addition to mediation, I do a great deal of leadership coaching. I

spend a great deal of time coaching supervisors and managers on how to be better leaders and

how to use the right amount of authority." Debra Davis said,

> I think that by going to law school, the knowledge gained become the biggest asset for
>
> me. When I get to the table, I can tell the lawyers, "I know just as much about the law
>
> and civil procedures as you. However, in this setting, I'm the mediator, and I preform
>
> only as a mediator."

Change Approach to Address Verbal and Nonverbal Communication. Neisha

Johnson stated,

> I believe a closed mouth does not get fed. Speaking out about it and letting them know,
>
> this is the way I'm feeling, and this is how your words made me feel is a good practice. I
>
> try to be as polite as possible, but at the same time, straightforward and firm. I want them
>
> to understand and know that it is not okay for them to do what they are doing, and I
>
> recognize what they are doing. I communicate that I am not okay with their
>
> communication. Once they realize their error, most of the time, they will try make the
>
> correction. Other times, they just apologize, and we move on with the mediation. Either
>
> way is fine with me, as long as it does not happen again.

Caroline Francis reported,

> I always believed in trusting the process. I trusted my instincts and I told them even
>
> though this may seem a little out there, I invite you to trust that I know what I'm doing,

and I have experience in this mediation process. I let them know that my goal is to help

them get relief and to help them to move away from their current conflict.

Michelle Wallace responded,

I just try to remember this is a normal reaction. A great deal of times they don't even

realize they are doing it because this is a pattern of behavior, they have most of the time. I

find, once we have talked for some time, the behavior changes. Once they know I am not

just going to side with the other person because I am a woman, things are better.

Karen Scott described how she addressed nonverbal communication when she said,

I also have no problem saying, "you know what, I would feel more comfortable if I was

on the other side of the desk so that way, I can take my notes a little better." Then asking,

"will you be alright with that"? Then, I have switched positions without them even

understanding why I'm doing what I just did.

Susan Smith replied,

As a mediator, you may have to ask, "is there a claim about this, if so, why have we not

heard anything about it"? One side may even say, "we are not going to talk about that, or

it is not really a claim anymore, or we amended our complaint." If you have gotten this

information by listening, you want to understand what happened to these things, because

you don't want any unresolved issues. When you say they have got an agreement, you

want to make sure that you have tied up all of the loose ends. Also, those unspoken things

may be even more important than the stuff they are talking about, and you sure do not

want to be, three or four hours into the mediation and have someone say, "oh wait, there

is this thing over here, that we have not addressed."

Gail Greene said,

What I try to do is reiterate my position. I ask them to calm down. I also remind them that I'm the mediator, and I am not the opposing side. Normally, we start off with a joint caucus where we have both sides in the same room. If it is a telephonic mediation, we will have a joint session. This is when everybody is on the line at the same time in the same conference. During this time, I will open with my opening statement. I also let them know the rules of engagement. Then after that, I will let the complainant give their opening statement, or their attorney can speak for them. This is usually when these males start going off the rails with their demands. Then, when we get into private caucus, they are no longer talking to a group. They are talking directly to me. So, when they start yelling at me, I have to remind them to back up. I tell them, "Hold it, I said in my opening statement, I am neutral. I'm here to try to help resolve this. Ultimately, if it does not get resolved here, I will have to refer your case to the court." Depending on the type of mediation it is, especially if it is an employment case, it could be a long process. There could be investigations, which can take up to a year, or a year and a half to complete. So, I remind them, if we can resolve it here today, that might be better. I tell them to try to be more reasonable and remind them what is at stake if we do not compromise.

Caroline Francis described in her survey,

I sensed that had I been a man asking them to do any of what I had asked, there would not have been the dismissive looks or dismissive attitude. The person with the cards started going through them with an attitude of "ok I'll entertain you. . ."—but from the moment a card came up that resonated with him, he began to go through the cards more slowly and thoughtfully. Then, the first item on the list had been fully processed with an action item all agreed to and written on the white board within an hour.

Debra Davis said, "When you know that individuals are more inclined to want a male up front, you have to realize that maybe there is nothing you can do to overcome that." Moreover, Lisa Gray said, "They put on such a show that I have to sometimes tell them, wait, wait, hold up."

Ask Reframing Questions. Comments from the participants confirmed that by asking reframing questions, mediators are driving toward mutual agreements. For example, Caroline Francis, recalled how during a mediation, she asked, "What are you needing in this moment"? Niesha Johnson stated,

> Sometimes I have to use the opposite or the devil's advocate approach to ask what-if questions. I ask very direct questions, and sometimes it makes people a little bit uncomfortable. Sometimes people have to be in that uncomfortable situation to be able to fight through what they may be thinking in their head, or their preconceived notions, just so we can get to the root of the issue and move toward a resolution.

Another participant, Karen Scott recalled,

> In one particular case wherein the parties had been in dispute over the employee feeling as though their supervisor was not taking them seriously about having to deal with workplace bullying, I had to change things up. After allowing them both to have their say, and preventing interruption; but allowing space for questions, I asked one reframing question, "so where do we go from here?"

Additionally, Lisa Gray said,

> I also ask reframing questions that will get them to see the other party's point of view and drive them to an agreement on a topic. This allows me to say, "look, we are agreeing already." Then we can move forward.

