# DEI PROGRAMS: ADDRESSING MINORITY AND GENDER LEADERSHIP DISPARITIES IN LARGE U.S. BASED ORGANIZATIONS
## University of Maryland Global Campus
AJ Nwoga

Management Problem

Despite substantial investments in DEI programs, women and minorities remain underrepresented in leadership roles and organizations are failing to achieve the desired levels of inclusivity.

Research Purpose: The purpose of this study is to understand the strategies managers can implement to overcome the barriers of DEI program implementation.

Significance of Problem: Lack of leadership diversity affects absenteeism, turnover, performance, profitability, employee engagement, and innovation.
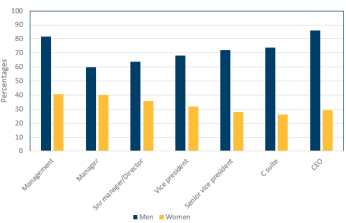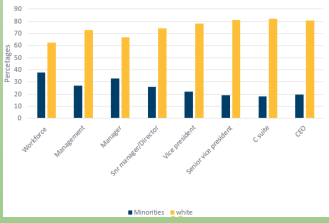
Research Question

What strategies can managers implement to overcome the barriers of DEI programs and increase the number of women and minority leaders in large U.S corporations?

Barriers to Corporate Leadership Roles

- White male leadership stereotype
- Workplace discrimination
- Biased hiring practices
- Biased performance evaluation

Why is leadership diversity important?

- Increasing diverse population with increasing buying power
- Increase diverse talent base.
- Increase in profitability by over 38%
- Enhanced competitiveness and innovation
- Engaged workforce with increased retention.
- Failure could be detrimental or lead to demise of organization

Methodology- Systematic Review

A systematic review is a scholarly comprehensive and structured method for synthesizing and summarizing existing research evidence on a particular topic or research question following a rigorous and predefined protocol.

Unlike literature reviews which are general and may be biased, systematic reviews are specific and focused with a goal of answering a targeted research question in an unbiased way.

Data Characteristics

Number of articles analyzed = 65.
Method of research
Quantitative – 40%
Qualitative – 57%
Mixed method- 3%
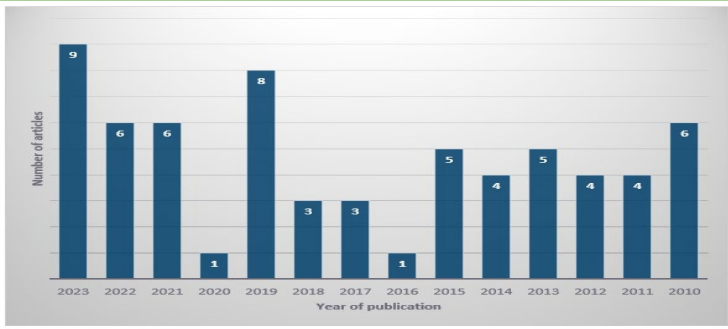
Coding process

Highlights:
- Atlas.Ti used for coding.
- 21 a-priori codes
- 186 inductive codes
- 1,126 unitized data
- 4 major findings or themes
- 16 sub findings or categories

Categories and Themes

Findings

- **Organizational strategy**: Managers can influence or disrupt organizational practices and policies that enhance or impede meaningful DEI progress.
- **Team approach:** Managers can hold team accountable for inclusive practices, thus creating a work environment that sustains inclusivity.
- **Manager Self-development**: There is need for managers to develop and enhance their diversity skills to create a more inclusive work environment.
- **Minority employees experience**: Managers can leverage inclusive leadership behaviors to attract, retain and engage women and minorities while creating equal opportunities and equitable outcomes for all employees.

Recommendations

Promote Inclusive Recruitment Strategy
- Use vendors that have similar DEI values.
- Multiple diverse channels to message open positions.
- Diverse candidate pool for open position
- Diverse interview panel
- Review interview questions to ensure bias is minimized or eliminated.
- Standardized question and rating criteria

Leadership Specific DEI Training
- Educate managers on the history of DEI.
- Importance of leadership diversity
- Train the trainer sessions to aid managers in facilitating DEI sessions.
- Unconscious bias training and impact on leadership diversity

Invest in internal talent.
- Mentorship and sponsorship opportunities
- Networking opportunities including conferences and seminars.
- Ensure women and minorities participate in leadership development programs or support the creation of such program if they don't exist within the organization.
- Stretch assignments.
- Career development plans
- Objective performance reviews and merit-based promotions.
- Offer flexibility and support in work arrangements.
- Offer job shadowing opportunities.
- Inform women and minorities of opportunities and encourage them to apply for leadership positions when the opportunities arise.
- Support women and minorities through job application and interview process.
- When possible, managers should interview every qualified woman and minority candidate for open leadership.