Lived experiences of racial and ethnic minorities in the lodging industry:
A phenomenological study

by

Hasan Birinci

B.S., Ege University, 2011
M.S., University of South Florida, 2016

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Hospitality Management
College of Health and Human Sciences

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2023

Abstract

Racial and ethnic minorities make up more than half of the lodging workforce in the United States yet hold a disproportionally low percentage of management and executive-level positions. The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experience of hotel managers of racial and ethnic minorities who have reached a management level. The problem examined by this study is what factors affect the low representation of racial and ethnic minority managers and how a small percentage of racial and ethnic minority managers may have overcome these barriers to achieve an advanced leadership position.

The phenomenological qualitative study was completed using semi-structured interviews with 11 racial and ethnic minority managers in the lodging industry. NVivo12 software was used to help organize data and identify patterns and themes associated with the lived experiences of the perceived career barriers of the racial and ethnic minority managers in the lodging field.

The research questions explored career barriers and challenges, preparation for career advancement, perceptions of the organization's diversity climate, and essential skills and attributes for success related to their career journeys to leadership in the lodging industry. The qualitative data analysis revealed five major themes: (a) career advancement barriers, (b) perceived diversity climate, (c) personal and professional preparation, (d) networking and mentoring, and (e) essential skills and attributes for success. The results revealed that the lack of representation of racial and ethnic minorities in management in the lodging industry is related to perceived career advancement barriers such as discriminatory treatment, implicit bias, access barriers, language issues, ageism, difficulty becoming accepted and channeling to lower-level position. The findings revealed variables to overcome potential career barriers, including joining helpful networking opportunities, finding good mentors, and preparing for personal and

professional growth. Furthermore, variables important for career success included working hard and having a good work ethic, having effective communication skills, being adaptable, exceeding requirements, having a strong demeanor, being open to learning, and being available for opportunities.

Word Counts: 323

Key Words: Diversity, diversity management, organizational inclusion, perception of diversity climate, phenomenology

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Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank my parents for all the prayers, love, and encouraging words along the way. I also want to thank all my siblings and other family and friends for their support.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my major advisors and dissertation committee for their expertise and encouragement throughout this journey. To my major advisors, Dr. Junehee Kwon and Dr. Kevin Roberts -thank you for your tireless support, continuous motivation and feedback, excellent guidance, and endless patience. I am extremely grateful to my outstanding committee members, Dr. Melinda Markham and Dr. Gyuhyeong Goh, for their valuable advice, feedback, and unparalleled support. I could not achieve this without your support.

I also would like to thank Dr. Cihan Cobanoglu, who opened the door to a world of academia and supported me throughout my journey. To the study participants, I truly appreciate you for sharing your life experiences with candor and honesty. Finally, I would like to thank my dearest friend Dr. Muhittin Cavusoglu who was always there when I needed advice during this journey.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my grandma, Asiye Birinci, who will always be loved and missed.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Over the past few decades, the American workforce has become more diverse, with women and racial and ethnic minorities comprising almost 75% of new entrants (Toossi, 2012; Wallace, 2021). As a result, public and private organizations have implemented diversity policies to increase the representation of minority groups in their workforce. Particularly, public organizations implemented diversity management policies in addition to existing affirmative action or equal employment opportunity related policies to emphasize their exemplary role and improve their legitimacy (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2013).

The multicultural workforce in the American hospitality industry continues to grow due to immigration and demographic changes. In 2017, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported foreign-born persons in the United States labor force made up 17.1% of the total workforce, and this population has increased fourfold over the last three decades (Madera et al., 2013). Moreover, racial and ethnic minorities are the fastest-growing workforce groups, with Hispanic and Black employees the two largest. According to BLS (2021), by the end of 2030, Hispanic workers are estimate to grow and become 21.2% of the total U.S. population, Black workers will comprise 13% of the total workforce, and Asian workers will make up to 6% total workforce (BLS, 2021). The growth of these diverse groups can help organizations create organizational success by increasing productivity, innovation, and effectiveness (Singal, 2014; Wang et al., 2016).

Previous research has shown that inclusive workplace culture can improve workplace diversity by including ethnic minority groups in every aspect of the workplace (Shore et al., 2017). In addition, including racial and ethnic minorities in leadership positions can help diversify organizations by creating more effective recruitment and management of minority

employees (Cook & Glass, 2015). Furthermore, having racial and ethnic minorities in the upper management or boardroom has been linked to positive outcomes on recruitment and retention of minorities in a workplace (Caba, 2018). Previous studies indicated that organizations could gain a competitive advantage by implementing diversity in management practices (Madera, 2013; Richard, 2000). A positive diversity climate within an organization may diminish perceived discrimination, improve job satisfaction, and garner commitment of minority employees (Madera et al., 2011; 2013).

Cox (1994) highlighted two outcomes from the influence of a successfully implemented diversity climate on career expectations. First, effective outcomes could influence how individuals feel about their work and their employer. Individual morale and satisfaction may relate to group identification such as gender and ethnicity in many organizations. Second, in some organizations, the actual career achievement of employees as measured by job performance ratings could be related to group identities. Moreover, diversity in the workplace could increase personal performance and interpersonal communication among employees, provide more efficient dispute resolution, increase a sense of fairness and equity in a work environment, increase productivity on more complex tasks, and increase sales and profits (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015; Von Bergen et al., 2002).

Even though the proportion of racial and ethnic minorities in the workforce has increased, the occupational disparities among the White majority and racial and ethnic minorities have persisted (Byars-Winston et al., 2015), as minorities are still less likely to hold management positions than White employees (Cook & Glass, 2014). Employees from racial and ethnic minorities make up 52.5% of the total lodging workforce in the United States (BLS, 2017), making the lodging industry one of the largest employers of ethnic minorities. However, most of

these minority employees in the hospitality industry work primarily in entry-level positions (BLS, 2017; Costen et al., 2002; Jackson & DeFranco, 2005).

Despite the considerable proportion of the workforce, the underrepresentation of racial and ethnic minorities is apparent at all levels of leadership positions in the lodging industry. Costen et al. (2002) explored the relationship between race and positions in the hotel industry to understand the representation of ethnic minorities in hotel management. The researchers collected demographic data and career histories from 552 hotels in the United States. They found that while minority employees comprised half of lodging employees in 2000, workers from ethnic and racial minorities held only 20% of salaried management positions. According to a 2021 study from the Castell Project, Black representation in leadership positions in the hospitality industry fell from 2019 to 2020. The report highlighted that at year-end 2020, an analysis of 801 hotel company websites indicated only 11% showed Black executives compared to 16% of 630 hotel company websites in 2019 (Castell Project, 2021). Moreover, Black executives represented 1.6% of executives in the lodging industry in 2020, which is less than one-tenth of their 17.5% share of employment in the lodging industry, demonstrating that career advancement is not equitable for Black employees. Such disparity appears persistent as most first- and mid-level managers (66.9%) and executive or senior-level managers (80.3%) in the lodging industry were White (BLS, 2017).

Furthermore, researchers stated that such disparity might be due to a lack of equitable promotion procedures, poor recruitment, or a poor perception of diversity climate (e.g., fairness and inclusion) of an organization (Buttner & Lowe, 2017; Castell Project, 2021; Greenhaus, 1990; Mor Barak, 1988; Price et al., 2005). Moreover, other factors contributing to such disparity included a lack of quality mentoring (Espino & Zambrana, 2019; Essien, 2003), fewer

opportunities for education and training compared to those undertaken by White employees (Kim & O'Brien, 2018; Worsley & Stone, 2011), exclusion from social and informational networks and social clubs (Cook & Glass, 2013; Essien, 2003; Greguletz et al., 2019; McGuire, 2002), access barriers (Madera & Wen, 2013), and downgrading—or being channeled to a lower position in the organization (Essien, 2003; Pager et al., 2009). In addition, perceived discrimination, bias, and stereotyping (Acker, 1990; Castell Project, 2021; Cook & Glass, 2015; Moss & Tilly, 2001; Pager et al., 2009; Reskin, 2011) and racial tokenism (Chused, 1988; Kim & O'Brien, 2018) are cited as possible reasons for such a disparity in the representation of senior-level leaders from racial and ethnic minorities compared to the representation of White employees in senior leadership positions.

This underrepresentation of leaders from racial and ethnic minorities among managers in the lodging industry is significant and an important topic to study. Considering the importance and potential benefits of workplace diversity (Cook & Glass, 2014), this study sought to explain why the underrepresentation of racial and ethnic minority leadership exists and how this representation may be increased in management. Findings from this study provide recommendations and considerations for the lodging industry regarding the creation and implementation of more effective workplace diversity initiatives.

Background

Previous studies explored the challenges and barriers that racial and ethnic minorities have faced (Clevenger & Singh, 2013; Shinnar, 2007), their perception of career opportunities (Grant, 2019), and the benefits of the diverse work environments in the hospitality industry (Ellis & Keys, 2015). However, there is scarce research that focuses primarily on the experiences of racial and ethnic minority managers in the hospitality industry. This phenomenon needs

scholarly investigation for several reasons. First, there is a lack of theoretical research on diversity and diversity management in the hospitality industry. Much diversity-related research in hospitality management has been atheoretical or with a heavy focus on literature review. Second, most diversity and diversity management studies used students in tourism and hospitality management programs as the sample, raising concerns regarding the generalizability of the results to the industry (Kalargyrou & Costen, 2017). Curtis and Dreachslin (2008) found that studies involving students have more positive outcomes than those conducted with industry professionals. Third, most studies on diversity and diversity management primarily focus on gender, age, migrant status, and cultural diversity, whereas race and ethnicity are under-investigated (Manoharan & Signal, 2017).

Diversity and diversity management are vital in the hospitality industry which comprise one of the most diverse workforces in the United States (Madera et al., 2012; Manoharan & Singal, 2017). Despite the fact that percentage of racial and ethnic minorities employees in the lodging industry exceeds the 36% of the general minority workforce, racial and ethnic minorities are substantially underrepresented as 19% of senior management or executive positions are racial and ethnic minorities (BLS, 2017; Kalargyrou & Costen, 2017; NAACP, 2019).

Moreover, the lack of representation of racial and ethnic minorities in upper leadership of the lodging industry has become a more significant challenge than before. According to a 2007 Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) report, 71% of top management positions in the lodging industry were held by European Americans, and by 2015, that proportion had grown to 81% (NAACP, 2019). Thus, based on historical data, the lodging industry is moving in the reverse direction regarding diversity and inclusion (NAACP, 2019).

Based on the current data, the representation of minorities among the lodging industry leadership will fail to achieve parity with their White counterparts. Despite efforts of both public and private industries to increase ethnic minority representation, challenges such as limited access to information and a lack of mentoring, fairness, and inclusion continue to exist (Smith & Joseph, 2010). The specific problems contributing to the current challenges include (a) racial and ethnic minorities being labeled as out-group in organizations based on their identity, and consequently, judged negatively regarding career advancement (Stets & Burke, 2000); (b) racial and ethnic minority managers may not have the same career return on their human capital investments such as education, knowledge, training, skills, and experience (James, 2000); and (c) racial and ethnic minorities may have scarce social capital sources, such as fewer informal networking opportunities and less access to information and social support (James, 2000; Siebert et al., 2001).

Previous studies highlighted diversity management practices and policies that assisted in attracting and maintaining racial and ethnic minorities in the workplace, and how an inclusive work culture helps racial and ethnic minorities receive equal opportunities (Shore et al., 2018). Several methods were identified to increase diversity in the workplace and management positions. Blayney and Blotnicky (2010) stated that mentoring minority managers with executives, role modeling for racial and ethnic minorities (including minority employees in formal and informal networks with White peers) and repairing the organizational diversity culture could increase diversity in the workplace. Each of these ideas holds potential to improve career advancement opportunities for potential leaders from racial and ethnic minorities in the lodging industry.

Statement of the Problem

Ethnic minorities make up more than half of the lodging workforce in the United States yet hold a disproportionally low percentage of senior and executive positions in the lodging industry (BLS, 2015; NAACP, 2019). Given the significantly low representation of racial and ethnic minorities in management positions in the lodging industry, this project aimed to explore the lived experience of hotel managers of racial and ethnic minorities, to identify factors affecting the low representation of racial and ethnic minority managers, and to explore ways to improve upward mobility of racial and ethnic minority employees in the lodging industry.

A phenomenological method was designed to collect and analyze data that explains potential barriers and obstacles racial and ethnic minorities face in their advancement to management level positions in the lodging industry. An analysis of the lived experiences of racial and ethnic minorities who had reached the management level revealed factors contributing to low representation of minorities among managers in the lodging industry and provides recommendations for more successful advancement within the organizations. In other words, this study was designed to provide a rich description of the essence of ethnic minority leadership experience so that profiles of successful ethnic minorities could be built, and successful career paths identified to help other ethnic minorities advance into management level positions. Furthermore, the study assessed perceptions of racial and ethnic minority managers related to diversity, diversity climate, and organizational inclusion.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experience of racial and ethnic minority managers who had reached a management level in the lodging industry. Moreover, the study explored perceptions of diversity, diversity climate, and organizational inclusion of racial

and ethnic minority managers. The study used social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978), human capital theory (Becker, 1975), and social capital theory (Coleman, 1986) along with research on organizational demography (Mor Barak, 1999) to develop the study's research questions. The specific objectives included the following:

- To explore the lived career advancement experiences of racial and ethnic minority managers in the lodging industry.

- To identify the challenges faced by racial and ethnic minority managers in their organization.

- To identify how racial and ethnic minority managers are prepared for advancement opportunities.

- To examine the perception of racial and ethnic minority managers on the diversity climate within their organizations in the lodging industry.

- To explore the perception of racial and ethnic minority managers on organizational inclusion in the lodging industry.

The phenomenological qualitative research explored the lived experiences of 11 racial and ethnic minority managers utilizing methods adapted from Moustakas (1994). With this approach, the researcher was able to describe and analyze what the ethnic minority managers in the lodging industry had in common as they described their experiences with a specifically identified phenomenon. Phenomenology aims to explain what the participant experienced and how they experienced it (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Moustakas, 1994). This approach was appropriate for this study as it explored the phenomenon of being a racial and ethnic minority manager in the lodging industry.

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory elucidates social structures and individual identity through the meanings people attach to memberships in salient identity groups, such as racial, ethnic, or gender groups (Tajfel, 1978). These meanings, in turn, shape the social interactions of these groups with others from in-groups (members of their own group) and out-groups (other identity groups; Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Wharton, 2002). This process could have consequences of self-enhancing outcomes for oneself. For example, Stets and Burke (2000) described how socially structured identities may lead to members of an in-group being judged positively and those from the out-group negatively (in-group favoritism). Furthermore, this in-group favoritism may lead to negative stereotyping and subordinating of out-groups (Shinnar, 2008; Wharton, 1992).

Davis (2006) stated that people tend to favor those who are like themselves and are inclined to negatively categorize or stereotype people who are different. For instance, Elliot and Smith (2004) revealed that most executives, regardless of race or sex, are more likely to fill power positions (management positions) they supervise with similar people in line with social identity theory. These socially constructed identities could lead to in-group favoritism and negative stereotyping (Chow et al., 2004). The distinctive identity of employees in organizations may result in the exclusion of ethnic minorities from group memberships, and therefore less access to support, resources, and information (Chow et al., 2004). This phenomenon may endanger career advancement for workers from these minorities. The perception of unfair treatment subsequently constructs a negative work environment (Chow et al., 2004). This study utilized social identity theory to understand what ethnic managers experienced and how they

experienced it. The theory also enabled the researcher to understand how racial and ethnic minorities perceive the organizational diversity climate.

Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory uses human capital investments such as educational attainment, work experiences, training, and networking to examine the expectations and outcomes of individuals, and how these capital investments impact employment outcomes (Becker et al., 1990). Human capital investments should lead to a higher return in organizational tenure opportunities, organizational access, promotional opportunities, compensation, and equitable treatment.

Previous research highlighted that women and minorities do not receive the same career return on their human capital investments (Smith & Joseph, 2010). For instance, compared to every dollar earned by their White counterparts, Black workers in a full-time position in the United States earn approximately $0.76 and Hispanic workers $0.73 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2020). These pay disparities have persisted despite the equal employment opportunity legislation, and these disparities are more pronounced for minority women (AAUW, 2020; Smith & Joseph, 2010). Furthermore, Cocchiara et al. (2006) found that human capital investments did not equitably impact employment outcomes for Black and Latino women compared to their White counterparts and the men from their own minority group. Parks-Yancy (2006) stated that White men in the workforce were likely to advance faster and further in their careers and earn higher wages than minority employees and women of any racial or ethnic group. Therefore, one of the possible explanations for the underrepresentation of minorities in upper-level management in the lodging industry may be due to disproportionate human capital resources available to

them. Additionally, human capital investments may not have provided the same return for ethnic minorities as they did for White colleagues in the industry (Parks-Yancy, 2006).