Susan Smith described,

The majority of the time, they want to tell their story to somebody. What I try to do in reframing is to get them to rethink the issue from the perspective of the other side. I don't think you are going to convince somebody to reframe what they're thinking if you say, "what are you thinking that way for"? It's not the best way to get somebody to reframe their thoughts. Instead, you go in and ask the questions. You ask them, "what do you think they're thinking about this? How do you feel about the fact that they may be thinking this about this"? Then, you at least get a feel for whether they really care about the other person, or if they are just interested in their own agenda. This will help you formulate how to manage the mediation process. These questions allow you to say, "I understand that you are saying this, if I heard you correctly. I heard you say that." Then you ask, "is that correct"? This way you ask questions to make sure you know where they stand. I use this when someone is stuck on a particular point of view. I think at times, they are missing the other side. I think the way you get people to agree is to get them to see the other person's perspective in some way, shape, or form.

Gail Greene replied,

I will ask them to look at things differently by asking them reframing questions, then suggesting they take a few minutes for a private meeting with their client. Then I will step out of the room and let them talk for; however, many minutes they need. When I come back and engage with them, they usually have a different attitude. They have toned down. I guess after they have visited with their client and let them know more about what could happen, they have a change of attitude.

Table 8 is the data triangulation of the themes for Research Question 3.

Table 8

Data Triangulation Per Major Theme for Research Question 3

Theme	Described in		Research's Notes	Literature
	Semistructured Interviews	Open-Ended Surveys		
Build Trust	Yes	Yes	Have multiple ideas before going into mediation (journal notes).	The aim of mediation is often to establish mutual trust between the parties as they move toward signing an agreement and avoiding litigation (Cheng, 2015).
Change strategy to address the use of power	Yes	Yes	This must be hard to do (journal notes).	A mediator who uses a combination of strategies is using a multifunctional technique (Wall & Dunne, 2012).
Change approach to address verbal and nonverbal communication	Yes	Yes	Professional approach (journal notes)	Female negotiators will change their approaches based on what they have experienced in the workplace and society (Craver, 2013; Schneider, 2017).
Ask reframing questions	Yes	Yes	This is how you get the person to start thinking differently. Must learn how to do this (journal notes).	The relational strategy focuses on improved communication between the disputing, while clarification seeks to identify the root cause for the dispute (Wall & Dunne, 2012).

Note. Described in semistructured interview and/or opened-ended survey knowledge of, or personal experience in this area.

Debra Davis also advised,

> When a mediator asks reframing questions, they are focusing on guiding the parties in a mediation to use their own self determination to resolve their conflict. This is paramount to not letting "self" get in the way. This is what gets a male or female mediator to a place of being the most effective mediator. Additionally, a mediator has to be mindful of their own sources of conflict, and how they manage conflict, without imposing their views on the participants.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba's (1985) recommended establishing trustworthiness in qualitative studies by focusing on credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. To maintain the credibility of this research, a pilot study with other doctorate students of Abilene Christian University was conducted before the research study was conducted. The results of the pilot study led to changes to the instruments. The demographic data form was updated to reflect a more accurate selection of ethnicity options. Additionally, the corresponding interview questions were updated based on the feedback provided.

As recommended by Terrell (2016), transferability was achieved by providing a thick description of the research results. Furthermore, as proposed by Yin (2018), member checking took place after the second interview was transcribed. This was achieved by allowing each participant to review and edit their transcriptions. This process was used to show dependability during this research. Confirmability was achieved by following the recommendation of Lincoln and Guba (1985) of establishing data triangulation. By using the data from the open-ended survey response, transcribed semistructured interviews, field notes, and previous literature, which established data triangulation. Ethical standards were also demonstrated throughout this

research. Therefore, no research was conducted until the Abilene Christian University Institutional Review Board granted approval. As well as, the highest level of confidentially was used by using pseudo names for organizations and participants as recommended by Seidman (2013).

Summary

This research focused on understanding and describing the perceptions of female workplace mediators and if they encountered stereotypes, bias, and other challenges as mediators in the state of Texas. Individual embedded units of female workplace mediators participated. All participants had completed 40 hours of classroom training in ADR, had a minimum of three years of experience as a mediator in the private, public, or educational sectors, and had continuously worked as a mediator throughout Texas without any gaps over the past three years. The information provided from individual interviews, field notes and an open-ended survey was examined through the lens of Goffman's (1963) theory on stigma and the contextual models of gender inequality, mediation, and ADR. After a cross-case synthesis analysis, several themes emerged which described the challenges faced by female mediators in Texas, how they overcome them, and what processes are used to overcome them.

Three research questions were asked to draw out information about the perceptions of the participants to understand and describe their experiences. The common themes that emerged from the first research question were female mediators in the state of Texas encountered non-attorney stigmatization, gender stereotypes, and gender inequality by male attorneys and clients. The second research question revealed that female workplace mediators in Texas reduce self-stigma, demonstrate neutrality, and change their approach based on verbal and nonverbal communication to overcome challenges while mediating. Furthermore, the third research

question disclosed that building trust, changing strategy to address the use of power, changing their approach to address verbal and nonverbal communication, and asking reframing questions are the processes that are employed by female workplace mediators in Texas to overcome their challenges. These questions described the circumstances, conditions further, and processes of female workplace mediators based on their perceptions of experiences with workplace mediation.

Chapter 5: Discussions, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this holistic case study was to understand and describe the perceptions of female workplace mediators and if they encounter stereotypes, bias, and other challenges as mediators in the state of Texas. The results of this study were designed to help female workplace mediators, and leaders develop additional conflict resolution and negotiation techniques when addressing workplace disputes. Although the themes of the study were drawn from the holistic case study with embedded units, they should not be generalized for all female mediators. However, they do provide clear descriptions that female workplace mediators do face challenges while mediating and employing different techniques to overcome them. This chapter consists of a summary of the case study, discussion of the researcher's lens of the research questions, research's reflection, recommendations to consider for future research, implications, and conclusions of the case study.

Summary of the Embedded Case Study with Holistic Units

This case study used the embedded case study research design. This method was selected because it allowed for an objective collection of multiple sources of data within a single case study. The data were then compared and contracted with Goffman's (1963) theory of stigma, and the contextual framework of mediation, gender inequality, and ADR.

All 10 of the participants that were interviewed are female workplace mediators in Texas that had mediated workplace disputes. Each participant created a pseudo name for use throughout the research to protect their identity. Following Seidman's (2013) recommendation, three interviews were conducted with each participant. The first interview was an intake session to explain the case study, ascertain if the female workplace mediator were viable participants, and provide an open-ended survey for the participants to complete. The survey allowed them to

describe a unique experience while mediating workplace disputes. The second interview was the primary source of data for this research. This interview focused on obtaining the authentic descriptions of the perceptions of female workplace mediators in Texas. The third and final interview was used to allow the participants to check their transcribed interviews. As recommended by Yin (2018), allowing the participants to check their responses was a form of member checking. All 10 of the participants were interviewed between February 2020 and March 2020.

Discussion of Findings

This study was designed to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How do female workplace mediators in Texas describe stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, that are experienced while mediating?

RQ2: How do female workplace mediators in Texas overcome stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, that are experienced while mediating?

RQ3: What processes do female workplace mediators in Texas employ to overcome stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, that are experienced while mediating?

The key findings of this holistic case study with embedded units provides a better understanding and description of the circumstances and conditions surrounding how perceptions, stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, are faced by female workplace mediators and how they overcome them. As recommended by Yin (2018), cross-case synthesis analyses of data were conducted. The themes that emerged from the literature review, interviews, and an open-ended survey response were reported in Chapter 4.

Several common themes developed from the research questions. The themes that emerged from the research questions are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Summary of Themes from Research Questions 1–3

Themes that Emerged from Cross-Case Analysis		
Research Question 1	Research Question 2	Research Question 3
Non-attorney stigmatization	Reduce self-stigma with positive self-talk	Build trust
Gender stereotypes	Remain neutral	Change strategy to address the use of power
Gender inequality by male attorneys and clients	Change approach based on verbal and nonverbal communication	Change approach to address verbal and nonverbal communication
		Ask reframing questions

I used the research results to answer Research Questions 1-3. The overview of the answer to each question is in the next sections.

Research Question 1

When I asked Research Question 1, I learned how female workplace mediators in Texas describe stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, that are experienced while mediating. The common theme of non-attorney stigmatization repeatedly came up in the descriptions provided by female workplace mediators in Texas. Livingston and Boyd (2010) defined stigma as the manifestation of marking, labeling, estrangement, prominence loss, and judgment in the framework in which authority is employed. Corrigan et al. (2009) and Papagiannaki and Shinebourne (2016) defined stigmatization as the categorization of a specific collection of people or individuals as altered from the social norm. The perception of stigma toward non-attorney mediators was described by 80% of the participants of this case study. One participant, Lisa Gray, stated,

I believe that when I was doing court appointed mediations, I had attorneys reply to

replace me simply because I am not an attorney. So, the judge would replace me. Then,

they would appoint their attorney buddies to mediate the case. I believe they did this

because I am a non-attorney mediator.

Brown et al. (2018) showed that because of the perception of this stigmatization, individuals

could become burdened with the stress of self-stigma. Another example of how non-attorney

mediators can face stigmatization was described by Gail Greene who informed how some

attorneys demonstrated a certain posture towards her when she replied,

I think they posture toward me like this because I'm not an attorney, and I believe that it

is because I am a woman. I also believe that there is a certain arrogance that some

attorneys have because they have that JD behind their name.

In contrast, female workplace mediators in Texas who are attorneys have described how the

stigmatization of being an attorney has been helpful. This was explained by participant Manuela

Martinez when she replied,

Even though I tell them that I'm not here to make any judicial decisions, I think people

still perceive that my experience as a judge will still have an effect on them. Even the

lawyers for the clients tell me that it helps with mediation when the clients are aware that

I'm a former judge or a current visiting judge. I am also a lawyer. It is as if it makes them

behave better than they would normally behave before a mediator that doesn't have those

credentials.

Thus, female workplace mediators in Texas can benefit from the stigmatization of being an

attorney but have been negatively impacted by non-attorney stigmatization when they are not an

attorney.

Female workplace mediators in Texas also described their perception of facing gender stereotypes while mediating. Zhang et al. (2018) defined stereotypes as a judgment about a person or group leading to a belief that all persons or members of the group have the same, usually negative, characteristics. Furthermore, Del Gobbo (2018) stated, women must modify their conflict resolution techniques to overcome various barriers arising from culture and gender stereotypes. Furthermore, Texas female mediators are being judged, generalized, and labeled with all females. Additionally, Goffman (1963) advised that stigma can show up within by individuals who absorb stereotypes and expectations from the group. Take for example Michelle Wallace who replied,

> I do tend to find a great deal of times that women will try to manipulate me like I'm part of "the sisterhood." Therefore, I should support them regardless of what they want or what they might have done. They don't really express this, it is more of an interpretation or perception when they talk to you that you should understand where they are coming from, and you need to help me fight back against these men.

Kurniawan et al. (2018) stated, when people face stigma by association, they are afraid of being associated with a certain group. Susan Smith, who is also an attorney, responded,

> I can think of one situation where one male lawyer was concerned that I was beginning to persuade his female client to rethink the matter when I was talking to both of them. I think he felt compelled to intervene, but I don't think that was necessarily a gender thing. I think that was more of a lawyer having their own idea about how they wanted something to go, and he did not want me to intervene with his female client.

The results of this research show that the display of gender stereotypes within the mediation process has both helped and hurt female workplace mediators in Texas.