Social Capital Theory

Social capital theory states that the social networks to which employees belong influence the degree of racial and gender similarities between them and others in their network (Coleman, 1986). Social capital theory assumes that certain resources are more available to individuals who have better network relationships with their peers, subordinates, and superiors (James, 2000). Having access to and use of these resources may impact career trajectories where, for instance, employees with extensive social ties are more likely to receive a higher quantity of job-related information than those with weak social ties (Granovetter, 2018).

According to Lin (2001), two mechanisms could cause social inequality: capital deficits and return deficits. Capital deficits refer to the relative shortages of access to social capital resources for one group compared to those for another. Organizations may invest more in the human capital or social capital of their White employees compared to the employees from ethnic minorities or for the women in the organization (Ely et al., 2011; Lean in & McKinsey, 2015; McGuire, 2002). For example, researchers found that White female employees and Black employees received far fewer opportunities to receive useful information, opportunities, and career advancements compared to White male employees (Elliott,1999; McDonald et al., 2009). One of the main reasons such disparities occur was because the social ties of the White female employees and Black employees did not possess the rich social capital resources that facilitates upward mobility. In other words, the women and racial and ethnic minorities working at the organization may be embedded in less useful social circles (Lin, 2002).

Return deficits refer to the phenomenon where a variety of social groups may have similar quality and quantity of social capital yet generate differential returns or outcomes among the members of different social groups (Lin, 2001). For example, two mid-level managers, one White male and one man from an ethnic minority may both form a close relationship with an executive-level manager who is also a White man. Even though both mid-level managers may have the same relationship with the executive-level manager, the returns on this relationship may not be equal between them. In this case, White mid-level managers may have greater gains in terms of return on the connection with an executive-level manager and receive greater access to career-enhancing information than the ethnic minority mid-level manager (Parks-Yancy, 2006).

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study. The main overarching research question and four sub-questions are:

Main Question: What is the lived experience of racial and ethnic minority managers in the lodging industry?

- SQ1: What are the perceived and experienced barriers to the career advancement of racial and ethnic minority managers in the lodging industry?

- SQ2: How do the perceptions of the organizational diversity climate affect the experiences of racial and ethnic minority managers in the lodging industry?

- SQ3: How do racial and ethnic minority managers prepare for career advancement opportunities in the lodging industry?

- SQ4: What are the perceptions of racial and ethnic minority managers regarding what specific skills, attributes, and strategies influence their career advancement in the lodging industry?

Significance of the Study

The study revealed challenges experienced by racial and ethnic minority employees and managers in the lodging industry, and it provided strategies for improving the diversity of managers in the lodging industry. In addition, the lived experiences of the racial and ethnic minority managers increased understanding of possible career pathways for racial and ethnic minority employees who seek career advancement in the lodging industry. Results of this study provides hospitality companies (specifically, hotels) with a better understanding of the challenges faced by racial and ethnic minorities in their pursuit of higher-level management positions.

Hospitality operators may become aware of the experiences of ethnic minorities in terms of career advancement and the barriers they must overcome to advance to a leadership position. The study was essential because data provided important insight into the reasons racial and ethnic minorities are significantly underrepresented in managerial and executive positions in the lodging industry. Understanding and exploring the essence of racial and ethnic minority leadership experience provided a new perspective on racial and ethnic minorities striving for more success on their path to senior- and executive-level leadership positions.

Definitions of Key Terms

Diversity: An understanding and accepting of individual differences regardless of race, gender, or age (Byrd & Scott, 2012).

Diversity management: Planning and implementing organizational systems and practices to manage people so that the potential advantages of diversity are maximized while its potential disadvantages are minimized (Cox, 1993, p. 11).

Organizational inclusion: Inclusive environments that allow people from all backgrounds—not

only members of identity groups historically identified as the most powerful—to be

treated fairly, valued, and included in the decision-making process (Nishii, 2013).

Perception of diversity climate: The workplace environment related to diversity as described

through the shared perceptions of the employees regarding the diversity policies,

practices, and procedures of the organization (Gelfand et al., 2005).

Phenomenology: A qualitative research method that seeks to understand the meaning, structure,

and essence of the culture and lived experiences of a phenomenon by a particular group

of people (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 introduces the study and describes the reasons for exploring deeper the lived

experiences of a specific group of mid- to low-level managers (in this case, a group of 11 men

and women who identify as members of a racial or ethnic minority) regarding the barriers each

have faced in their professional aspiration to achieve an executive level leadership role in the

lodging industry. The statement of the problem and purpose of the study were presented

followed by a brief description of the three theoretical models that align with the study. This

information was followed by the research questions, significance of the study, definitions of key

terms and a broad description of how the study was organized.

Chapter 2 begins with a review of the literature in the areas of diversity in the workforce,

diversity management, organizational diversity climate. Then the three theoretical models social

identify theory, theory of human capital, and social capital theory) are reviewed in more depth

and the chapter ends with description of the phenomenological approach selected for this study.

Chapter 3 provides detailed research methods used in this study. This includes the research questions, research design, data collection process, the data analysis procedures, and a summary. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study and discussions of the five primary themes that emerged. Chapter 5 contains a discussion of the conclusions drawn from the data analysis, implications for future research, and recommendations to selected stakeholders.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experience of racial and ethnic minority managers who had reached a management position in the lodging industry. This chapter begins with a review of the literature in the areas of diversity in the workforce, diversity management, and organizational diversity climate. Then three theoretical models are presented, which support the academic inquiry of the study and inform the research design. Each of three theories (i.e., social identity theory, theory of human capital, and social capital theory) is reviewed in more depth. This chapter ends with a review of the existing literature about the underrepresentation of leadership role models from a greater range of racial and ethnic backgrounds in the lodging industry, the potential causes behind the career barriers faced by minority leaders, and a description of the phenomenological approach selected for this study.

Diversity in the Workforce

Diversity describes an understanding and acceptance of individual differences regardless of race, gender, or age (Byrd & Scott, 2012). Caver and Livers' (2002) research on diverse work environments demonstrated that diverse teams are superior to homogenous teams in terms of problem-solving, decision-making, innovation, and dealing with complex situations.

Diversity itself is neither positive nor negative; the potential exists for both. Barajas (2018) claimed that diversity in the workplace results in either success or barriers to success for those in the organization. Similarly, Ashikali and Groeneveld (2015) stated increased diversity in the workplace could have both positive and negative work-related outcomes. Numerous studies exist, however, to convey the positive potential of an organization that has embraced its internal diversity. For example, diversity in the workplace could increase personal performance and interpersonal communication among employees; provide more efficient dispute resolution;

improve fairness and equity among the employees in the work environment; increase

productivity on more complex tasks; and increase overall sales, revenue, and profits (Ashikali &

Groeneveld, 2015; Von Bergen et al., 2002). The negative potential outcomes have also been

documented in the literature. For example, diversity could result in decreased group

identification, which could result in lower employment commitment, employee retention, and job

satisfaction (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015).

Conversely, Kim et al. (2015) stated diversity inclusion increased employee performance

and job satisfaction. Hence, diversity needs to be managed strategically and tactically at both the

upper-levels of leadership and at the mid-management levels (Kaur, 2014). Ellis and Keys

(2015) posited that workplace diversity encourages creativity and innovation; yet Elliott and

Smith (2004) reported that one of the essential problems associated with the changing dynamics

in the workplace has been an organization's initiatives to increase and improve workplace

diversity.

Previous research studies (Makhdoomi & Nika, 2017; Rijamampianina & Carmichael,

2005) have described several dimensions of diversity including (a) primary dimensions (i.e.,

race, age, ethnicity, disability, gender, etc.), (b) secondary dimensions (i.e., religion, education,

lifestyle, culture, sexual orientation, political affiliation, native language, nationality, etc.), and

(c) tertiary dimensions (i.e., cultural beliefs, group norms, and personal or group assumptions,

values, perceptions, feelings, and attitudes). Diversity in the workforce is increasing as ethnic

minorities are forecasted to continue growing (Shore et al., 2017). The trend of an expanding

workforce with ever-increasing numbers of ethnic minorities entering the labor market is having

a tangible impact on organizations everywhere, but especially in the lodging industry, which is

one of the most diverse industries. This study explored how the issues accompanying race and

ethnic diversity contribute to a better understanding of the current underrepresentation of ethnic minority managers in the lodging industry.

Demographic characteristics of organizations, including compositions of race and sex, shape the meaning individuals attach to their membership in an identity group at work (Ely, 1994; Mor Barak et al., 1998; Wharton, 1992). Researchers have argued that the extreme overrepresentation of White men in organizational positions of authority could have a negative impact on subordinates who are women and people of color (Ely, 1994; Mor Barak et al., 1998; Pfeffer, 1989; Ridgeway, 1988). Researchers have also identified evidence of the discriminative treatment experienced by women and racial and ethnic minorities in the workplace (Flores & Matkin, 2014; Levin et al., 2002). The issue identified most frequently facing these populations is limited access to or exclusion from professional and informal interactive networks within an organization (Ibarra, 1993; Miller, 1986; Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990; O'Leary & Ickovics, 1992). These networks grant a variety of instrumental resources that are crucial for job effectiveness and career advancement along with expressive benefits such as friendship and social support (Ibarra, 1993; Mor Barak et al., 1988). On the other hand, exclusion from these networks may limit access to information related to job opportunities, high status peer networks, potential mentors, and peer support (Cook & Glass, 2013; Ibarra, 1995; McGuire, 2002). McGuire (2002) stated that even when racial and ethnic minorities obtain leadership positions, they are less likely to receive work-related support from their social networks.

Diversity in the hospitality workplace is growing faster, and the number of individuals who belong to racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States has been increasing substantially (Kim, 2006). As the hospitality industry becomes more diversified with changing trends, the need to interact effectively with these minorities becomes critical.

Diversity Management

Cox (1993) defined managing diversity as "planning and implementing organizational systems and practices to manage people so that the potential advantages of diversity are maximized while its potential disadvantages are minimized" (p. 11). For this study, the definition of diversity management recommended by Olsen and Martins (2012) was adopted: "the utilization of human resource (HR) management practices to (i) increase or maintain the variation in human capital on some given dimension(s), (ii) ensure that variation in human capital on some given dimension(s) does not hinder the achievement of organizational objectives, or (iii) ensure that variation in human capital on some given dimension(s) facilitates the achievement of organizational objectives" (p. 1169).

Olsen and Martin's (2012) research on diversity management indicated that some organizations attempted to implement all three practices described above. In contrast, the researchers also stated that other organizations focus solely on either the first practice of increasing or maintaining variation in human capital or the first and second practices that ensures human capital dimensions do not hinder the achievement of organizational objectives. Meanwhile, Gilbert et al. (1999) described an optional organizational approach designed to create greater inclusion of all peoples into informal social networks and formal organizational programs.

Diversity management has received attention recently from academics and practitioners because of benefits to the organization and the people working in it. Research from both Barajas (2018) and Kim et al. (2015) claim that diversity management improves organizational competitiveness by providing an inclusive organizational environment that values individual differences. The concept of diversity management was introduced in the United States in 1961

with initiatives such as affirmative action and has become more important following the 1980s and 1990s with updated policies and laws such as Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Civil Rights Act of 1991. Even though affirmative action directs attention to the selection and recruitment processes of public and private organizations, diversity management has been widely used in organizations and is advertised as a prominent feature of HR policies (Manoharan & Singal, 2017). While diversity refers to the differences amongst individuals employed by organizations, Manoharan and Singal (2017) stated that diversity management refers to policies and practices created to acknowledge and recognize diversity while leveraging these differences to reinforce organizational goals (e.g., increasing innovation, broadening customer satisfaction, fulfilling corporate social responsibility, or gaining competitive advantage).

Diversity management could be essential when used correctly and has successfully demonstrated the best way to appropriate group differences while managing or minimizing the disadvantages of diversity in the workforce (Caba, 2018; Okcu, 2014). According to Ashikali and Groeneveld (2015), diversity management should, in practice, stimulate the positive cognitive outcomes of diversity and alleviate the adverse effects of intergroup biases. In such situations, diversity should lead to more positive work- and employee-related outcomes. For this reason, diversity management should encompass programs, policies, and management activities that can address diversity in the organizational workforce to put forward its potentially positive effects (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015). Therefore, diversity management should aim to manage a diverse workforce effectively by changing organizational practices and climates.

Diversity management is not the same as equal employment or affirmative action policies and programs. These two programs aim to increase the representation of minority groups in the organization, often by setting quantitative targets (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015; Kidder et al.,

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2004; Swanson, 2002). However, compliance with quotas or government regulations does not address managing cultural differences of diverse groups, nor does it equate to managing diversity effectively. Diversity management practices are typically performed for several reasons, such as helping employees with diverse backgrounds come together to achieve organizational goals. In addition, Caba (2018) claimed diversity management improves the perceptions of diverse employees, demonstrating that organizations respect the diverse workforce. Diversity management and diverse workers are meant to assist in recruiting, managing, training, retaining, and leveraging human capital with the visible and the hidden differences various racial and ethnic groups of workers such as Hispanic, African American, and Asian (Manoharan & Signal, 2017; Olsen & Martins, 2016).

Diversity management has been studied heavily in general business and is gaining more attention from the hospitality field, yet it has lacked a theoretical foundation (McGrandle, 2017). Many of the studies on diversity management are based on demographics, which assists in managing some of the main differences such as age, gender, cultural diversity, and migrant status (Guillaume et al., 2013; Manoharan & Signal, 2017). Most research on diversity management mainly focused on gender, age, migrant status, and cultural diversity, while race and ethnicity are under-investigated (Manoharan & Signal, 2017).

Various diversity management approaches have been proposed with multiple dimensions. Some researchers combined inclusivity with diversity management in their studies (Hope-Pelled et al., 1999; Shore et al., 2012; 2018). Recent management approaches in diversity have raised the awareness of organizational leaders to the importance of an inclusive work environment (Nishii & Rich, 2014). Nishii (2013) described inclusive environments that allow people from all backgrounds to be valued, treated fairly, and included in the decision-making process—not just

those from historically powerful identity groups. Inclusion provides equal opportunity for individuals from socially marginalized groups to participate and contribute while simultaneously providing opportunities for individuals of nonmarginalized groups. Inclusion supports engagement at all levels of the organizations (Shore et al., 2018). These researchers argued the most prominent distinction between inclusion and diversity is that inclusion stems from voluntary actions, whereas diversity can be mandated or legislated. Based on this description, inclusion may provide opportunities through organizational and managerial practices that offer equal access to employees who are linked to socially identified groups experiencing greater discrimination (Bell et al., 2016).

While diversity management practices primarily focused on bringing more women, racial and ethnic minorities, and others from marginalized groups into the workplace, inclusion practices seek to develop equal access to information, decision making, resources, and upward mobility opportunities. Hays-Thomas and Bendick (2013) described diversity as a mixture of characteristics within the workforce that affect how people think, feel, and behave at work and that in significant ways affect their acceptance, job performance, satisfaction, or advancement in the organization. On the other hand, the researchers reported inclusion emphasizes new interest in workplace policies, practices, and climate that shape workers' experiences with these characteristics.

Therefore, diversity management practices help bring racial and ethnic minorities to the workplace, and inclusion helps racial and ethnic minorities receive equal opportunities through the five inclusion constructs (Shore et al., 2018). The "workgroup inclusion" (the employees perceive they are included) is the first of these constructs, describing the individual's experience within their group. The second construct is "leader inclusion," where leaders of the organization

accept and apply diversity and inclusion management practices. The third construct is "perceived organizational inclusion," which encompasses the individual-level perception of an employee's inclusion in the organization (Hope-Pelled et al., 1999; Shore et al., 2018). The fourth construct consists of organizational inclusion practices focused on established and supported best practices created and implemented by the senior leadership to enhance inclusion (Shore et al., 2018). The final construct is "inclusive climate," which recognizes and addresses the potential problems diversity brings, such as conflicts and turnover, that need to be addressed at the organizational level (Guillaume et al., 2014; Shore et al., 2018). These five inclusion constructs, as well as the three theories reviewed earlier, were used to develop the interview protocol for this study.

Perception of Organizational Diversity Climate

The perceived diversity climate is described as the employees' shared perceptions of their organizations' policies, practices, and procedures related to diversity (Gelfand et al., 2005). Cox (1994) stated that diversity climate is formed from four "individual-level factors" (personal identity structures, prejudice, stereotyping, and personality type), three "group or intergroup factors" (cultural differences, ethnocentrism, and intergroup conflict), and four "organizational-level factors" (organizational culture and acculturation process, informal integration, structural integration, and institutional bias in human resource systems).

McKay and Avery (2015) stated that the first, individual-level factors, depends on the clear understanding of which employee social identity (i.e., gender, race, ethnicity, etc.) subject group those members to different types of biased treatment (i.e., prejudice, stereotyping, etc.). The second, group or intergroup factors, focuses attention on how individual differences in perspectives influence intergroup relations among the employees. Finally, the organizational-level factors emphasize organizational-level considerations of diversity management practices

such as fairness in human resource policies (e.g., standardized selection procedures, performance appraisals) and the integration of underrepresented groups (e.g., ethnic minorities, women) against hierarchical positions in an organization and within informal communication channels (McKay & Avery, 2015). Previous researchers stated that members of lower-status groups may most likely be excluded from top management positions and informal networks within the firm (Ibarra, 1995; McKay & Avery, 2015).

Mor Barak et al. (1998) analyzed the dimensionality of diversity climate and examined the extent of racial, ethnic, and gender differences in employee perceptions of the diversity climate in an electronics company. The authors conceptualized the overall diversity climate in the organization under two dimensions: employee views of organizational dimension (how management's policies and procedures affect ethnic minorities and women in the case of discrimination) and personal dimension (an individual's view, prejudice, or prejudging of other people who are different and therefore, less able to do the job). Mor Barak et al. (1998) reported the organizational-level dimension consists of the organizational fairness factor (if the employee selection, hiring, and promotion procedures were conducted in a non-discriminatory manner) and the organizational inclusion factor (the extent that the work environment is free from interpersonal biases and prejudices). Moreover, the personal-level dimension consists of personal diversity value (the extent employees view diversity as adding value to the workplace) and personal comfort (the degree that employees feel at ease with communicating with individuals from different backgrounds). Mor Barak et al. (1998) collected data from 2,686 employees with diverse ethnic groups in a large U.S. electronic company. The results showed that White employees reported significantly higher scores on the overall diversity climate scale, organizational fairness subscale, and organizational inclusion scale compared to Black

employees. White men viewed an organization as fairer and more inclusive of women and racial and ethnic minorities than other groups, with Black employees viewing the organization the least favorably of all groups. This discrepancy in the perceptions between the White employees and those from other racial and ethnic minority groups on the organizational dimension may be explained by the expression of covert prejudicial beliefs, such as unequal treatment and covert discrimination (Swin et al., 1995). For instance, Greenhaus et al. (1990) found that Black workers had a lower rate of promotion and were more likely to plateau (more than 7 years) in a job than White employees. Additionally, Mor Barak et al. (1998) found that White female employees and employees from racial and ethnic minorities all saw more value and felt more comfortable with diversity than White male employees concerning the personal dimension. This study provided evidence of racial, ethnic, and gender differences in diversity climate perceptions, with White men having a less favorable perception of diversity and diversity management than women or ethnic minorities (Mor Barak et al., 1998).

Diversity management policies may influence fairness in the organizational treatment of women and racial and ethnic minority groups, allocation of resources, and access to power (Mor Barak et al., 1998). Based on the social identity theory of intergroup behavior, memberships in identity groups are not impartial from memberships in organizational groups (Alderfer & Smith, 1982; Mor Barak et al., 1998). Typically, the more positive perceptions of personal and organizational dimensions, the more accepting of diversity the organizational climates (Mor Barak et al., 1988). In addition, individuals who benefit from current organizational policies and procedures were more likely to perceive them as fairer.

Previous studies indicated that female employees and racial and ethnic minority employees face discrimination, limited access, and exclusion in the workplace more than White

male employees (Chow et al., 2004; Mor Barak et al.,1988). Ilgen and Youtz (1986) stated that ethnic minority employees might experience treatment discrimination after gaining access to the organization. Discriminatory treatment may reduce the job performance of ethnic minority employees, produce slower promotion rates, offer fewer opportunities to develop job-related skills, and affect the career prospects of racial and ethnic minorities compared to White employees in the organization (Greenhaus et al., 1990; Ilgen & Youtz, 1986). Hence, organizational inclusion and fairness dimensions become vital in how racial and ethnic minority employees perceive organizational diversity. Organizations that have an inclusive work environment will, consequently, have more positive outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job performance, organizational citizenship, and creativity (Shore et al., 2011).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework provided the foundation for researching the lived experiences of ethnic minority leaders in the lodging industry. The theories reviewed provided a guide through the fundamental principles that explicate the existence of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The specific theories utilized to understand the underrepresentation of racial and ethnic minority leaders in the lodging industry included (a) social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978), (b) human capital theory (Becker, 1975), and (c) social capital theory (Coleman, 1986). Each is useful for exploring the effects of social group membership on the organizational relationship. These theories were utilized to understand the lived experiences of racial and ethnic minority leaders in the lodging industry. Understanding the experiences of those from ethnic minorities is vital to this study and its focus on the underrepresentation of leaders from ethnic minorities in hotel management.

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory explains how social structures shape the meaning people assign to their membership in identity groups such as racial, ethnic, or gender groups and how this, in turn, shapes their social interactions with members of their own group (in-groups) and other identity groups (out-groups; Tajfel, 1978: Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Social identity theory posits that people prefer to interact with people from the group they identify with rather than others. Through a social comparison process, individuals like themselves are labeled as in-group, and individuals who differ from themselves are labeled as the out-group (Stets & Burke, 2000). This process could have consequences of self-enhancing outcomes for individuals. Specifically, the self-enhancing process could lead the in-group to be judged positively and the out-group to be judged negatively (Stets & Burke, 2000). Tajfel et al. (1979) discussed in-group favoritism over the out-group derogation in decision-maker evaluations and behaviors and stated social categorizations per-se are sufficient enough to trigger inter-group discrimination supporting the in-group. In other words, the existence of an out-group is enough to cause an inter-group competitive or discriminatory response in the in-group.

Alderfer and Smith (1982) investigated the nature of group and intergroup relations in organizations by applying social identity theory. They divided groups into two broad classes: identity groups and organizational groups. Identity groups were categorized under particular demographic characteristics such as sex, ethnicity, age, and family. Moreover, organizational groups were regarded as groups who share nearly common organizational positions, have equivalent work experiences, and consequently have the same organizational view (Alderfer & Smith, 1982). Alderfer and Smith (1982) further stated that intergroup relations in organizations is that membership in identity group is not liberated of membership in organizational groups and

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organizations assign members to a particular group based on division of labor and hierarchy of authority. Hence, certain positions in the organization might be occupied or filled by a particular identity group.

According to the social identity theory, identity has two components: a personal component derived from idiosyncratic characteristics such as personality, physical, and intellectual traits; and a social component derived from salient group memberships such as class, nationality, sex, and race (Ashforth & Mael, 1989: Tajfel, 2010). Social identity is an individual's perception that they belong to a social category or group (Abrams & Hogg, 2006). The social component of identity involves self-categorization and an attachment of value to the particular social category (Mor Barak et al., 1988). Thus, an individual's knowledge of their membership in a specific social group (group categorization) and value attachment constitutes social identity (Turner & Giles, 1981). Although the proportion of ethnic minorities in the workforce has increased, the occupational disparities between White employees and those from ethnic minorities have been lasting (Byars-Winston et al., 2015). The upper management and top executive positions are mainly held by White men. For instance, in 2018, Black employees comprised 12% of the workforce; however, only 6.5% of managers are black (BLS, 2019). Mor Barak et al. (1988) emphasized that social identity comes from the categorizations of people, the uniqueness and importance of the group, the salience of outgroups, and other factors linked with the formation of the group.

The social identity theory of intergroup behavior may explain the reasons why racial and ethnic minorities are excluded or included in particular groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Social identity stems from the social categorization of personal identity. When social identity establishes a positive outcome (e.g., access to exclusive benefits), individuals and groups tend to

protect their social identity (Caprapinha, 2013). Contrarily, in situations where social identity is perceived as a concern, the personal interest of individuals is "jeopardized because their group has to compete with other groups for scarce resources" (Branscombe et al., 1999, p.36). In such situations where individuals felt that they were treated differently in terms of gender or ethnicity, they may resist and consider the situation to be unjust (Branscombe et al., 1999). Furthermore, they may feel more likely that they were victims of prejudice and were being prejudged based on their membership category, rather than seen as a unique individual.

The meanings people attach to their identity group will shape their social interactions with people from in-groups and out-groups (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Wharton, 2002). Organizational demographic studies investigated how in-groups and out-groups form and function. Individuals prefer to interact with people from their own group who are similar to their category (in-group) rather than dissimilar or out-group members. This process is described as similarity-attraction and stems from the principle of homophily (Caprapinha, 2013). This process could have consequences of self-enhancing outcomes for the individual. Conversely, dissimilarity-repulsion theorized that dissimilar individuals and groups will not be attracted to each other and thus will be judged negatively, shunned, ignored, or excluded resulting in negative stereotyping (Stets & Burke, 2000; Wharton, 1992). Based on their identity group, individuals may be vulnerable to exclusion in the work environment. Mor Barak (2000) stated that identities could be readily observable characteristics such as gender, age, race, or ethnicity— or less visible factors such as religion, education, and sexual orientation.

Social categorization, based on socio-demographic factors, may be a more prominent root of differential or unequal treatment in the workplace (Caprapinha, 2013; Hope Pelled et al., 1999). Mor Barak (2000) offered two vital observations while exploring this phenomenon. First,

the author claimed that it could be easier to develop prejudices, preconceptions, biases, and stereotypes to discriminate against people who are viewed differently. Second, visible and invisible diversity factors are related, which means that observable characteristics are correlated with more complex and implicit differences in perspectives and beliefs (Mor Barak, 2000). Researchers have stated that dissimilar individuals and individuals from lower socio-demographic groups, such as women and people of underrepresented groups, are more likely to be excluded from networks of information, opportunities, and authority (Caprapinha, 2013; Findler et al., 2007; Reskin et al., 1999).

Racial and ethnic minorities might be aware of how they are treated and valued in the hospitality industry because their racial and ethnic minority status is a source of identity (Wen & Madera, 2013). Previous studies highlighted that racial and ethnic minorities tend to experience more career barriers and tend to have lower status positions than White employees do (Goldman et al., 2006; Mor Barak, 2000). This phenomenon may endanger career advancement for minorities. For instance, although racial and ethnic minorities comprise 52.5% of the lodging workforce in 2015 (BLS, 2015; NAACP, 2019), only 19% of the managers identify from racial and ethnic minorities. Since racial and ethnic minority employees are statistically a minority in upper-level management positions, they are more aware of their racial and ethnic identity and have significantly higher experiences with career barriers (Avery et al., 2008; Levin et al., 2002; Wen & Madera, 2013). This study used social identity theory to understand what racial and ethnic managers experienced and how they experienced it. The theory also enables researchers to understand how racial and ethnic minority managers perceive the organizational diversity climate.

Human Capital Theory

Becker (1975) developed the human capital theory and investigated activities that influence future monetary scenarios. According to this theory, individuals are classified by job and wage levels based on their human capital investments. The human capital theory illustrates that individuals possess attributes like education, knowledge, training, skills, and experiences which provide advantages for them in the work environment (Becker, 2002). Individual successes heavily depend on how extensively and effectively people invest in themselves. Employees who invest in their human capital (i.e., training, education, experience, skills development) are more likely to have more organizational tenure opportunities and management-level positions (Tharenou et al., 1994). Thus, human capital theory proposes that benefits increase with each unit's growth in human capital investments (e.g., education, training, organizational tenure, years employed).

Elliott and Smith (2004) stated that human capital deficiencies were more specifically related to education among the Latino population and work experience among White women. Moreover, James (2000) conducted a study on race-related differences in promotions and support within an organization and found that human capital resources (education and training) did not mediate the relationship between race and promotion rate, but human capital moderated the relationship between race and promotion, which meant that investing in human capital led to higher income and career advancement for White managers than for Black managers. In addition, Black managers reported a slower promotion rate and less psychosocial support than White managers. According to Cocchiara et al. (2006) human capital investments did not lead equal impact on career advancement for Black and Latino women compared to their White counterparts and men from their own minority group.

Disparate human capital available for ethnic minorities may contribute to their underrepresentation in upper-level management positions in the lodging industry. For instance, Elliott and Smith (2004) investigated racial and gender inequalities in the workplace and assessed differential access in workplace power among racial and ethnic minorities and women relative to White men. They found that among Latinos and White women, increasing inequality in the organization were primarily results of human capital deficiencies compared to White men (Elliott & Smith, 2004). Findings of the study revealed that educational differences among Latinos and White women were the main reason behind the inequalities. In summary, racial and ethnic minorities are known to be underrepresented in management positions, which leads researchers to believe that they have fewer human capital resources available to them or racial and ethnic minorities are not adequately prepared for upper-level management positions.

Social Capital Theory

Social capital theory states that the social networks to which employees belong influence the degree of racial and gender similarities between them and others in their network (Coleman, 1986). Social capital theory assumes that certain resources are available to individuals who have better network relationships with their peers, subordinates, and superiors (James, 2000). These relationships are vital because they can help enhance career advancement and provide organizational support related to career opportunities (Coleman, 1986). James (2000) found that White managers had more social capital than Black managers. Also, Black employees were more likely to have limited same-race social contacts and networks, which hindered them from developing and fostering strong ties. Individuals with scarce social capital were less likely to learn about new job or promotion opportunities, receive new positions, and gain more significant sponsorship from senior managers in the organization (Ng & Feldman, 2014; Zippay, 2001).

Having access to social capital resources (networking) is one of the most significant factors individuals can have for employment, mentoring support, and upward mobility (Khosrovani & Ward, 2011). Previous studies highlighted that female employees and those from racial and ethnic minorities were at a disadvantage in receiving job offers or promotions because they lack access to social capital networking (Ibarra, 1995; Khosrovani & Ward, 2011). In addition, Castilla (2008) found that women and ethnic minorities received fewer rewards than White men who had a similar rating on their performance appraisals. Furthermore, Black employees received lower pay raises despite having high scores on work performance.

Seibert et al. (2001) stated that employees with weak ties were negatively affected in two social network benefit measures (access to information and career sponsorships), while those with strong ties within social networks increased information access and social support. Coleman (1986) found that employees who have more social capital or more robust connections to a particular individual or group are more likely to benefit from them in more frequent promotions, salary increases, desired assignments, and other job prerequisites. Wen and Madera (2013) studied the career expectations of ethnic minority students majoring in hospitality management and found that ethnic minority students perceived more access barriers and job search barriers than White students. These studies confirm that individuals who have strong ties within the organization and have access to information and sources may be more likely to benefit from career advancement. In the organizations, individuals with greater access to information reported positive relations to more promotions and greater career satisfaction. People who had greater access to resources revealed higher salaries and greater career satisfaction (Seibert et al., 2001). Furthermore, a higher level of employee career sponsorship is positively related to a higher salary, more promotions, and career satisfaction (Seibert et al., 2001). Employees with access to

career sponsorship networks (e.g., mentors, formal and informal networks) more likely have greater career success.

Lin (2001) stated that there are two ways that inequality can occur in an organization: capital deficits and return deficits. Capital deficits means shortage of access to social capital resources for one group to another. For instance, compared to white men and women and Blacks do not have as many connections who may provide useful information, opportunities or who may help them with career progress. Women and Blacks are more likely to embedded in less useful social networks (Park-Yancy, 2006). On the other hand, return deficits means that different social groups may have similar quality and quantity of social capital resources yet generate different outcomes among the members of different social groups (Lin, 2001). For instance, two first-level managers, one White man and one Black man form close relationships with an upper-level manager who is White man. Although both first-level managers spend an equal amount of time developing a relationship with the upper-level manager, the returns on this connection may not be equal between both parties. The White first-level manager may gain more in return on this relationship and receive far greater information and resources, which can enhance career advancement, than Black manager (Parks-Yancy, 2006). This study measured the effect of race, gender, and social capital resources on career outcomes, and the study found that Black employees suffer social capital deficits relative to White employees, and White employees are more likely to be promoted because of greater access to social capital resources.