Based on the descriptions of their experiences with males, female workplace mediators in Texas experience, or are aware of others experiencing, gender inequality by male attorneys and clients. Kray and Kennedy (2017) informed that women in all types of workplaces must prepare to negotiate gender discrimination. For instance, Neisha Johnson described,

In my workplace, we conduct several telephonic mediations, which is mediation by phone. There was a time when I was in my private caucus with an attorney that was representing the company side. He said to me, all right, little girl, what do you think is going to happen today?

Additionally, Gail Greene painted a clear description of why she perceived she experienced gender inequality when she responded,

Oftentimes, by the time my services have been enlisted, the employee has hired an attorney. The attorney is usually a male. Some of these male attorneys feel because we are in the presence of an attorney, and that their client is present, they need to be very aggressive. They feel they need to posture up and kind of show off in the presence of their client. They'll come at me says things like, we are good on this, or we demand. They put on such a show that I have to sometimes tell them wait, wait, hold up. I do believe they are posturing up in front of their client, but I really do not like that. I don't know if they do that to my male counterparts, but I definitely don't believe they do. This is just from my gut feeling. I really don't believe that they do this to my male counterparts. If they do, I don't believe they do it quite as aggressively.

Although women in business environments usually reached a mutual agreement in conflict, 73% of the women felt they were held in less regard than their male co-workers (Petkeviciute &

Streimikiene, 2017). Therefore, female workplace mediators must prepare to address challenges brought on by gender inequality while mediating in the workplace.

Research Question 2

When Research Question 2 was asked, I gained knowledge about how female workplace mediators in Texas overcome stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, that are experienced while mediating?

Female workplace mediators in Texas remain neutral throughout the mediation process. Beer and Packard (2012) stated that while facilitating the mediation process it is important to remain neutral by not being impartial towards one party or the other. Remaining neutral was a common theme from seven participants. Take, for example, how Caroline Francis described remaining neutral when she said, "It is a way of making sure we don't put ourselves as more important than the parties or the issues they brought to the table." Additionally, Surma (2018) stated, it is vital for a mediator to remain impartial toward all disputing parties by not allowing their personal views and biases to intervene in the mediation process. Another participant, Gail Greene, described that while mediating, "They'll get really aggressive towards me while I will remain neutral." This process aligns with Beer and Packard (2012) who said, the mediator must also remain neutral toward the outcome and be careful to not make suggestions that favor or disfavor one party. Therefore, female workplace mediators in Texas remain neutral when they are faced with challenges.

Female workplace mediators throughout the state of Texas also use techniques to reduce self-stigma demonstrated by positive-self talk to overcome stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges that are experienced while mediating. Oexle et al. (2018) stated self-stigma is internalized by individuals because they begin to self-identify with the negative discrimination

presented to them. To overcome this negative self-stigma, female workplace mediators in Texas are speaking positively to themselves to reduce self-stigma. Take, for example, Neisha Johnson who described using positive self-talk to reduce self-stigma while preparing for some mediations when she stated, "I have to deal with some of the same attorneys on a regular basis. There are some attorneys that I know going into the mediation that I have to prepare myself mentally for the situation." Caroline Francis also said, "I just believed in myself and trusted my instincts to trust the process." Additionally, Karen Scott responded,

> I have to give myself a pep talk in advance because as mediators it is so very important to maintain your emotions. You can be compassionate, but we have to be able to maintain our own emotions. Additionally, by having confidence, knowing my skill set, and being able to feel like I'm being accepted was beneficial. Then their biases actually become a positive thing for me, even thought it was misdirected by them.

Therefore, when faced with challenges in the mediation process, female workplace mediators in Texas use positive self-stigma that is demonstrated by positive self-talk to overcome the challenges.

Female workplace mediators in Texas also change their approach based on verbal nonverbal communication when mediating. Devinatz (2018) informed that mediators must use active listening to identify and handle situations when the opposing parties are not willing to let go of the conflict and engage in bargaining towards an agreement. One participant, Karen Scott, reported,

> The parties don't want your outcome. You want them to have their own outcome. If you want the communication to really flow so they can achieve this, you can help by giving

some type of a safety net and a safe zone for everyone. Sometimes it works at the

beginning, but when it does not, you have to be ready to shift it up.

Additionally, Susan Smith also advised, "Oftentimes, what is not said is just as important as what

is said, if not more." As well, the mediator will also employ style changes to drive toward an

outcome (Bollen et al., 2016). One participant, Gail Greene, said,

What they'll do is they will make these demands, and they will insist upon this and that.

They will raise their voices and say things like my client demands that they get this, and

nothing else will be acceptable. They act as if they don't know that they are in the

mediation process. In this process, we are here to mediate on everything we want. That's

why it's called mediation. It is a process where we hear both sides because everyone has

a-side.

Thus, female workplace mediators in Texas are changing their styles to overcome the challenges

they are receiving because of the verbal and nonverbal communication while mediating.

Research Question 3

By asking Research Question 3, I learned, what processes female workplace mediators in

Texas employ to overcome stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, that are

experienced while mediating?

Different techniques are used by female workplace mediators in Texas to build trust.

Cheng (2015) advised that the aim of mediation is often to establish mutual trust between the

parties as they move toward signing an agreement and avoiding litigation. Abdi and Mason

(2019) advised that mediators build trust by moving forward in small achievable steps that can

be implemented instead of taking big steps that are not executed. This is achieved by female

workplace mediators in Texas, as Gail Greene indicated,

I also try to focus on the technique that I use to try to gain their trust. I start trying to do that in my opening. I try to gain trust by telling them a little bit about me. I don't go into anything too personal about myself. I tell them a little general information about myself. I let them know that I am just like them. I have been in HR for a long time, and I have heard it all. Therefore, especially in an employment mediation, I want them to know that I have knowledge of dealing with employment matters. I also want them to know that, because of my long history in human resources, there is nothing that will surprise me. I want them to know that I have lived all over the world, so I have experience with a great deal of different cultural things as well. I try to gain their trust by letting them know that whatever they are dealing with is unique, but they are not the first person in the world that this has happened to. My goal is to ease their mind and open them up to talk to me as a person. I assure them that I may not have been involved in their particular story, but I have been involved with something similar. I want everyone to feel comfortable sharing information with me so that we can get through the process together, without a great deal of posturing as I have heard similar things before.