In summary, racial and ethnic minorities are known to be underrepresented in management positions, which leads researchers to propose that racial and ethnic minorities suffer capital deficits and return deficits, which prevent them from achieving leadership positions in the lodging industry.

Underrepresentation of Racial and Ethnic Minority Leadership in the Hospitality Field

Researchers illustrated the need for and benefits of having racial and ethnic minority leaders manage, recruit, and retain a diverse workforce (Cook & Glass, 2015; Flores & Martin, 2014; Sy et al., 2017). Having a diverse boardroom and management team is also an important step, and researchers found that having a diverse management team with racial and ethnic minorities would improve performance, product development, and governance (Cook & Glass, 2015). Cook and Glass (2015) further stated that attitudes of racial and ethnic minority leaders would be essential in successfully adopting and implementing organizational diversity management strategies. Racial and ethnic minorities who achieve upper-level leadership positions may be more educated and trained because racial and ethnic minority employees tend to face more barriers than White employees in their promotion to leadership positions (Caba, 2018; Cook & Glass, 2015). Although organizations have shown the best intentions for diversity and inclusion, they have been less successful in developing racial and ethnic minority leaders or providing equal opportunities to attain leadership positions (Shore et al., 2011; Sy et al., 2017).

This underrepresentation of racial and ethnic minority leadership is more pronounced in the lodging industry, because of the greater proportion of minority employees in the general workforce. Even though 52.5% of the lodging workforce comprise from racial and ethnic minorities in 2015 (BLS, 2015; NAACP, 2019), only 19% of the managers were from a racial or ethnic minority groups. Moreover, the data showed that at the very top of the leadership pipeline, the lodging industry was becoming less inclusive. In 2007, the NAACP released the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) report which showed that White colleagues held 71% of top management positions in the lodging industry. That proportion had grown to 81% by 2015. Based on social capital theory and social identity theory, the reduction of minority

managers in the lodging industry may lead to less favorable upward movement for minority employees. The current trend is concerning because the lodging industry continues to be strong and is growing in many urban communities where people of color most need economic opportunities (NAACP, 2019).

The NAACP (2019) study investigated the diversity and inclusion of the top four hotel corporations: Hilton Hotels, Hyatt Hotels, Marriott International, and Wyndham Hotels and Resorts. Results showed that racial and ethnic minorities were significantly underrepresented in the top management in the lodging industry. The NAACP report utilized a letter grading system ranging from A (highest representation of racial and ethnic minorities) to F (lowest representation of racial and ethnic minorities) in leadership. Of the four hotel companies that took part in this study, only Marriott received a grade of C regarding the inclusion of African Americans in top management and a grade of D regarding including people of color in top management. Wyndham Hotels and Resorts received a grade of F in both the inclusion of African Americans and people of color in top management. Hyatt Hotels received a grade of D in both representation of African Americans and people of color in top management. Finally, Hilton Hotels received a grade of F on the inclusion of African Americans and a grade of D on the inclusion of people of color in top management at the hotel (NAACP, 2019). In addition, the NAACP reported that in terms of board diversity, African Americans represented an average of 12% membership and people of color representation was an average of 6% in these four corporations.

However, research showed that racial and ethnic minorities were not excluded from all management positions in the lodging industry, just those considered crucial to the business. Witz (1992) reported that racial and ethnic minorities may not be excluded from an occupation itself;

however, they could be given opportunities in management positions that have lower status, prestige, and salaries. Such lower grade jobs included leadership in the housekeeping department, which had fewer responsibilities and represented a less successful path to leadership positions like the general manager (Witz, 1992). Costen et al. (2002) conducted a study to assess whether racial and ethnic minorities were clustered in management positions in peripheral departments rather than management positions with key financial responsibilities. They found that racial and ethnic minority managers were overrepresented in the housekeeping department (62.2%). In contrast, White managers made up an overwhelming majority in management positions of more prominent departments such as front office (72.2%), reservations (76.1%), controller (81.7%), sales and marketing (83.8%), food and beverage (82.8%), chef (70.4%), and human resources (80.1%). Costen et al. (2002) found that White managers are the dominant group in key hotel management positions, and they control the access to these positions through the recruitment and selection process (Costen et al., 2002). Castel Project (2021) reported that Black women's representation in leadership is primarily in human resources. Black male representation is mainly in operations and, to a lesser extent, in key hotel management positions such as accounting, finance, and VP levels.

Even in situations where occupation, education, and experiences were controlled, racial and ethnic minorities were less likely to hold leadership positions compared to their White colleagues (Cook & Glass, 2015; Elliott & Smith, 2004; McGuire & Reskin, 1993; Smith, 2002). For instance, Castel Project (2020) highlighted that Black manager represents 1.5% of lodging industry executives at the director level, which is 12.5 times below their proportionate share of lodging industry employment. Furthermore, racial and ethnic minority employees were more likely to fill middle or lower-level leadership positions in the workplace hierarchy. Several

mechanisms could explain the underrepresentation of racial and ethnic minorities. Possible explanations for such disparity include a lack of equitable promotion procedures, insufficient active recruitment, and an overoptimistic perception of a functioning and positive diversity climate (e.g., fairness and inclusion) within an organization (Buttner & Lowe, 2017; Castell Project, 2021; Greenhaus, 1990; Mor Barak, 1988; Price et al., 2005). Further, other factors contributing to the disparity are a lack of quality mentoring (Espino & Zambrana, 2019; Essien, 2003), fewer opportunities for education and training—compared to those attained by White employees (Kim & O'Brien, 2018; Worsley & Stone, 2011). Moreover, disparity may occur due to unintended exclusion from social and informational networks and social clubs (Cook & Glass, 2013; Essien, 2003; McGuire, 2002; Greguletz et al., 2019), access barriers (Madera & Wen, 2013), and downgrading channeled down to a lower position in the company (Essien, 2003; Pager et al., 2009). Other potential explanations for such disparity include real or perceived discrimination, bias, and stereotyping (Acker, 1990; Castell Project, 2021; Cook & Glass, 2015; Moss & Tilly, 2001; Pager et al., 2009; Reskin, 2011) and racial tokenism (Chused, 1988; Kim & O'Brien, 2018).

Perceived Career Barriers

According to Weber and Ladkin (2008), perceived career barriers are those aspects of social and organizational life that could hinder employee career advancement. Chuang (2010) claimed that perceived career barriers could be classified as either internal (self-concept or motivation) or external (discrimination) barriers. The researchers posited that individuals would passively accept career barriers as fate if perceived as external and uncontrollable; whereas they would develop coping strategies to overcome career barriers if they saw them as internal and controllable (Wen & Madera, 2013). Career barriers such as financial constraints and

discrimination (gender, ethnicity, or race) have disproportionately influenced the career paths of racial and ethnic minorities by limiting both options and access to wider opportunities (Mejia-Smith & Gushue, 2017; Perrone et al., 2001). Previous studies indicated that the populations from racial and ethnic minorities and women of all social and cultural backgrounds perceived more significant career-related barriers associated with their ethnicity and gender than European Americans (Cook & Glass, 2015; Mejia-Smith & Gushue, 2017).

Present Study

This phenomenological qualitative study aimed to explore the lived experiences of 11 racial and ethnic minority managers who had reached a management level in the lodging industry. In addition, the study explored the variables that contributed to the underrepresentation of racial and ethnic minority leaders in the lodging industry and the variables that helped to overcome potential career barriers, and investigated essential skills and attributes that were important for them to reach the management position.

Most of the researchers utilized a quantitative approach (Clevenger & Singh, 2013; Hornsby & Scott-Halsell, 2015; Madera et al., 2017; Wen & Madera, 2013) to discover career barriers that racial and ethnic minorities confront when pursuing leadership positions in the hospitality industry. Since the current study is focused on lived experiences of racial and ethnic minorities, the researcher decided to exclude quantitative methods and explore qualitative designs.

Creswell and Poth (2016) identified five traditional approaches to qualitative research design: narrative approach, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. Grounded theory allows researchers to develop a theory about a process or action, while ethnography focuses on describing the behaviors of a cultural group (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

Case study helps in development of in-depth description and understanding of a case or multiple cases, while narrative research focuses on exploring the life of an individual (Crewell & Poth, 2016). Finally, phenomenological research focus on understating the essence of the experience. The study's problem statement and purpose guide to development of the research question. The research question for this study focused on understanding the shared or common experiences of several individuals on perceived career barriers, perceptions of organizational diversity climate, and preparation Therefore, after reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of each design, a descriptive phenomenological qualitative approach was chosen as the most appropriate design to explore the phenomena of the perceptions of racial and ethnic minority managers in the lodging industry. It also explores the meaning and essence of the culture and lived experiences of the phenomena by a particular group of people (Creswell & Poth, 2016). In addition, phenomenology seeks to uncover how the phenomena unfold rather than how they are controlled (Giorgi, 2012).

Focusing on the phenomena of the perspectives of minority managers within the hotel industry might raise new meanings or understandings of diversity climate. This approach allowed for the capture of the essence of the experience of being a minority manager (Creswell & Poth, 2016) and provided an opportunity for their voices to be heard. Phenomenology's central focus is on the actual phenomena and tries to understand the individual's lived experience (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

The phenomenological study utilized methods adapted from Moustakas (1994). Using this approach, the study's design made it possible to describe and analyze what the ethnic minority managers in the lodging industry have in common as they experience a phenomenon. According to Moustakas (1994), phenomenological researchers should first engage in epoche

(sometimes referred to as bracketing) to build a rapport and environment for conducting the interviews. Epoche results in investigators setting aside their personal experiences, beliefs, preconceptions, and assumptions about the phenomenon under examination as much as possible so they can approach the phenomenon with a fresh and unbiased perspective (Moustakas, 1994). Therefore, the researcher used an epoche or bracketing approach to ensure any personal perception of the phenomenon was set aside so the primary focus remained on understanding the views of the study's participants (Iwasaki et al., 2005).

Data Validation

Data validation is an essential procedure for qualitative research. Data validation involves evaluating the accuracy of the information obtained through data collection (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) and establishing trustworthiness (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The criteria to establish trustworthiness are credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability (Guba &Lincoln, 1989), and reflexivity (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Credibility. Credibility refers to the extent to which the data matches reality, and credibility could be established by drawing correct interpretations of the data (Creswell, 2005). Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) stated that qualitative research is considered credible when the descriptions of respondents' experiences are recognized by people who share the same experience.

Transferability. Transferability helps readers determine whether qualitative research findings can be transferred to other settings. Furthermore, it refers to the generalizability of the results or external validity in qualitative research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The researcher should provide detailed information about the study's context, processes, participants, and the researcher-participant relationship, which will allow the readers

to decide how the study finding can be transformed (Morrow, 2005). The study's sample size is an essential factor in deciding if the findings are transferable to other settings or groups. Previous qualitative researchers reported that sufficient sample size is when data saturation is achieved (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Patton, 2002). This study's sample size comprised 11 credible individuals who provided candid responses about their lived experiences.

Dependability. Dependability deals with the finding's stability over time (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The audit trail is a frequently used strategy to ensure data dependability, and it can be achieved by asking external experts to examine the research process (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Then, experts can evaluate if the research process, interpretations of findings, and conclusions are supported by data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

Confirmability. Confirmability refers to whether the research findings could be confirmed by other experts (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). More specifically, confirmability ensures that the results stem from data, not from the researcher's preconceived notions (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Researchers recommended that confirmability could be achieved through several ways, including audit trail, reflexive journal, and triangulation (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). An audit trail is a record of the research steps taken from the start of the project to the development of theoretical, methodological, and analytical processes (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Triangulation is a data validation method that aims to reduce researcher bias. Robson (2002) stated that triangulation increases the meticulousness of the research.

Summary

Reviewing the previous literature and research methodology is paramount in presenting a conclusion supporting the need for an investigation of lived experiences of racial and ethnic minorities in the lodging industry. Research on workplace diversity in the lodging industry

supports the argument that racial and ethnic minorities are disproportionately underrepresented 19 % in leadership positions, although racial and ethnic minorities comprise the majority lodging workforce (BLS, 2017). The literature review revealed that the inclusion of racial and ethnic minorities in leadership is staggering in the lodging industry. Several researchers argue that extreme overrepresentation of White men in organizational positions of authority could negatively impact subordinates who are women and people of color (Ely, 1994; Mor Barak et al., 1998; Pfeffer, 1989; Ridgeway, 1988). Diversity management practices, policies, and organizational inclusion practices are prominent factors that can increase the representation of racial and ethnic minorities in the lodging industry. The existing literature on organizational demography highlighted that racial and ethnic minorities experience career barriers and challenges in lodging.

Three theoretical models were utilized to understand the lived experience of racial and ethnic minority managers in the lodging industry. Social identity theory focused on what racial and ethnic minorities experienced, how they experienced it, and how they perceived the organizational diversity climate. The theory of human capital primarily focused on how racial and ethnic minority managers prepared for career advancement professionally and personally, what human capital resources were available to them, and how it affected career outcomes. Finally, social capital theory focused on whether racial and ethnic minority managers had access to social capital resources such as networking and mentoring and how that impacted their career outcomes. The researcher analyzed and discussed the challenges and reasons behind such a disparity in leadership through the lens of these theoretical models. Further, these three theories and research on organizational inclusion constructs guide shaping the interview instruments utilized in the study.

Chapter 3 - Methods

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the lived experience of racial and ethnic minority managers who have reached a management position in the lodging industry. Moreover, the study explored the perceptions of diversity, diversity climate, and organizational inclusion of racial and ethnic minority managers. This chapter presents the research design selected for this study and the data collection and analysis processes. The research questions guiding the study are listed below, followed by the rational for selecting a phenomenological qualitative design. The chapter concludes with further details on all aspects of this selected research design.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- Main Question: What is the lived experience of racial and ethnic minority managers in the lodging industry?

    - SQ1: What are the perceived and experienced barriers to the career advancement of racial and ethnic minority managers in the lodging industry?

    - SQ2: How does the perceptions of the organizational diversity climate affect the experiences of racial and ethnic minority managers in the lodging industry?

    - SQ3: How do racial and ethnic minority managers prepare for career advancement opportunities in the lodging industry?

    - SQ4: What are the perceptions of racial and ethnic minority managers regarding what specific skills, attributes, and strategies influence their career advancement in the lodging industry?

Research Design

The phenomenological qualitative design was appropriate for this study as it explores the phenomenon of being a racial and ethnic minority manager in the lodging industry. Justification for the phenomenological qualitative approach derives from the following reasons: First, the qualitative data helped the researcher understand what racial and ethnic minority managers experience (and how they experience) regarding perceived career barrier, challenges, and organizational diversity climate in the workforce. Second, the qualitative research method allowed the researcher to gain insights into the nature of the study, develop theoretical perspectives about the phenomenon, and discover the problem that exists within the phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). Third, the qualitative study allowed for capturing different stakeholder perspectives on the phenomenon of perceived career barriers of racial and ethnic minorities. Lastly, phenomenological design allowed the participants to share their stories, with their own voices.

Study Sample and Recruitment

The sample comprised 11 ethnic minority managers from lodging operations. Purposive and snowball sampling methods were used because these methods allowed for the selection of highly probable data that best illuminated the research questions. Phenomenological research requires purposeful sampling to select participants accurately. Additionally, snowball sampling allowed the researcher to reach out to more participants via referrals made by individuals who participated in the study. Patton (2002) stated there are no sample size rules in qualitative research. Previous qualitative researchers stated that interviews with 10 participants were sufficient to acquire the expected data when conducting phenomenological research (Boyd, 2001; Creswell, 1998). Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) suggested at least six participants are

needed when the inquiry primarily focused on understanding the essence of the experience. Hence, the sample size of 11 participants with direct experience with the phenomenon was sufficient for saturation for this study (Creswell & Poth, 2016). According to Cleary et al. (2014), data saturation can achieve when the participants' responses become redundant and recurring themes emerge from the interview. The researcher stopped interviewing more participants because further interviews would not provide additional insights or contributions.