This process leads to long term sustainable conflict resolution because the disputing parties have transformed the ownership of building long-term peace to themselves (Abdi & Mason, 2019). Furthermore, Lisa Gray also described how she builds trust to overcome challenges when she said,

Usually, you want to try to loosen people up. That's what I try to do. I go through a whole procedure, whether it is transformative or facilitate, of how things are going to proceed. This gives them time to start to calm down and trust me.

In the introduction, she tried to be really warm and inviting and try to get on a first-name basis with someone, so that they can start to trust you. Therefore, female workplace mediators use the process of building trust to overcome the challenges faced while mediating.

Female workplace mediators in Texas change strategy styles to address the appropriate use of power. Schneider (2017) stated, women usually do a better job of showing how they understand where a person is coming from, even when they do not agree with their point of view. This allows women to focus more on building relationships while negotiating workplace conflict disputes (Dobrijević, 2014). Karen Scott gave an example of how she did this when she said,

When I had disputes with people that were being aggressive and things like that, they don't need somebody that's going to be demure, but they also don't need someone who's going to be controlling. They do need to have people in their presence that will take authority in the room not authority over them, as much as just being able to maintain the authority presence in the room.

She also described in her survey how important it is not to strip away a leader's power when she responded,

So, one of my conflict interventions is simply—silence. I recall one particular case wherein the parties had been in dispute over the employee feeling as though their supervisor was not taking them seriously about the workplace bullying, they were dealing with. After allowing them both to have their say, and preventing interruption; but allowing space for questions, I asked, "So where do we go from here?" We all sat there in silence for almost five minutes before the supervisor gave a heartfelt apology which was accepted by the employee with their offer to withdraw the complaint and schedule an in-

service meeting regarding workplace bullying. The mediation lasted about one hour.

Silence is STILL golden!

Therefore, a process that female workplace mediators in Texas use to overcome their challenges is to change their style to address the appropriate use of power.

Changing Their Approach to Address Nonverbal Behavior and Communication.
Female mediators in Texas also implement informal approaches when disputing parties are displaying strong feelings about workplace conflict. McKenzie (2015) recommended using the facilitative mediation style to involve parties through problem-solving techniques in hopes of reaching a settlement. However, when facilitating a mediation, and challenges arise, female mediators are changing their style to address verbal and nonverbal communication. For example, participant Gail Greene stated,

> What I try to do is reiterate my position. I ask them to calm down. I also remind them that I'm the mediator, and I am not the opposing side. Normally, we start off with a joint caucus where we have both sides in the same room. If it is a telephonic mediation, we will have a joint session. This is when everybody is on the line at the same time in the same conference. During this time, I will open it up with my opening statement. I also let them know the rules of engagement. Then after that, I will let the complainant give their opening statement, or their attorney can speak for them. This is usually when these males start going off the rails with their demands. Then, when we get into private caucus, they are no longer talking to a group. They are talking directly to me. So, when they start yelling at me, I have to remind them to back up. Hold it, I said in my opening statement, I am neutral. I'm here to try to help resolve this. Ultimately, if it does not get results here, I will have to refer your case to the court. Depending on the type of mediation it is,

especially if it is an employment case, it could be a long process. There could be

investigations, which can take up to a year, or a year and a half to complete. So, if we can

resolve it here today, that might be better. I tell them to try to be more reasonable and

remind them what is at stake if we don't compromise.

Additionally, female mediators may benefit from having ADR methods in their toolbox to help

them collaborate within today's complicated workplace (Del Gobbo, 2018; Kray & Kennedy,

2017; Lu et al., 2018). Thus, a mediator must be prepared to change their approach to the

mediation process, so they are empowered with ways to aid in reaching a successful agreement.

Additionally, female workplace mediations in Texas use reframing questions to

overcome stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges that are experienced while

mediating. Several participants described how they asked reframing questions to help develop

different ways to drive toward an agreement. Susan Smith described this process when she said,

The majority of the time, they want to tell their story to somebody. What I try to do in

reframing is to get them to rethink the issue from the perspective of the other side. I don't

think you are going to convince somebody to reframe what they're thinking if you say,

"what are you thinking that way for?" It's not the best way to get somebody to reframe

their thoughts. Instead, you go in and ask the questions. You ask them, what do you think

they're thinking about this? How do you feel about the fact that they may be thinking this

about this? Then, you at least get a feel for whether they really care about the other

person, or if they are just interested in their own agenda, because that will help you

formulate how to manage the mediation process. These questions allow you to say, I

understand that you're saying this, if I heard you correctly, I heard you say that. Then you

ask, is that correct? This way you ask questions to make sure that you know where they

are. I use this when someone is stuck on a particular point of view. I think they're

missing the other side. I think the way you get people to agree is to get them to see the

other person's perspective in some way, shape, or form.

Additionally, female mediators are challenged to find the best techniques to facilitate acceptable

outcomes based on how the organization viewed women (Benharda et al., 2013). Therefore,

when female mediators in Texas asked reframing questions, they captured a complete image of

what was happening, what to do, and demonstrated the process of changing their approach.