The purposive sampling method is appropriate when the sample size ranges between five and 25 and all participants have direct experience with the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2016). To be eligible to participate in this study, each participant must have (a) belonged to a racial and ethnic minority group and (b) worked as a manager at a lodging operation in the United States at the time the study was conducted. A link to an online screening questionnaire was sent to managers of various U.S.-based hotels with whom the researcher had personnel connections to solicit their participation in the study and distribute it to others within their organization. Furthermore, professional organizations such as Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA) and the National Association of Black of Hotel Owners, Operators, and Developers (NABHOOD) were contacted to distribute the online screening questions to minority managers in the lodging industry. Additionally, the social media page LinkedIn was utilized to recruit the participants. The volunteers who agreed to participate in the study completed a criteria-based pre-questionnaire (see Appendix A). Only participants who met the selection criteria were included in the sample. Table 1 shows the participants' demographic profiles for the study.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

Characteristic	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	7	63.6%
Female	4	36.4%
Age		
21-29	2	18.2%
30-39	5	45.5%
40-49	3	27.3%
50-59	1	9.0%
Race/Ethnicity		
Black	2	18.2%
White/Middle Eastern	2	18.2%
Asian	2	18.2%
Hispanic	5	45.4%
Education		
Some College	1	9.1%
BA/BS Degree	7	63.6%
MA/MS/MBA Degree	2	18.2%
Other	1	9.1%
Manager in Chain/Independent Hotel		
Independent	3	27.3%
Chain	7	63.6%
Other	1	9.1%
Level of Management		
First-mid-level	5	45.4%
Executive/senior	4	36.4%
Other	2	18.2%
Years in Leadership Position		
1 years or less	1	9.1%
2-5 years	8	72.7%
6-10 years	2	18.2%
Employees Managed		
1-4	3	27.3%
5-9	1	9.0%
10-25	2	18.2%
26-50	2	18.2%
51-99	3	27.3%

A total of 11 racial and ethnic minority managers working in the lodging industry in the United States participated in this qualitative study. Of these, seven participants were male, and four were female. In addition, the most represented minority was Hispanic, representing (45.4%)

of the respondents, followed by Asian (18.2%), Black (18.2%), and White-Middle Eastern

(18.2%). Regarding education, most participants held at least a bachelor's degree (63.6%) and

had between 2 to 5 years of leadership experience in the lodging industry.

 Data Collection Procedure

Prior to data collection, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from Kansas State

University was obtained. Data were collected between March 28, 2022, and February 8, 2023.

Participants who met the inclusion criteria received an email invitation with an overview of the

study and a copy of the informed consent form. Only participants who met the selection criteria

and agreed to the terms of the study were included in the sample. At the end of each interview,

participants were asked if they knew anyone else who might be interested in participating in the

study. Each participant in this study received an email invitation with an overview of the study

and a copy of the informed consent form, which included the study's title, a description of

participation, and the researcher's contact information. Once the participants agreed to take part

in the study, a Zoom link was sent to each based on their preferred date and time.

Interviews were conducted via Zoom according to preference and availability. Zoom

interviews were recorded and transcribed. Open-ended semi-structured interview questions

allowed the participant to speak freely about their lived experiences and perceptions (see

Appendix B). The semi-structured interviews were open and engaged in dialogue focusing on a

specific topic. Even though semi-structured interviews establish pre-determined questions and

formats, they allow researchers to ask follow-up questions when appropriate to gain a full range

of responses and depth of the explored phenomena (Dearnley, 2005). The interview questions

followed a systematic protocol for each participant.

Upon receiving their consent (see Appendix C), interview dialogs were recorded and transcribed verbatim. All participants were interviewed individually, and interviews lasted between 40 and 60 minutes.

To build rapport with participants, the following interview protocol was followed:

1. The interviewer described the study's nature to establish a connection with each participant.

2. The interviewer assured the participants of the confidentiality of information.

3. The interviewer advised participants that there were no right or wrong answers to questions to provide the most honest feelings about the question.

4. Before beginning the interview questions, participants were given a chance to express any concerns about the study.

5. After the interview, the interviewer thanked each participant and offered to provide a copy of the final paper.

Data Analysis

All transcribed recordings were imported into the NVivo12 software program for organizing and coding. Transcripts were prepared following each interview by utilizing the methods, procedures, and practices of phenomenological analysis described by Moustakas (1994), which are further explained below. Data analysis was also based on Moustakas' (1994) modification of the Stevick-Colaizze-Keen method (Moustakas, 1994), as it was considered the most practical and useful approach (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

The researcher followed the steps recommended by Moustakas (2016) when analyzing phenomenological research. First, named the description or understanding of the phenomenon under study, which assessed the researcher's ability to set aside their personal experiences.

Second, the researcher identified a list of significant statements from the interviews and observations. Moreover, the researcher also listed significant statements that described how participants experienced the phenomenon, treating each statement equally during the analysis. Also, the researcher ensured that each statement did not compete or overlap with any other statement (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Moustakas, 1994). Next, the researcher grouped these significant statements into larger meaningful units called meaning units or themes. The researcher then wrote a textual description, which highlights what happened, including verbatim examples, of the experience. Next, the researcher described "how" the experience occurred, which is frequently referred to as structural description. Finally, the researcher wrote a composite description of the phenomenon that incorporated both structural and textual descriptions (Moustakas, 1994). This informs the reader "what" the participants experienced and "how" they experienced it, revealing the *essence* of the phenomenon.

After the interviews, the data were transcribed using the Zoom transcription tool. The researcher verified the transcribed data by replaying the recorded interviews several times to guard against mistakes or negligence in transcription. To protect the confidentiality and privacy of the participants, pseudonyms were assigned, and organization names were removed from the research. Afterward, the researcher verified that the documents were imported into NVivo12. The researcher used the NVivo12 software program to assist in the data analysis process. Specifically, NVivo12 helped manage unstructured data that were not easily condensed by numbers through indexing, searching, and coding the data for analysis. The coding allowed the researcher to identify the patterns and themes that provided meaning and assisted in interpreting data. This software was used to help organize data and identify patterns and themes associated with the lived experiences of the racial and ethnic minority lodging managers. Once the data

were entered into NVivo12, participant profiles were developed. The text segments extracted from each interview were examined, and redundant expressions and sentences unrelated to the study were excluded for coding purposes. Then, the remaining text segments from each file were analyzed for meaning and clustered into a few broad categories. These categories were coded as free nodes in NVivo12 for development into themes. Finally, expressions relevant to the participants' experiences were coded, and patterns and themes were identified. For instance, coding for the category "perceived career barriers" included all the data related to the experience of career advancement barriers that racial and ethnic minority managers perceived in their organization. Based on the emergent themes derived from the analysis of participants' experiences of the phenomenon, textual descriptions were developed for each participant. These highlighted "what" happened and structured "how" the experiences occurred.

The purpose of the phenomenological study was to obtain data to answer the research questions. The researcher was able to uncover the meaning of the perceptions and lived experiences of the participants. Based on this analysis, five core themes and sub-themes emerged.

Data Validation

Several methods ensured the credibility of the study, such as peer review and debriefing, member checks, triangulation, and prolonged engagement (Creswell, 2005; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In this study, peer reviews and debriefing of the data were utilized to ensure the data supported the findings of the qualitative study. The researcher also engaged in debriefing sessions with dissertation committee members. The study transferability was achieved by providing a detailed description of the lived experiences of participants.

The audit trail is a frequently used strategy to ensure data dependability, and it can be achieved by asking external experts to examine the research process (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Then, experts can evaluate if the research process, interpretations of findings, and conclusions are supported by data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Therefore, the researcher's doctoral committee members served as external experts to evaluate research design before conducting research. Finally, confirmability was achieved by providing all the interviews, notes, audio recordings, data analysis process available to doctoral committee members.

Summary

This chapter presented the phenomenological qualitative research design selected for this study. The research questions guiding the study were reviewed and aspects of the design, including sample and recruitment of participants for the study, were described. Procedures for data analysis were offered, which included discussions on the aspects of the design in place to ensure elimination of researcher bias and reliability.

Chapter 4 - Findings

The research question and sub-questions that guided the phenomenological qualitative component of the study follow:

Main Question: What is the lived experience of racial and ethnic minority managers in the lodging industry?

- SQ1: What are the perceived and experienced barriers to the career advancement of racial and ethnic minority managers in the lodging industry?

- SQ2: How do the perceptions of the organizational diversity climate affect the experiences of racial and ethnic minority managers in the lodging industry?

- SQ3: How do racial and ethnic minority managers prepare for career advancement opportunities in the lodging industry?

- SQ4: What are the perceptions of racial and ethnic minority managers regarding what specific skills, attributes, and strategies influence their career advancement in the lodging industry?

Participants' Descriptions

Participant 1 (P1) was a Hispanic man who had been in the hospitality industry for over 20 years. He entered the industry like many others thinking it would be a temporary position to earn some short-term income. He started as a server in a chain restaurant and then became a supervisor at that property. After 10 years of work in various positions at several restaurants, he said, "I was feeling a little bit stuck. That's when I decided to go back to school." He earned a master's degree in hospitality management and then switched to the hotel industry. Remembering when he decided to make that switch, he said,

Funny enough, after even having all those years of experience managing restaurants, when I tried to switch to the hotel side, they didn't think that I had enough experience to be a hotel manager for our restaurant. And it is a little different than managing a four-wall freestanding restaurant [than it] is to manage a hotel restaurant. So, I decided to take the opportunity [of] a supervisor [position] with an organization. Actually, I had to take a substantial pay cut to do that. But in a matter of months, they definitely knew that I had the experience, and I was promoted very quickly. And then from there, I went to another property where [I took] a director position [at a] much smaller property. It was a timeshare property, which [was] also a little different than a hotel (P1).

At the time he participated in this study, he was working as an operations manager for a hotel company.

Participant 2 (P2) was a room operation manager for a luxury hotel chain. A White man with an ethnic minority background, he was born and raised in Turkey and was pursuing a career in the United States. He earned a bachelor's degree in hospitality management and had 8 years of experience as a manager in the hotel industry.

Participant 3 (P3) was an assistant director of an independently owned hotel company. He was from Turkey, and had a bachelor's degree. In addition, he had 7 years of management experience in various positions.

Participant 4 (P4), a Black woman who had 9 years of experience working in the lodging industry. She worked as a catering sales manager for a chain hotel and had four years of management experience. She held a master's degree and was pursuing a Ph.D. in hospitality. She highlighted her decision to stay in the industry as the most pivotal point for her career. She said,

When I got to my second property—an airport property—the team looked like me and that was a first for me. It was really important in my development as a manager as well. Mind you, my supervisor, of course, was not a minority, but all of us within the sales department--, we all were--, and that for me was different, and so I got to speak with them a lot. And this is how I've been feeling about things. How can I bounce that off where I couldn't necessarily have that with other individuals that I've worked with (P4).

Participant 5 (P5), a Hispanic man who had been in the industry for over 20 years, worked as a general manager for the franchise of a chain hotel. He held a bachelor's degree in business management. He mentioned several turning points in his career that directed him to his current position. The organization he worked for vitally helped him achieve his current position by providing a strong structured outline of all the tasks, responsibilities, and expectations required of him to become a hotel general manager. Another turning point he mentioned was joining the regional task force team for a chain hotel, which helped him discover networking opportunities. Consequently, at this task force assignment, he met the franchise owners for whom he was currently working.

Participant 6 (P6), a Hispanic man who worked as a sales manager for a chain hotel, had been in the industry for nearly 20 years and had been in a leadership position for more than 5 years. He held a bachelor's degree in advertising. The first time he understands the status of ethnicity in the workplace when he moved to the United States and began working at a ski resort 20 years ago.

Participant 7 (P7), a Hispanic man with about 13 years of industry experience, had been in a management role for more than 2 years. He started in the back of the house as a steward, moving his way up the career ladder to become a cook, a lead cook, and sous chef. At the time of

this study, he was an operations manager and held a bachelor's degree in hospitality management. He admitted that his experience of becoming a manager was not easy:

> It was a little bit harder for someone like me. For example, I am a Latino, so in the industry, I would say it was a little more difficult to get through it. But once you get in there, you are worth twice as much, because in the lodging industry, especially in the State of Florida, there're a lot of Latinos, so [there's] a lot of Spanish everywhere. I'm able to go and translate do this and that— and [remember], I started from the bottom. I started as a dishwasher, as a cook, a lead cook, and a sous chef, so I have a lot of exposure to what happens on day-to-day operations [in the] back of the house. And now, as front manager, in front of the house manager as the operations manager, I am responsible [for everything in the] front of the house. I can communicate with all of the staff, no matter what. Even though it was difficult to get my foot in the door, once I stepped in, it was [more beneficial] for the employer than it was for me at that moment (P7).

Participant 8 (P8), a Hispanic man with more than 25 years in the industry, was working as director of food and beverage. He entered the industry while he was in high school. He dropped out of college after his first semester and joined a culinary school. His work experience had been primarily at higher-end luxury brands of fine dining restaurants and hotels. When describing his most critical turning points in his experience, he said that he had learned

> . . . not [to] put money ahead of experience. Find good quality places to work and identify some mentors early on. I think that changes as time goes on—mentors drop in and out of your life because they take you from point A to point B in your career. I knew that early on and I [was] fortunate to have met certain people. It was a mentor that actually

suggested I go to culinary school, and it was a mentor that suggested I find work in in a large-scale hotel. My first real job out of culinary school was at a luxury hotel brand in New York City. I think they have, like, 2000 rooms. [It's a] very big place, [with] a staff in the kitchen of probably somewhere near 150 people just in the kitchen. So, I knew early on the value of finding good leaders, good role models to ask questions, to emulate, and so on (P8).

Participant 9 (P9), a Black woman with over 20 years in the industry, had 16 years of leadership experience and was working as general manager for a chain hotel. She had entered the industry as a night auditor while she was going to college to support her children. Then, she worked another property for a year as a night auditor and liked what she was doing. Eventually, she decided to pursue an upper-level management position.

Participant 10 (P10), an Asian woman who is working in human resources in a generalist position. She has been in the lodging industry since 2016 and had 2 years of low- to mid-level management experience. She held several positions in the hotel, such as breakfast host, night auditor, and breakfast attendant. She enrolled in a hospitality program and completed an internship at a full-service hotel working and cross-training in different departments. She claimed that it had become "very handy" to be cross-trained in different departments.

Participant 11 (P11), an Asian woman with more than 10 years in the industry, had 2 years of management experience and had independently owned a hotel. She started as a busser then moved her way up to become host, server, and banquet captain, and she was working as an assistant banquet manager during this study.

Themes

Five core themes emerged from the data: (a) career advancement barriers, (b) perceived diversity climate, (c) personal and professional preparation for career advancement, (d) mentoring and networking, and (e) essential skills and attributes. Each theme is discussed in the following sections.

Theme 1: Perceived Barriers to Career Advancement

Participants offered various perspectives regarding their experiences of the barriers faced by racial and ethnic minority employees that often stood in the way of their career advancement. When asked to reflect on their experiences as managers in the lodging industry, all 11 participants agreed that there were several barriers that racial and ethnic minority employees faced to advance in their careers. Table 2 presents the findings related to the perceived barriers to career advancement experienced by the participants in their years in the lodging industry.

Table 2 Participant Experiences Related to Perceived Barriers to Career Advancement

Experience	# Times Mentioned	% Participants Mentioned
Discriminatory treatment (unequal opportunities, being overlooked because of background)	8/11	72
Implicit bias (being labeled or stereotyped)	3/11	27
Language challenges	3/11	27
Difficulties becoming accepted	2/11	18
Access barriers (it's not *what* you know, it's *who* you know)	2/11	18
Ageism	1/11	9
Channeling (downgrading) to lower-level position	1/11	9

Discriminatory treatment: The most common career barrier experienced by participants was discriminatory treatment. Of the 11 participants, eight expressed that they did not have the same opportunities for promotions or that upper management had overlooked them at some point

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in their careers because of their ethnicity and race. P1 talked about how he was treated when he applied for a promotion within the organization.

[There were] probably one or two situations where I felt that my background as a whole [was not taken into consideration]. But I think it was more that the person I was running against was given a better opportunity to succeed; for example, in the interviewing stage. And it happened recently! I believe that I applied for a specific position and my interview was done in the middle of a shift while I was the only manager on duty. [I was] having to stay paying attention to the radio because employees, if they needed anything, they will have to reach out to me. The person I was running against was actually interviewed on his day off, where he came in fresh, not having to worry about anybody bothering him in the middle of the interview. So, I don't know if that was done purposely. But it definitely felt like it wasn't necessarily handled the right way (P1).

Similarly, P9 talked about her experience with promotion opportunities. She said she was "always up against other people that either had more experience than me or were given better opportunities because they weren't minorities." Similarly, when P7 spoke about his experiences, he said, "If I had to compete with someone for a position and if we had same qualifications, same education, I think sometimes they would overlook me because of my background."

P8 also expressed his frustration with promotional opportunities.

I experienced working in a place where I felt that when it came time for the position [to] open, and the number one spot as the chef was available, I think, while everything had helped me in the day-to-day run, I think that job went to a White individual because that's what they wanted. So, it doesn't always work. I think there was one instance in my life

where I actually felt like that. I think I got passed over for a job because I was not the

right European, or not. I wasn't European (P8).