Researcher's Lens

Throughout this research, I obtained a broader view of how I can approach workplace

challenges. As a seasoned human resource professional, I have experienced and been exposed to

a wide array of workplace situations. Additionally, through these experiences, degree-seeking

programs, and many workshops and training sessions, I have gained many techniques to address

these challenges. However, after conducting this research, I am better equipped to face gender

inequality and stigma in the workplace.

The hyper-awareness of gender inequality while conducting this research has caused me

considerable stress, extensive frustration, and sizable moments of depression. For example,

throughout my career, I have worked in male-dominated environments. In most of the places I

have worked and volunteered, the senior leadership team has been comprised of mostly males.

Additionally, on occasion, I was deliberately excluded from meetings, purposely paid

substantially less, and repeatedly denied promotions. While I have experienced this, my male co-

workers have been included in all meetings, received promotional opportunities, and obtained

substantial pay increases. Not only do I have experience in these situations, but these are real

issues that persist in the workplace today (Ganiyu et al., 2018). Additionally, as a human

resource professional, I have investigated and mediated similar workplace situations. This research has caused me to develop more consciousness of my personal experiences, and those of others, with gender inequality.

I have also faced workplace challenges brought on by stigmatization in the workplace. Just like other women who have school-age children, throughout my career I have faced flexibility stigma (Padavic et al., 2020). To overcome this, I have worked 12- to 14-hour days, traveled with short notices, and have constantly been tethered to my company laptop and cell phone. Although I may face stigma in the workplace, this research has given me additional techniques to address these challenges.

To remain objective throughout this research, I have taken extra time and kept a journal. As recommended by Seidman (2013), this allowed me to keep an open mind and limit mixing my own experiences with the participants. I also followed the recommendation of Seidman by not sharing my personal experiences with the female workplace mediators that participated in this research. This has allowed me to keep an open mind while conducting this research.

This case study has empowered me with the process of asking reframing questions to address gender inequality and stigma in the workplace. Bolman and Deal (2017) presented reframing as the craft of approaching situations with an open mind. This process allows the development of alternative strategies that infuse structure, human resources, and political and symbolic frames (Bolman & Deal, 2017). After this research, I plan to use reframing questions to obtain a broader view of the workplace conflict exchange and drive those involve toward peace. This holistic case study with embedded units has given me hope that I will be able to contribute to a workplace that is free of stigma and gender inequality by asking reframing questions.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of this research and previous research, there are several recommendations for female workplace mediators in Texas. These recommendations are designed to provide support to the development of female workplace mediators in Texas. Although the recommendations may be applied to female workplace mediators in Texas, they may also apply to female workplace mediations in other states.

First, in this case study, I evaluated the perspective of Texas female workplace mediators and the challenges they face while mediating. Several of the participants reported experiencing gender inequality while mediating. The research results showed how female workplace mediators overcome these challenges and the processes they used. This limited the ability to obtain the view of males, and the parties involved in the workplace dispute. A similar study can be conducted that would include males or focus solely on describing the male mediator's perceptions and the perceptions of those involved in the workplace conflict.

Second, 50% of the female workplace mediator participants identified with a minority ethnicity race. Perhaps a similar study can be conducted to identify if the perception of racial bias exists toward minority workplace mediators. This type of research can be conducted with male and female participants that identify within a minority ethnicity race.

Third, the participants delivered mediation in the private, public, or educational sectors. Most of them perceived they faced stigmatization of non-attorney mediators and gender inequality by male attorneys and clients. Going forward, there should be more training after the 40-hour mediation training that provides more techniques to overcome tough situations in a private, public, or educational workplace. Specifically, the situations focused on the stigmatization of non-attorney mediators and gender inequality.

Finally, female workplace mediators should be familiar with more ADR methods to resolve complex workplace conflict disputes. The complexity of current workplace conflicts will require the use of ADR methods. Therefore, although mediation is an arm of ADR, mediators of workplace disputes may explore and become comfortable using other ADR methods. This can be achieved by requiring newly trained mediators to obtain a coach for a certain period of time. Although it did not arise as an emerging theme, it is also insightful to mention that three of the participants have mentors or coaches. These participants received mediation support and professional guidance from a personal coach or mentor. All three contributed their success as a mediator to their work with their coach. Take for example Debra Davis, she informed,

> Maybe the last 12–15 years, I have had a professional coach. I work with my coach every month, and I create an extensive vision board yearly. We meet monthly, and we talk about how I can be a better person and mediator.

Additionally, Neisha Johnson learned from and contributed her success as a mediator to her mediation mentor. She described how she spent nearly two months observing her mentor, which helped her when she stated,

> I was trained by a really wonderful mediator. I sat in on several of her mediations. She called me a co-mediator in the mediation process, but basically, I was just observing. I watched her religiously, how she changed her strategies, and I would listen to the advice she would give me. Then she told me about different conferences that I can attend to learn from other mediators. I attended these conferences. Therefore, I would say that the classes and the time I spent watching my mentor have helped me.

Likewise, Katie Rogers spoke well of her male mentor when she replied,

It comes from observation of the person that I consider my mediating mentor. My mentor is not necessarily just in mediation. It is also in the way that he handles himself in everything. He has taught me from his nature, his personality, and his instruction on how to react when something happens in mediation that you don't expect. He is a male, and he is the most phenomenal and fabulous person I have ever met. I want to also stress that I have never seen him in an actual mediation. However, because of my association with him, I have no problem at all knowing exactly how he would perform in a mediation. This is because everything that he does uses the very same skills that are taught in the mediation training. It's really a part of his DNA and it's who he is as a person that I learn skills that I have used in mediation. I cannot imagine a more unbiased person. I don't think I've ever known a more unbiassed person than my male mentor.

Implications

This study offered conceptual, theoretical, and practical implications. The results of this holistic case study with embedded units increased the awareness of the perception of challenges faced by female workplace mediators and how they overcome them. This research added to the conceptual framework of gender inequality, mediation, and ADR. The researcher focused on providing lessons of female workplace mediations in Texas. Specifically, when perceptions, stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges are faced by female workplace mediations. This research advanced the knowledge of Goffman's (1963) theory of stigma by exposing that female workplace mediators in Texas perceived non-attorney stigmatization.

A practical implication is provided by describing how female workplace mediators in Texas reduced self-stigma with positive self-talk. They also remained neutral, and adjusted their approach based on verbal and nonverbal communication to overcome challenges. The study

results demonstrated that female workplace mediators in Texas employed blended processes to overcome challenges. They reduced self-stigma with positive self-talk, remained neutral, and changed their approach based on verbal and nonverbal communication. The findings of this case study could offer data to explore areas of future research on the use of ADR to resolve workplace conflict disputes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this qualitative research will further the body of knowledge on workplace gender inequality, mediation, ADR, and the Theory of Stigma. The study results elaborate on the role of potential perceptions of gender inequality and stigma play in the experiences of female workplace mediators in Texas. Specifically, this case study with embedded units provides insight into the challenges perceived by female workplace mediators in Texas while implementing conflict management interventions. The perceived challenges identified are non-attorney stigmatization, gender stereotypes, and gender inequality by male attorneys and clients. Female workplace mediators in Texas are sparked to reduce self-stigma with positive self-talk, remain neutral, and change their approach based on verbal and nonverbal communication to overcome these challenges. Thereafter, the processes female workplace mediators in Texas employ are to build trust, change strategy to address the use of power, change approach to address verbal and nonverbal communication, and ask reframing questions. The results of this research can provide additional alternative dispute resolution techniques for female leaders and mediators as they provide workplace conflict management interventions.

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Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Exemption

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
320 Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103
325-674-2885

January 22, 2020

Gaedria Goodwin
Department of Educational Leadership
Abilene Christian University

Dear Gae,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled
"Perceptions and Challenges of Female Workplace Mediators and How they Overcome Them",

(IRB# 19-162   )is exempt from review under Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects.

If at any time the details of this project change, please resubmit to the IRB so the committee can determine whether or not the exempt status is still applicable.

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

Megan Roth, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Sponsored Programs

Appendix B: Recruitment Letter

Dear [Name],

My name is Gaedria Goodwin. I am a doctoral student in Organizational Leadership at Abilene Christian University's College of Graduate and Professional Studies. I am conducting a study on female mediators and would like to invite you to participate.

The purpose of the study is to learn about the perceptions of female workplace mediators and if they encounter stereotypes, bias, and other challenges as mediators in the state of Texas and how they overcome those challenges, if they exist. Participation in the study would involve 3 interviews, which can be done in person, online or by phone. One interview will be audiotaped, with your consent. Each interview will take 30 to 90 minutes.

Attached is the consent form, which provide additional information. If you have questions or would like to participate, please contact me at XXXXXXXXXX or XXXXXXXXXXX.

Thank you for your participation,

Gaedria Goodwin
Abilene Christian University
College of Graduate and Professional Studies
Abilene Christian University
Status: Doctoral Student

Appendix C: Demographic Data Form

This Demographic Data Form will be used to collect participants' information during the first interview. This data will be used to establish the identity and to understand a realistic picture of the professional background of the participants. The document will only be used in the initial interview by the investigator. The data will be retained for three years in a secure location then destroyed.

Name: _____ **Date of Evaluation:** _____

Residential Location (City and State): _____, _____

Age: _____

Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female
    ☐ Other: Provide name _____

Ethnicity Race: Please Select the most appropriate response
☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
    ☐ Provide name of principle or enrolled tribe(s)_____
☐ Asian:
    ☐ Chinese ☐ Filipino ☐ Asian Indian ☐ Vietnamese ☐ Korean ☐ Japanese
    ☐ Other: Provide name _____
☐ Black or African American:
    ☐ African American ☐ Jamaican ☐ Nigerian ☐ Haitian ☐ Ethiopian ☐ Somali
    ☐ Other: Provide name _____
☐ Hispanic, Latin, or Spanish:
    ☐ Mexican, Mexican American ☐ Puerto Rican ☐ Cuban ☐ Colombian
    ☐ Dominican ☐ Salvadorian
    ☐ Other: Provide name _____
☐ Middle Eastern or North African:
    ☐ Lebanese ☐ Iranian ☐ Egyptian ☐ Syrian ☐ Moroccan ☐ Israeli
    ☐ Other: Provide name _____
☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander:
    ☐ Native Hawaiian ☐ Samoan ☐ Chamorro ☐ Tongan ☐ Fijian ☐ Marshallese
    ☐ Other: Provide name _____
☐ White
    ☐ German ☐ Italian ☐ Irish ☐ Polish ☐ English ☐ French
    ☐ Other: Provide name_____
☐ Other
    ☐ Provide race or origin _____

Education: Please select the highest-level degree achieved

☐ Associate

☐ Bachelors

☐ Masters

☐ Doctorate

Have you completed 40 hours of alternative dispute mediation training? (Please Check One)

☐ Yes   ☐ No

SELF ASSESSMENT OF OVERALL MEDIATION SKILLS: (Please check one)

☐ Well above proficient

☐ Somewhat above proficient

☐ Proficient

☐ Somewhat below proficient

☐ Well below proficient

HAVE YOU HAD PRIOR MEDIATION EXPERIENCE IMPLIMENTING WORKPLACE CONFLICT INTERVENTIONS: (Please check one)

☐ Yes   ☐ No

LIST ALL TYPES OF MEDIATION PREVIOUSLY FACILITATED: (Select all that apply)

☐ Evaluative ☐ Facilitative ☐ Transformative

HOW MANY YEARS OF MEDIATION EXPERIENCE DO YOU HAVE:

☐ 3 to 5 Years ☐ 6 to 10 Years ☐ > 10 Years

HOW MANY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE DO YOU HAVE MEDIATING WORKPLACE CONFLICT:

☐ 3 to 5 Years ☐ 6 to 10 Years ☐ > 10 Years

Appendix D: Open-Ended Survey

Dear [Name],

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study. This open-ended survey is designed to capture the details of **one experience** you had while implementing workplace conflict interventions.