Also, P8 highlighted that people with different ethnic backgrounds did not have the same career

opportunities or were not afforded the same trainings compared to White employees. Then he

said, "We need to stop looking at color and gender and really [look] at the person. And are you

affording that person the same opportunity as the rest of the team or the other peers?" Moreover,

several participants (P2, P3, P4, and P11) expressed similar experiences about having been

overlooked for promotion and hiring because of their background.

Implicit bias: Three participants described their encounters with implicit bias (labels and

stereotypes), which prevented them from getting a promotion or getting hired for an upper

management position. For example, P9 spoke about her experience with an interview process

and how her race was a significant factor in the hiring process. She said,

I went through an interview process for a hotel as a general manager. I would have been a

general manager over two hotels and I got all the way through. There was a series of

panel interviews. It was a series of phone interviews, virtual interviews, an in-person

interview that I got through to the last interview—and I ended up not getting selected for

the position. And one of the reasons, I believe, this is just my reasoning, because they had

pretty much already made up their mind. They wanted to hire me, but upon them learning

just in our conversation, in that last final interview that I was a single mother of two

children, they assumed I was possibly single, or that I had no one else at the house to help

me, and this is a demanding position. But they ended up looking me over for that

position. I feel like had I have been a different ethnicity they most likely would not have

looked me over for it because they would have said, "Okay. Well, I'm sure she's married

with a husband. . . I am sure that her having children would not be an issue." But when

you think about young Black female a lot of times, most young Black females are single

mothers, so I think [that's how] they looked at it more along the lines with me. But now

that we know she is a single mom—because most the women in my race are—they felt

that that would play a part on my ability to make myself available for that leadership

[position] (P9).

P4 also talked about her experience in the workplace and how people were labeled based

on their race. When the researcher asked if the participants had ever felt their ethnic background

hindered their career advancement, P4 stated,

Yes. And it's only because, as I say, we have to handle ourselves differently. So, I've

been in a lot of situations that can be seen as stressful, and you have to handle them a

particular way. But the moment you seem upset, you're instantly labeled. Or, the moment

you don't do something the way that is expected, you're instantly labeled. Whereas, I've

personally seen other individuals do the same thing and react the same way that I have,

And then, it's "Okay. Whatever." [They] just kind of brush it off and move forward. So,

it's definitely a negative thing. I think it has a lot to do with internal biases that people

already have and not to necessarily say that it stems from racism or anything of that

nature. I think it's a lot of implicit bias. And these stereotypes that have been played over

and over again of, "This is how this race acts," or "This is how this ethnicity is," or "This

is how this culture is." So, it's, "Oh, yeah. That makes sense." I wouldn't want someone

to be in that position because this is how they would handle that situation. I've seen

individuals passed up for promotions for that reason—"Oh, well. They come off as a little

too aggressive," or "Oh, they wouldn't handle the situation the same." People getting

promotions because of "Oh, yeah, their wife works at this company that can benefit us,"
even if that person doesn't have the experience that a minority or racial or ethnic minority
person who's been in that position for 20 years has had. So, it definitely has a negative
impact. I've had my own personal experiences of knowing that I haven't gotten a position
because of my race, or that there has been conflict because of my race. And it's sad that it
has to be like that, and I think that the industry can grow. But I also think that it's a lot of
this is a diverse industry. But the problem is a lot of minorities are stuck in lower-level
positions, because that's the expectation that others have or they just get fed up and they
get to positions like mid-level or sales and catering managers like myself and they know,
okay, where there's no work for me to go. So, I'm just going to leave the industry. [It]
definitely has a negative impact (P4).

Access barriers: Two participants talked about the existence of access barriers and
mentioned that often "it's not *what* you know, it's *who* you know." P4 described her experience
of not having access to everything she needed to succeed in her career. She said,

A lot of the times, unfortunately, it's not *what* you know, it's *who* you know. And even if
it's just to get you into the door, having that relationship and building that rapport with
other people within the industry, especially as a racial or ethnic minority, is very
important. Because we don't always have access to everything we need. So, if you have
even the slightest bit of, "Oh, I know this person," . . . and it can get you to where you
need to go, it's going to benefit you (P4).

Similarly, P5 stated, "Unfortunately, sometimes it comes down to who you know rather what
you know to get a promotion or get hired." He explained that he had seen incompetent people
promoted or hired for positions because of who they knew.

Difficulties becoming accepted: Several participants said they were not accepted easily in the organization because of their background. For instance, P2 said,

> People still valued me that I'm a foreigner, that I am not American born. And then, they can see your skin. They can [hear] your accent. That [plays] a big role at some point. I'm not saying in just a negative way, but it's the fact. You know? And some people, in their mind—and it could be a guest, too. So, sometimes they evaluate in you some sort of barriers, so that's kind of hard to break into when you first encounter someone. So that's kind of the first step which you need . . . to overcome the challenges first. Get yourself accepted, and [then] do other things (P2).

Also, P2 mentioned that to get accepted into an organization, employees from minority groups should be prepared to work harder than their fellow White colleagues. P3 added, "When I changed the job or went to work for a different company, it was harder for me to get accepted versus someone from this country."

Language challenges: Of the 11 participants, three expressed that having an accent could hinder career advancement. For instance, P6 stated that he worked very hard to ensure he did not have a strong accent. He said, "If you have a strong accent, people immediately have an assumption about it. If you show [the accent] too much, if you show too much of your culture— you know, there are still some ugly assumptions out there." P2 talked about how someone's accent affects their career advancement and how others (i.e., managers, guests) evaluate employees based on their accent and culture. P10 also talked about her experience, saying, "Even though I do not have much accent, I still suffer from communication, especially after becoming a leader."

Ageism: P5 described his experience when age was used against him and created barriers to advancement. He shared,

> I think sometimes, my age—because I was young when I was coming up, so a lot of people were like, "Oh, you're young," or whatever and—or, "You don't have enough experience." Or this, or that. And I just think [my age] was used against me a little bit. But like they say, if you know you don't like something, find another route. So, that's what I did. To me it's like, if I feel like a company or somebody is holding me back because of that, I'll just move (P5).

He further explained that he would just leave the company whenever he felt like an organization was holding him back because of his background.

Channeling to lower-level position: Lastly, P6 talked about his experience of having been channeled to a lower-level position. He said,

> I tried very hard to get my English up to speed and make sure that I wasn't treated differently by the other team members. One of the things that happened was that in my training class for that resort, [there were] about 40 people and we were seeing concepts that I had never seen before as a 20-yearold. We were looking at revenue, systems, and yield—things that I never thought about and especially in English. And the rest of my training class was Australians—so, I was lost. I couldn't ask the Australians because I couldn't understand the Australians, and I did very poorly on my class. I was supposed to be hired for the luxury hotel in that resort. But then they moved me out too far away from the front desk because I guess I wasn't up to speed with whatever they needed (P6).

Theme 2: Perceived Diversity Climate

The second theme addressed participants' perceived perceptions of the diversity climate of the organizations. All participants were asked how they would describe the organizational diversity climate of their hotel and what made organizational diversity climate successful in the workplace. Table 3 shows the themes that emerged from an analysis of the participants' responses to these questions.

Table 3 Perceived Experiences of Diversity Climate in the Workplace

Experience	# Times Mentioned	% Participants Mentioned
Management not diverse (Glass ceiling)	5/11	45
Mutual respect, welcoming environment	5/11	45
Equity and fair treatment	3/11	27
Inclusion of everyone	2/11	18

Management not diverse: When asked how they would describe the organizational diversity climate in their hotel, nearly all participants stated that it was very diverse. However, when asked follow-up questions regarding diversity in senior and executive-level positions, most participants stated that a White man primarily occupied those positions. For instance, P11 said,

> We have a lot of different people from different cultures. We have a lot of Spanish . . . White . . . Black . . . Asians. We got European—a lot of my team [were] from Bulgaria and Albania. The majority of the management still tend to be mostly White American. I don't know if [it was] that just other people didn't show their interest, but the majority of them [are still] White.

Similarly, P4 described the diversity in her hotel, stating, "It is very diverse at mid-level however, when you start getting into executive positions. No, there's just a window. There is that glass ceiling, and it has a lot to do with it with perception."P8 stated that although some diversity

had been added among the leadership in higher management, the organization still had to work on diversity. She said, "The majority of senior and corporate leadership are White men." P9 added, "There was a fairly low percentage of minorities in management." She went on to share an example from her corporate event. "I went to a corporate banquet that we had with all the general managers, and I want to say, maybe out of 150 of the general managers, there was just me and one other person [who] were Black." P1 stated that all races and colors filled most entry-level positions, but diversity was almost nonexistent in the top management.

Mutual respect: Almost half of the participants mentioned that having mutual respect and a welcoming environment was essential for a positive perception of the organizational diversity climate. For instance, P1 stated, "It was crucial to create a welcoming environment for minorities and to be able to get those who exceed work expectations the opportunities to progress—to climb the ladder." P2 described the importance of creating an environment and culture where everybody is happy and respects each other. Furthermore, he said diversity was about richness, and organizations should keep it that way.

P4 also believed that having mutual respect was very important. Describing her experience with her general managers, she said,

> Prior to my general manager passing, that was one of the things that was . . . a must. He had a mutual respect for everyone regardless of what they looked like, and it was based on how you do your job, and that's what it was. Since getting our new general manager, not so much. But that's just because we no longer have that diversity within that position now, mind you, our new general manager was a director within the hotel already. So, there is some form of relationship there, I think it helps. But she also does not understand certain situations the way that he did. So, I think it's very important once you have that

mutual respect and understanding of whatever racial or ethnic minority working for you.
It can help benefit that. Because I think that's what hinders people is not having that
mutual respect or just it's saying, oh, I'm your boss that it is what it is. I'm not going to
take the time to understand who you are or what you've been through and have the
respect of your experiences. I'm just going to lead the way that I know how to lead, and
that's what it is. So, I think that having the respect of you of those individuals would help
a lot.

Equity and fair treatment: Out of 11 participants, three emphasized that equality and
fairness are vital factors that shape their perception of organizational diversity climate. For
example, P8 stated that everyone needs to be treated equally. He added,

I think that the playing field needs to be just equal down the line, and we need to stop
looking at color and gender and I think that's Step 1. And Step 2, we need to then provide
all the tools and training and mentorship and leadership and all that stuff across the board.
You know, whether it could be in tiers, because you may not provide somebody sitting at
a in a lower position may not have the same as somebody sitting up top, because they
maybe need more, but their needs should be met, and they should be included, and should
be equal across the board.

P9 also described the need for fairness in an organization. She explained that when her company
merged with another company, she recognized that the new company had more diverse
management than the previous hotel. She felt the new company had a fairer crowd than the
previous one and they wanted to be diverse. Similarly, P3 stated that organizations must make
sure they treat employees equally regardless of background.

Inclusion: Several participants stated that inclusion of everyone in management was essential. P8 believed that 100% inclusion was necessary. He added that not only was inclusion a good jumping-off point, but there needed to be training tools as well. He said, "If you want folks to drink the kool-aid, you not only have to include them and invite them to the kool-aid, but then show them as well." P1 emphasized that "many companies have a mission or vision statement saying that they wanted to be inclusive, they wanted to have diverse employees. However, looking up the ladder shows that diversity is almost nonexistent." He expressed that companies need to practice what they preach.

Theme 3: Personal and Professional Preparation for Career Advancement

The third core theme addressed how participants prepared for career advancement opportunities in the lodging industry. The researcher asked the participants questions such as what organizational support was offered for professional development, whether they had participated in these programs, what personal preparation they had undertaken to support their advancement, and if education had been instrumental in career advancement. Table 4 shows a summary of participants' experiences on how they prepared for career advancement.

Table 4 Personal and Professional Preparation for Career Advancement

Experience	# Times Mentioned	% Participants Mentioned
Organizational support (internal trainings)	11/11	100
Personal preparation (external trainings, certifications)	9/11	81
Education	3/11	27
Organization initiatives support for minorities	1/11	9

Organizational support: All 11 participants stated that their organizations provided support (e.g., training opportunities—both mandatory and voluntary, tuition reimbursement, participation of the manager in the training programs, and manager readiness programs). In

addition, the participants mentioned that these opportunities were available to everyone regardless of race or ethnicity. When participants were asked if any organizations had offered career advancement opportunities specifically for racial and ethnic minorities, only one participant mentioned that his company offered a couple of programs where the company wanted to elevate and provide resources to minorities and women in the industry. Of the 11 managers, eight participated in various training opportunities and benefited from company resources. For instance, P1 used the company employee website to learn languages such as Italian and Thai and to train himself about wine to teach his employees. Similarly, P5, P6, and P8 talked about utilizing companies' websites for training opportunities. In addition, P2 talked about how he had participated in the management readiness program offered by the organization to its employees. He mentioned this program prepared managers to be effective leaders and provided resources like how to be emotionally challenged and strength-based leadership. Moreover, P3 stated that he joined the internal development programs, saying,

> We have a program called Move Up. It means that prepared level employees to become managers. And then they also have a second one called Move Forward, [which] prepared managers to become a senior manager and director. So, I participated both of those programs. So that definitely helped me, and also [hotel name] really invested a lot into their employees. So, I was lucky to have participated in all of these programs, and to have a faster trajectory for my career to get promoted (P3).

Furthermore, P7 noted that his organization gave him a scholarship to pursue education.

> My employer gave me the scholarship to go get my BA. So, I was fortunate enough that I was not just exposed, but they encouraged me to become a leader and to get my degree. They were also the ones [who] paid for my degree or for my schooling for this leadership

program. And since, like I said, I want to get my masters, they will be paying for that as well (P7).

Personal preparation: When asked what personal preparation was undertaken, most managers explained what they had done besides company-offered programs. For instance, P3 stated, "Since I wanted to do revenue management, I took revenue management certification from Cornell to prepare myself for a management position." Besides the revenue management certificate, he said he had completed 20 certification programs (e.g., in data science and analytics). Similarly, P5 took asset management certification through Cornell to learn more about finance and budgeting. P6 expressed that during the pandemic, he used Coursera for different pieces of training on revenue, yield, and optimizing to keep up with trends. P8 had taken some modern culinary workshops, which helped him bring in and apply some of the experiences in his work environment. P9 said that she went to school for business management to prepare herself and had completed many trainings in different areas (e.g., customer service, operations, and budget training). P10 expressed that she had enrolled in a career-building supervisory program, a 3-month program, to learn more about time management and communication. Additionally, P7 participated in a leadership program. It was a year-long program that taught people how to become better managers and leaders. Most participants in the current study had completed some certifications, schooling, and training in their field to prepare for the future.

Education: When participants were asked if education was instrumental in their career progress, 8 of 11 stated that education had not been instrumental or had little effect on their career advancement. For instance, P9 stated,

I think it was a stepping stone in the beginning. But I think, after I got to where I'm at, the level that I'm at now, I think it just took on-the-job training and being here in that

moment learning different things, just the different things that I've learned in different

people that I've met along the way—that helped me shake my career (P9).

P10 stated that things he learned at school were not really helpful in preparing him for

future success, and he learned everything in the hotel. However, he said that school prepared him

to solve problems, handle himself, and develop himself. Similarly, P4 stated education was not

instrumental in career progress; however, it helped in creating connection and networking

opportunities, which were very instrumental for her. She said,

I think that the people I met in the experiences I had and being able to network while

getting my degree was very instrumental in me getting the positions. Do I feel like my

degree in itself got me the position? No, and I only say that because when I got into my

first property, I had my master's degree. It wasn't required for me to have a masters. But

once getting into the role, no one who was in the role actually had a degree. So I think it

has a lot to do with who you know, and the experiences that you have versus the degree

in itself (P4).

P6 stated that a college education was not instrumental for career advancement; however,

it helped build confidence in himself. P11 had a bachelor's degree in special education, which

had no relation to lodging. She decided to pursue a career in the hospitality industry after college.

P8 also expressed that education was somewhat helpful, saying,

A little bit of a yes and no, and I started, if I could rewind back, I would have finished in

a different school or pursued my bachelor's [degree]. But 30 years ago, some of that, the

way education was especially for culinary, wasn't quite as needed. Now, I think I would

say that is, it is necessary, and at the time that I went to school, not as much. But I think

that a combination for me personally what worked is I had culinary. I had gone to

culinary school. I had a good foundation early on, and I think at some point the experience that I had outweighed any benefit (P8).

On the other hand, several participants highlighted that education was instrumental in their career progress. P5 noted that taking a class at Cornell was informative. P7 also stated that a college degree was instrumental in career advancement, and education was key to success in his career. P10 described the importance of pursuing a hospitality degree.

I have taken a lot of classes as far as hospitality goes. I do think it was very instrumental, apart from that, just the amount of networking that I was able to do. For instance, you and I would have never been able to connect unless it was for Professor X. So, I think that has something that has helped me a lot. Not just Professor X. I'm very close with a lot of my professors, as well as the university faculty since I am HR so I reach out to them [for things] like flyers. These are some of the jobs we have open, on top of that like I said, I'm very outgoing. I'm very people person, So I was able to make friends with a lot of the people in the hospitality industry and one thing that I have learned is that the hospitality industry is so big, yet so small. So even if we have people who, for instance, my last HR Manager was from New York, and our assistant general manager was from Tennessee, and somehow they had people within the hospitality industry that they knew. So making contacts everywhere you go is so important. And the program definitely helped me with that. We had various speakers come in. We had the mayor of Great Wine come and talk to us for one of our classes. And he was like, "Hey, yeah, you'll add me on LinkedIn to reach out to me." And I was doing something very much similar to what you were doing, but it was for a class, and we reached out to him for an interview, and he was like, "Yeah, anything you guys need." So that was again very, very helpful, instrumental. There's a lot

of tools that the university exposed us to utilize in our future. Apart from the career

building classes, but also just the university being a big campus with so much diversity

and just having that, like what's it called like social student organizations as well. I was

able to reach out to a much larger audience. So yes, that definitely helped (P10).

In addition, P2 explained that education helped his personal development. He emphasized that he

took various travel management and hospitality courses and joined the Erasmus Exchange

program, where he was exposed to international business courses. He further stated that joining

the Erasmus Exchange program was one of the best decisions he made in his educational

development.

Theme 4: Mentoring and Networking

All 11 managers had a mentor and explained that their mentor's guidance and

encouragement helped them to get where they were in their careers. In addition, participants

stated that mentoring and networking were important to their growth and development in the

industry as a leader. Table 5 highlights managers' experiences in mentoring and networking.

Table 5 Participants Experience in Mentoring and Networking

Experience	# Times Mentioned	%Participants Mentioned
Active in professional organizations	8/11	72
Importance of mentor (guidance, encouragement, advancement)	7/11	63
Importance of mentoring for racial/ethnic minorities	7/11	63
Benefits of networking (opportunities for job openings, or advancement)	6/11	54
Mentoring by minority leaders	3/11	27
Good support system (family)	1/11	9

Active in professional organizations: Most of the participants were members of

professional organization networks. For example, P4 was a member of Meeting Professional

International (MPI) and a couple of other smaller groups targeting the minority populations (e.g., the National Association of Black Owners and Operators Developer). She described how being part of MPI helped her find a job. She said,

> MPI had the most impact because I joined MPI when I was in undergrad. When I moved to [city], I transferred chapters. So those individuals—[they] would host a lot of their groups within the country club that I worked at, which is how I got the information that the position was even available at the first hotel that I was at. So, it was very instrumental. They also post a lot of different positions on there like on their website. But they just . . . they didn't pay for that or wasn't a part of that. So, I only knew because of a contact that knew someone else. So that's why I said networking is key (P4).

P5 was a member of the Hotel and Lodging Association (HLA) and Restaurant Association and sat on an advisory board. He said that "being part of these network groups doesn't necessarily teach you anything, but it is important for networking and developing relationships." P1 stated that he was a Lodging and Restaurant Association and Chamber of Commerce member in his previous workplaces, which allowed him to have many networking opportunities. He said that thanks to connections created on the way, he had many peers worldwide. P10 was a Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) member, and she helped them coordinate their event. She described how being part of the SHRM was very important for her and allowed her to "get to see people from all walks of life." She said that it provided professional and social connections. P8 mentioned that he was an active member of the American Culinary Federation, where he had been awarded as a certified chef. He used this professional organization for education and networking purposes. Finally, P6 stated that he was

involved with the Chamber of Commerce to develop relationships with people in the community, which he believed was a crucial hotel entering a new market.

Benefits of networking: When the researcher asked how important networking was for racial and ethnic minorities' advancement to leadership positions, most participants stated that good networking was important for everyone, not just for minority workers. For instance, P4 said,

> A lot of times, it is not what you know, it is who you know. And even if it's just to get you into the door, having that relationship and building that rapport with other people within the industry, especially as a racial or ethnic minority, is very important.

Similarly, P5 described his experience.

> I think it's definitely important. It goes back to who you know sometimes versus what you know, right? Because there's a lot of people in positions that probably shouldn't be, you know, even in our industry.

P10 talked about her experience and said many times there were opportunities (e.g., networking, career fairs, social events) at work or school that she was not aware of. She said it was very important to have that exposure. She explained that as an HR leader, she always encouraged people to attend these networking events. Similarly, P3 stated that developing connections were essential for career advancement.

Importance of mentoring: When the researcher asked if participants had mentors, they all stated that they had a mentor. Most of the participants expressed having several mentors throughout their careers. All the participants talked about how true mentors could guide them in the right direction and how they can shape and mold their careers with positive encouragement. For instance, P7 described the experience with his mentor. He said he was working as a cook in

banquets, and he did not know what to do with his career. His director, who was to become his mentor, encouraged him to enroll in a hospitality program and ensured that the company provided a scholarship to pay for college. His mentor ensured that he completed his degree and set the bar high for him to learn both front and back-of-the-house operations. Moreover, when there was an opening within the company, his mentor promoted him to operation manager. P1 also highlighted that he had a few mentors who helped him learn different aspects of the operation and helped him get a job or advance his career. He emphasized that a good mentor or boss could make a lot of difference in how committed or involved the company was in the development of their employees. Similarly, P3 expressed that the sales and marketing director was a true mentor for him. She had helped him with various job-related issues and was always available for him with any questions. He also stated that a good mentor could share their experiences and challenges with an employee to help them avoid making the same mistakes they had made. P6 said one of his front desk managers was his mentor. And though she was no longer in the lodging industry, they were still in touch she still helps him.

> Every time there is a new position, or every time there is something going on, especially when the pandemic happens, when hotels closed and I was completely lost, she was there [for me], and we were able to talk, and she was always a helping hand, and somebody listening to my concerns, and it will help me move through. So, she is a person that I appreciate a lot, and she's always been that one person that I can reach out (P6).

P8 stated that his mentors in life dropped in and out of his time. He said,

> There was one that was important to me in early on when I was a young chef, and he gave me the advice to pursue working in in New York City in hotels. Ironically enough, I

would then later return to him to work for him as one of his sous chefs at another high-

end hotel.

He further described how years later, he had another mentor who was a Japanese woman, and it

was refreshing because it was from a female perspective. It was nice to see a softer side but firm

and fair at the same time. He explained that his mentor told him, "You cannot cut your way

through failure, you have to innovate your way to a success." He said he still used this quote in

his career. Currently, the Vice President of the company was mentoring him as well. He learned

a lot from him (e.g., finance, revenue).

P11 also mentioned she had a couple of mentors who helped her learn the job and how to

manage people and promoted her to different positions or referred her as a candidate for new

opportunities. Similarly, P10 stated she had a few mentors who trained her from scratch and

taught her everything about HR. Also, the general manager and executive chef of the hotel were

her true mentors, and she described her experience with them.

My general manager, me and him had a very close relationship where we would have

closed door talks about my future, about positions that were open. He was like, "Hey,

listen. I know what you have planned and what you're thinking of. And this is where I'm

trying to help you." Or, "This could be a really good opportunity for you." And then I had

our executive chef who was just such a wonderful, wonderful person, and he really

wanted me to go into culinary. While I was in his kitchen, he trained me. He would say,

"Hey, this is the best way this is. If you're wanting to go down this route, this is what you

have to do. What are your expectations?" So, he helped me and trained me in a way

where he [told me,] "I can see you being in the culinary side of hospitality" (P10).

P10 said that even though they did not work together anymore, she still reaches out to these mentors and asks them any questions or to get advice. She also stated that having a good mentor was tremendously important. She described working with a mentor who had been in the industry for so long, and who had seen it all. Hearing from their experiences, hearing that they had been in the same situation was important.

Mentoring by minority leaders: Several participants expressed that having an approachable mentor who could understand what you have gone through was crucial for their career advancement. For instance, P4 described her experience with her first mentor, who had passed away.

> He was my general manager. He's unfortunately no longer with us. He passed away. But he 100% believed in me, believed in his whole team; and was very encouraging, [He] is really the reason why I'm even getting my Ph.D. He completely supported me 100%. He allowed me to change my schedule in order to attend classes. It was just amazing. But he was Japanese American, had a military background. He completely understood the struggle of getting into that position. So, the minute I approached him and let him know "Hey, this is what I want to do. This is what I'm focusing on, what I'm studying." The owner of our property was also a minority. So, they built this family atmosphere to make us all feel very comfortable in an industry that doesn't necessarily make you 100% comfortable in management positions. But one thing that he always said was, he's very big on promoting from within, but also promoting, based on what you can bring rather than what you look like for those stereotypes. So, he really liked to get to know you as a person rather than just what do you look like on a piece of paper (P4).

P9 also described her relationship with her mentor as eye-opening, and it had helped her tremendously learn how to deal with certain obstacles. She said,

> He's not a minority. He actually was a Caucasian and I guess because of his sexual orientation, sometimes he faced a lot of adversity, too, in his career. So, him facing adversity based upon his sexual orientation and then me facing adversities based upon my ethnicity, I think that was one of the things that brought us together. And so, as far as him being influential, he pretty much helped, shaped, and molded me. Once he got on with the larger brands, he would reach out to me and tell me things, help get on board. And then, once he was on board, I was on board with the brand. I worked alongside him really just learning a lot of ins and outs about the company and the best ways to go about proving my worth and getting a better opportunity. I think sometimes people don't want to take the time to kind of to see what you bring to the table and race does play a part of that, and I think by just working alongside him and seeing how he was able to maneuver through certain obstacles it helped me open certain doors for me as well (P9).

Similarly, P1 described how it was easier to create a connection with his mentor because he was also part of a minority population. His mentor had similar experiences such as being passed over for a job or promotion because he was from a minority group. Therefore, they were able to connect, and he felt more confident talking with his mentor.

Importance of mentoring for racial/ethnic minorities: When participants were asked how important mentoring was for the advancement of racial and ethnic minorities, most said it was very important. P1 emphasized that it was very important to find a mentor that understood some of the struggles that minorities faced. He said that "as a minority leader, I was always very understanding, especially of those in entry-level positions." He said, "Managers often do not

consider them important; many take them for granted, but they are the heart and soul of the organization." P4 explained that there was not a lot of guidance in the industry, so it was imperative not only to have a mentor but to have a mentor that had been through the same experiences or who could relate to the experiences the employees might go through. She said she had learned a lot from those who looked like her, and having a mentor who can guide her was very beneficial. Furthermore, P7 stated that mentoring was the most important thing for minorities, especially mentoring someone who looked the same, who may not have the opportunities because of the lack of a strong support system. He said that as a minority manager, "Trying to support someone else that is of some basis, it goes along ways." He continued that having a mentor was key to bettering himself and developing this courage because sometimes, the employee will not see what everybody else sees. Moreover, P9 stated that having a mentor was extremely important for racial and ethnic minorities. She added that going into a leadership position, the employee should lean towards someone that is a cheerleader for them and who wants them to succeed. That would be someone to lean on as a mentor, who could help the employee along their career path to leadership as a member of a minority group.

Good support system: P4 explained that having a good support system was important for success in the industry. She said,

Making sure to have a very good support system is going to be very important, whether that's within the industry, whether that's family, or a mentor. Having a support system within the industry as well as your mentor is going to be helpful because those are people that you can go to, you can bounce things off of, that you may not be able to talk to or [be at the same] level. That's very important as well in exceeding, succeeding in this industry. I think it's just a mental aside from that, it's a mental battle, as you really just have to

understand. If this is what you want, there are going to be some roadblocks, but to push

through that, to get to where you need to be (P4).

Theme 5 Essential Skills and Attributes

The fifth core theme addressed common skills or attributes that were deemed essential for

racial and ethnic minorities to reach a leadership position in the lodging industry. Table 6

displays the essential skills and qualities recommended by the study participants.

Table 6 Essential Skills and Attributes for Successful attainment of a leadership position in

the lodging industry

Essential Experience	# Times Mentioned	% Participants Mentioned
Strong demeanor, "never give up" attitude	5/11	45
Hard worker; strong work ethic	4/11	36
Effective communication skills	3/11	27
Openness to learn; availability	3/11	27
Expectation to exceed work requirements	1/11	9
Adaptability	1/11	9

Strong demeanor "never give up" attitude: Five of the participants noted minority

employees to remain positive and motivated, not to give up, and to use their ethnic background

as the richness that they bring to the table. For instance, P7 stated,

Don't give up just because of what you are, your background, or where you came from.

Just because you're competing with someone that has had all the opportunities doesn't

mean you should give up. If anything, you're worth more because of your struggles. You

will push yourself more. You'll be willing to gamble more if that makes any sense. So,

that's my recommendation. Just go for it.

He said the minority employees need to "make sure to have an education, push yourself, be

willing to do things, and take full advantage of opportunities. As a minority, make sure not to

give up or let anybody else tear you down. Doors will always open." Similarly, P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5 highlighted that "having a strong demeanor" and "staying positive" were vital skills for success.

Hard work, strong work ethic: Several participants expressed that working hard and having good work ethics were essential for a successful career in the lodging industry. For instance, P8 expressed that employees who want to move into leadership positions, stating:

> . . . need to work hard, at least in the beginning, and you need to ask questions, do as much as you can, go above and beyond, and I promise that those things will be recognized, noticed, and you will find yourself in some really good scenarios for elevated, promoted, compensated (P8).

P2 described that working hard always pays well. Sometimes not on the same day, but it would be noticed even if they had disadvantages (e.g., accent and ethnic background). Similarly, P3 recommended to racial and ethnic minorities to work as hard as possible for their careers.

Effective communication skills: Several participants emphasized that communication was crucial for the success of minority employees striving for a leadership position. For example, P11 expressed that a younger manager needs to talk to many people. Therefore, they need to learn the right way to communicate (the art of talking) with employees, guests, and superiors as a leader. She emphasized that communication was the key to success and stated,

> First of all, ability to speak English, it will be the most important thing because as a manager, you need to talk to a lot of people like I'm still trying to improve myself. Communication is really important, you need to learn the way to talk, "the art of talk". Sometimes you want to say one thing and if you change the way you say it. It's going to be totally different. For example, If I want to move a wedding from outside to inside. I

don't just tell her, hey! It's raining you have to move inside. No, I'll do this instead. It's going to rain. I don't want you get wet, and I don't want your guest to feel uncomfortable, would you mind if we move you inside or give them different option. Because you don't want to pour down raining during the wedding, and then they will get mad because no one told them anything. But if you communicate better and then they will respond it differently, which I think that's really important skills as a manager. So, I think that's a one part, if we want to move up higher, we have to practice talking the art of talk. We need to practice on that (P11).

P3 and P10 also stated that how one communicates with employees and superiors was essential for success. P10 highlighted the importance of effective communication skills could be integral for success and stated,

Communication is one of my things that I'm working on anytime that I'm talking to someone at the end. I always come back and be like, okay, well, so this is what you're asking me, and may just reiterating everything like making sure we're always on the same page, because communication errors, even a little bit, can lead to misunderstandings and mis execution of plans (P10).

Openness to learn, availability: A few participants emphasized that an openness to learning different departments and different aspects of the job, as well as making oneself available were essential for success or promotion. P9 stated,

What I tell people all the time that actually works for me is if they're interested in management, [they should] make themselves available, learn different aspects of not just their position. When you come to work, don't just say, "Okay, this is my job, and this is what I'm here to do." But be willing to learn and cross train other departmental job

descriptions. If you're at the front desk, maybe learn about housekeeping, because in the you always have some department that may be short staffed. But as a general manager, when I see that I have an employee that's interested and they'll say, "Oh, I can help out in housekeeping," or "I can help out in breakfast," that lets me know that this person is not just zoned in on one thing in the hospitality industry but they're looking at it as a whole. And trying to learn every aspect of it and those are the ones that I encourage to keep moving forward in their career path in a leadership position. So, I would definitely say if you get in on the ground up, in the beginning, just as a line level employee, just learn everything you can, cross train for other positions, offer when you know there's a department that's short staffed, offer to work in that department, so you can learn everything. When there does come an opportunity available, you can say, "Hey, I cross-trained in that position for a couple of months. I would love the opportunity to move into that position." And that's what I used to tell a lot of the general managers. They came in as line level and went from maybe a housekeeper all the way up to an assistant general manager. Those were some of the things that I would share with them (P9).