Please complete this survey within two days of receiving.

Instructions

1. Think about your most unique experience while implementing workplace conflict interventions and the techniques used to manage the situation.

2. Describe what it was like to be in this situation and include specific details in a way to aid the reader to believe they are with you.

Appendix E: Interview Guide

Preparation Checklist
1. Review Demographic Data Form Information before the interview.
2. Review participant background information.
3. Review open-ended survey of participant which describes an experience while implementing workplace conflict interventions.

☐ Note anything about the experience which I am unclear or would like more information.

☐ Note any gaps in employment.

Outline for Opening the Interview
☐ **Greet the participant**
Good Morning and thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to be a part of my study. My name is Gaedria Goodwin and I am a doctoral student at Abilene Christian University.

☐ **Remind the participant of the purpose of the interview**
This study may help female workplace mediators and leaders have additional conflict resolution and negotiation techniques when addressing workplace disputes.

☐ **Inform participant the interview will be recorded**
This interview will be recorded. The recordings will be transcribed and retained for one year after the end of the research.

☐ **Inform participant I will be taking notes**
During this interview will also take notes.

☐ **Remind the participant they can exit the process at any time**
Please also note participation in the research is strictly voluntary, and you are welcome to exit at any time without any ramifications. Additionally, since we are discussing perceptions, stereotypes, bias, gender bias and other challenges, if any that are faced by female workplace mediators, if you have any concerns that are outside the scope of this research, you are encouraged to contact the local governing authority to thoroughly document and investigate the situation. This can be done by contacting your local police department.

☐ **Share with participant information about my background**
- 23 years of HR experience
- Experience mediating workplace disputes
- Have worked in male dominated environments throughout my career
- Interest in exploring career as fulltime workplace mediator

Review Demographic Information and Description of Phenomenon
☐ Explain I have reviewed the previously provided Demographic Data Form
I have received and reviewed your Demographic Information Form and Open-Ended Survey response. Thank you for providing this information.

(select one of two next step options)

☐ **Explain more clarity is needed.**
Ask the following clarifying question:
1. Can you tell me more details about the experience you shared in your open-ended Survey?

2. What made this your most unique experience while implementing workplace conflict interventions?

Once more detail information is given, move to thank the participant for providing the detail description.

☐ **Thank the participant for providing the detail description**
Thank you for providing this formation. The following interview questions will expand on this phenomenon during our interview today.

☐ **Ask the following research questions**
Additional corresponding interviewing questions are also provided if more information is needed

Research Question	Corresponding Interview Questions
Q1: How do female workplace mediators in Texas describe stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, that are experienced while mediating?	1. For what alternative dispute resolution scenarios are female mediators being used? 2. How does your performance ratings compare to your male counterparts, if you know? 3. What do you feel like you must do in order to be competitive or effective? 4. Describe a time you have tended to be viewed as behaving emotionally, caringly, and passive, if you have been?

Q2: How do female workplace mediators in Texas overcome stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenges, if any, that are experienced while mediating?	1. Describe a time you might have been thought of as being deceptive while mediating?
	
	    1a. What training have you had on how to adjust your mediation strategy?
	
	    1b. How do you adjust your mediation strategy?

	2. Describe a time you may have perceived any stereotypes during mediation about you personally as a mediator?
	2a. What training have you had on how to adjust your mediation strategy?
	2b. Beyond the initial 40-hour training, what professional development training or strategies related to coaching have you taken?
	2c. What training or strategies have you taken related to framing communication?
	2d. What training or strategies do you have related to self-reflection?
	2e. Describe what traditional training methods you have encountered that are helpful when encountering stereotypes to be effective as a mediator?
	2f. Describe how do you adjust your mediation strategy for stereotypes?
	2g. Describe how are you pressured to operate through those stereotypes?
	3. Describe a time you may have perceived any gender bias during mediation?
	3a. If so, what training have you had on how to adjust your mediation strategy for gender bias?
	3b. What strategies or training have you had related to developing strategies related to coaching?
	3c. What strategies or training or have you employed about framing communication?
	3d. What strategies or training have you employed relating to self-reflection?

	3e. Describe what traditional training methods you have encountered that are helping when encountering gender bias to be effective as a mediator?
	3f. Describe how do you might adjust your mediation strategy for gender bias?
	3g. Describe how you might feel pressure to operate through those gender biases?
	4. Describe how you feel about having an understanding of how gender influences workplace mediation can help you overall?
Q3. What processes do female workplace mediators in Texas employ to overcome stereotypes, bias, gender bias, and other challenge, if any, that are experienced while mediating?	1. What did you do to gain insight into what will help you design the framework of mediation process.
	2. How many meetings were held before the mediation?
	3. Where did you think the process would lead to?
	4. What did you do to obtain the buy in of the various parties?

Interview Close
☐ **Explain next steps in process**
Over the next few days I will spend time transcribing this interview. Once I have completed this process, we will meet again to allow you an opportunity to review the transcription. This will allow you an opportunity to make any edits or corrections.

☐ **Thank the participant for their participation**
Thank you again for taking time from your busy schedule to be part of my research. Please remember all information shared will remain confidential.