Participants recommended that racial and ethnic minorities should learn as much as possible, cross-train in other departments, be willing to help other departments, and be available when needed.

Adaptability: P2 believed adaptability, neutrality, openness to learning, and focusing on development were very important skills for his career success. He stated that "sometimes coming from different backgrounds with different experiences may take more time to be accepted by fellow workers. So, the decision makers need to know where the employees stand and how they

would adapt to that environment." He added that "if they could adapt to the culture they were in, embrace challenges, and focus on their career goals, they would be successful."

Expectation to exceed work requirements: Moreover, P4 recommended that whatever position an employee was going for, they should make sure to have the basic requirements and go above and exceed requirements. She stated,

> I think, looking at whatever position you're going after, what are the basic requirements and making sure you have those, but not just that, making sure that you go above that. Unfortunately, it's not something that's going to change overnight. So, you're going to have to make sure you're at least exceeding the basic role. I think that making sure that they remain positive and motivated is going to be very important, because there is a lot of times that I got very down because I didn't expect to succeed in the industry (P4).

Summary of the Findings

This phenomenological qualitative study aimed to explore the lived experience of racial and ethnic minority managers who had faced career barriers to reaching a management level in the lodging industry. Moreover, the study explored perceptions of diversity, diversity climate, and organizational inclusion of racial and ethnic minority managers. The qualitative data analysis revealed five major themes: (a) career advancement barriers, (b) perceived diversity climate, (c) personal and professional preparation, (d) networking and mentoring, and (e) essential skills and attributes for success. The results revealed that the lack of representation of racial and ethnic minorities in management in the lodging industry was directly related to perceived career advancement barriers such as discriminatory treatment, access barriers, language barriers, implicit bias, ageism, difficulty in becoming accepted, being channeled to lower-level position (downgrading), and being overlooked because of background. Almost every participant

experienced obstacles on their career path to management. The majority of them stated that they had experienced discriminatory treatment (overlooked because of background or missed opportunities), which led to the underrepresentation of minorities in leadership positions. Participants expressed the reasons why they had been overlooked, including White male dominance in senior and executive management, implicit bias, and a lack of guidance and support. Participants emphasized that to overcome these career barriers or to have a successful career path, minorities should work harder, develop great communication skills, be adaptable, exceed requirements, have a strong demeanor, be open to learning, and be available when opportunity arises.

Furthermore, all participants stated that networking and mentoring were vital in career advancement for racial and ethnic minority leaders to move up the ladder. Participants claimed that finding good mentors and joining networking groups early in their careers were essential to career growth for minorities. Also, nearly every participant expressed that personal and professional preparation (e.g., participating organizations offered a program, taking job-specific training, certifications, and education) were important factors in overcoming obstacles.

Chapter 5 - Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusions

Previous research has stated that an underrepresentation of racial and ethnic minority leaders exists in the lodging industry in the United States (BLS, 2015; NAACP, 2019). Despite racial and ethnic minorities comprising so much of the lodging workforce, the underrepresentation of minorities in leadership positions is apparent at all levels of leadership. The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to explore the lived experiences of 11 racial and ethnic minority managers who had reached a management level in the lodging industry. The study explored the variables that contribute to the underrepresentation of racial and ethnic minority leaders in the lodging industry and variables that might help overcome potential career barriers in the future. The study also investigated essential skills and attributes that were important for success.

This phenomenological study was completed using a semi-structured interview process. The phenomenological design selected as the most appropriate approach focused on the meaning and sense-making of the lives and experiences of these racial and ethnic minority managers. This approach aimed to discover the actual lived experiences of racial and ethnic minority managers and provided a way to understand the world from their perspective. Using this approach, the researcher was able to describe and analyze what the ethnic minority managers in the lodging industry had in common as they experienced a phenomenon. The variables that contributed to the underrepresentation of racial and ethnic minority leaders including (a) discriminatory treatment (not having the same opportunities, being overlooked because of one's background), (b) implicit bias, (c) access barriers, (e) difficulties becoming accepted, (f) language barriers (g) ageism, and (h) channeling (downgrading) to lower-level position. These variables can be used to develop a

more inclusive work environment and increase the representation of racial and ethnic minority leadership.

The data analysis also revealed the variables that helped to overcome potential career barriers: They included (a) joining helpful networking opportunities, (b) finding good mentors, and (c) achieving personal and professional growth. Finally, variables important for career success included (a) effective communications skills, (b) being open to learning, (c) being adaptable, (d) working hard and having a good work ethic, (e) exceeding requirements, and (f) having a strong demeanor.

Implications

Racial and ethnic minorities are extremely underrepresented in senior and executive-level positions, occupying less than 20% of these positions in the U.S. lodging industry (BLS, 2017). In 2017, BLS reported that racial and ethnic minorities comprised 52.5% of the total lodging workforce yet occupied a disproportionally small percentage of leadership positions. This study examined which factors have affected the underrepresentation of racial and ethnic minority managers and how the participants overcame these barriers to achieve advanced leadership positions. This study aimed to explore the lived experience of 11 racial and ethnic minority managers who had reached a management level in the lodging industry. The research questions were developed to inquire into the career barriers and challenges faced by the participants, the preparations undertaken by the participants for their career advancement, their perceptions of the organization's diversity climate, and which essential skills and attributes best led to success within the context of their career journeys toward leadership in the lodging industry.

Research Question: What is the lived experience of racial and ethnic minority managers in the lodging industry?

The research question asked about the lived experiences of the racial and ethnic minority managers in the lodging industry. Collectively, the participants in this study averaged more than 15 years of work experience per person in the lodging industry. All managers in the study had experienced career barriers at some point in their careers that were connected to their race and ethnicity. The participating managers had a clear awareness of how they have been treated and valued in the lodging industry and when it was connected to their racial and ethnic minority status as a source of identity (Wen & Madera, 2013). They tended to experience more career barriers and remain at lower-level status positions than their White colleagues in their respective organizations (Goldman et al., 2006; Mor Barak, 2000). This phenomenon endangers career advancement for minorities. Because racial and ethnic minorities are statistically a minority in upper-level management positions, they are more aware of their racial and ethnic identity and its negative connection to the career barriers they had faced (Avery et al., 2008; Levin et al., 2002; Wen & Madera, 2013). Although the participants in this study viewed the hotel industry as having a diverse workforce, most stated that executive and senior-level positions were primarily occupied by White men. This is consistent with the literature that while, in 2015, racial and ethnic minorities made up 52.5% of the lodging workforce, (BLS, 2015; NAACP, 2019), only 19% of the upper-level managers were from this population.

The participants in this study stated that personal and professional preparation, mentoring, and networking were essential components to overcoming career obstacles. All 11 racial and ethnic minority managers pursued a college education in different disciplines. Three of

them obtained a bachelor's and graduate degree from the hospitality and tourism-related fields, and many of the participants received certifications and job-specific training from institutions and professional organizations. Obtaining degrees, certifications, and training allowed the racial and ethnic minority managers to advance in their careers. This finding aligns with the theory of human capital whereby individual success depends on how extensively and effectively people invest in their human capital activities (i.e., training, education, experience, skills) during their careers (Becker, 2002).

All the managers had the opportunity to work with a mentor and participate in formal and informal networking activities. Having access to and the use of these resources was recognized as an important factor for the career advancement of these racial and ethnic minority managers, which is also consistent with previous research findings (Granovetter, 2018).

Sub-Question 1: What are the perceived and experienced barriers to the career advancement of racial and ethnic minority managers in the lodging industry?

The first sub-question asked about the perceived and actual barriers to the career advancement of the participants. They were asked to describe their experiences as managers in the lodging industry. All 11 managers described experiences of encountering career barriers. In their career journeys to positions of upper-level management in the lodging industry, these 11 participants revealed the following examples of barriers that hindered or delayed their successful advancement: (a) discriminatory treatment (not having the same opportunities, not being afforded the same training, and getting overlooked because of their social and cultural background); (b) implicit bias, which includes variables such as being labeled and stereotyped; (c) access barrier for information; (d) difficulties to be accepted; (e) language barriers; (f) ageism; and (g) channeling to a lower-level position.

Eight managers indicated discriminatory treatment as a barrier to their advancement.

Previous research highlighted that discrimination negatively impacted various work outcomes,

including opportunities for advancement, training and development opportunities, organizational

commitment, and job satisfaction (Button, 2001; Greenhaus et al., 1990; Cunnigham & Sagas,

2007). Discrimination may produce slower promotion rates, offer fewer opportunities to develop

job-related skills, and affect the career prospects of racial and ethnic minorities more than White

employees in the organization (Greenhaus et al., 1990; Ilgen & Youtz, 1986). This finding is

consistent with the literature whereby racial and ethnic minorities felt they were treated and

prejudged based on their ethnic background rather than being seen as unique individuals

(Branscombe et al., 1999).

Three managers emphasized implicit bias, being stereotyped, and being labeled as

barriers to career advancement. Regarding career advancement, these managers experienced

being judged or labeled differently by their superiors resulting from being part of a specific racial

and ethnic minority group. Social identity theory emphasizes that individuals labeled as in-group

prefer other individuals similar to themselves, and individuals who differ are labeled as the out-

group in the organization (Stets & Burke, 2000). This finding is consistent with literature stating

that racial and ethnic minority managers might be considered out-group in the organization and

judged negatively, shunned, and excluded, resulting in negative stereotyping by senior

management and executives (Stets & Burke, 2000; Wharton, 1992). This phenomenon endangers

the career advancement of minorities considering that over 80% of leadership positions in the

lodging industry are occupied by European Americans.

Two of the managers indicated that the access barriers hindered career advancement, or at

least slowed their advancement. Regarding promotion opportunities or the hiring process,

participants said it often came down to who one knew rather than what one knew. This "who one knew rather what one knew" mentality is also referred to as cronyism. Cronyism means that favoritism shown by senior managers to his/her subordinates solely based on relationship rather than individual's qualification or capabilities (Worsley & Stone, 2011). Participants in this study perceived that they had fewer opportunities for career advancement compared to White peers because hiring and promotion was based on "who one knew," belonging to social networks. Lodging organizations should consider demolishing such a social system, which is known as the "Good Old Boy Network" who grants favors on one another (Nadler & Schulman, 2006). This finding is consistent with social capital theory literature (Coleman, 1986). Previous research has shown that women and racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to be excluded from both formal and informal networks of information and opportunities (Caprapinha, 2013; Findler et al., 2007; Reskin et al., 1999). Lack of access and lack of social capital networking opportunities were considered significant disadvantages in receiving job offers or promotions for racial and ethnic minorities (Ibarra, 1995; Khosrovani & Ward, 2011). Decision makers were more likely to promote individuals they knew closely and were more likely to promote employees with whom they had strong ties to than those with weak ties. This "who one knew rather what one knew" mentality suggested that being connected to social networks plays a vital role when being considered for promotions within workplace (Coleman, 1986). However, racial and ethnic minorities rarely have access to the same social networks.

Three managers described how having an accent and a different communication style hindered career advancement. In addition, they mentioned that speaking with a strong accent affected how others evaluated them. Previous literature stated that accents can create adverse effects on the career outcomes of non-native speakers (e.g., career advancement and career

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satisfaction), and that these non-native speakers may feel excluded and devalued at work (Iheduru-Anderson, 2020; Russo et al., 2017). Research has shown that speaking with an accent constitutes a critical part of individual's social identity and conveys important information about an individual (Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010). However, speaking with a non-native accent could be a source of stigmatization and may contribute to individuals' feeling of less belonging towards organization (Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010).

One of the managers also noted that ageism was a barrier to advancement. He said his younger age was used against him and was a barrier to further advancement to leadership due to the perception that younger employees do not have enough experience to become a leader. Ageism describes the process of systematic stereotyping and discrimination against older people (Butler & Lewis, 1973). However, a new form of ageism has appeared, which is directed at younger adults. Raymer et al. (2017) claimed that younger people had been excluded from leadership due to a perception they lack a strong work ethic or enough experience.

One manager indicated that being channeled to a lower-level position hindered his career advancement. He said he had been directed to a position than the one promised. This finding is also consistent with previous research that racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to have a downward channel than White employees. For example, Pager et al. (2009) conducted a field experiment in New York City, recruiting White, Black, and Latino job applicants who had equivalent resumes and were sent to apply for jobs. The researchers found White employees were more often channeled up or were encouraged to apply for jobs at a higher level than the initial position they had inquired about. On the other hand, Black and Latino applicants were channeled downward into positions lower than the initial one they had enquired about.

Sub-Question 2: How does the perceptions of the organizational diversity climate affect the experiences of racial and ethnic minority managers in the lodging industry?

The second sub-question asked how the perception of organizational diversity climate affected the experiences of the participants. Five managers described that most entry-level positions were filled by all races and colors. However, their hotel management was not diverse, particularly in senior and executive level positions. They added that diversity was almost nonexistent in higher-level positions. This finding is consistent with the literature in the hospitality field that racial and ethnic minorities are underrepresented in executive and senior level management positions (19%) despite making up 52.5% of the total lodging workforce in the United States (BLS, 2017; Castel Project, 2021; Costen et al., 2002). The literature highlighted that diversity management practices help bring racial and ethnic minorities to the workplace, and inclusion helps racial and ethnic minorities to receive equal opportunities through the five inclusion constructs (Shore et al., 2018). The current study's finding supports the argument that the lodging industry has efficient diversity management practices to bring in racial and ethnic minorities. However, the lodging industry fails to provide an inclusive work environment.

Two managers highlighted that inclusion was a significant factor affecting the perception of organizational diversity climate. One participant stated that many companies had a mission or vision statement claiming they wanted to be inclusive and foster a diverse workforce for the organization. However, a glance up the leadership ladder revealed a nonexistent profile of diversity. Both managers pointed out that bringing in racial and ethnic minorities would be a good starting point. Furthermore, hotels should establish and support best practices to enhance inclusion in senior and executive leadership. Prior research supports the findings that the

organizational and managerial practices of hotels do not provide sufficient opportunities to offer equal access to employees of socially marginalized groups (Bell et al., 2016; Shore et al., 2018).

Five managers mentioned mutual respect and a welcoming environment as essential for a positive perception of the organizational diversity climate. Managers expressed that those in power should respect, understand, and accept employees regardless of their background. Embracing and celebrating diversity is important for organizations to create a positive organizational diversity climate. Previous literature stated recognizing that diversity exists and learning to value and respect fundamental differences is one of the most effective strategies to increase awareness about workplace diversity (Patrick & Kumar, 2012).

Similarly, three managers pointed out that equality and fairness were essential factors to create positive perceptions of diversity climate. They expressed that organizations should treat everyone equally and be fair throughout the organization. For example, Nishi (2013) claimed that universal fair treatment of people from all backgrounds and their inclusion in the decision-making process can only be achieved by creating an inclusive organizational environment. One of the participants described her experience with diversity when her hotel merged with another company. She noticed that the new company had more diverse management and she felt like the new company had a fairer representation of racial and ethnic minorities than the previous one. This finding is also consistent with the literature that effective outcomes in diverse climates could influence how individuals feel about their work and employer (Cox,1994). In addition, the factors of organizational fairness and inclusion affect perceptions of racial and ethnic minorities regarding management's policies and procedures (Mor Barak et al., 1998).

Sub-Question 3: How do racial and ethnic minority managers prepare for career advancement opportunities in the lodging industry?

The third sub-question addressed how the participants prepared for career advancement opportunities in the lodging industry. They were asked a series of questions to understand how racial and ethnic minority managers overcome career barriers in the lodging industry. From these responses, two major themes emerged: (a) personal and professional preparation for career advancement and (b) mentoring and networking.

Personal and professional preparation for career advancement. The human capital theory postulates that managers who invest more in job training, work experience, and enhanced managerial skills will have increased levels of career advancement opportunities (Becker, 2002). Eight of the managers had participated in various training programs provided by their organizations. These managers said that participating in these voluntary and mandatory programs prepared them for a faster trajectory of career advancement. On contrary, Garavan et al. (2006) found that participation in training programs did not provide significant relationship regarding career advancement.

Nine of the managers also stated that training options outside the programs offered by the organization, including formal schooling and job-specific certification programs (e.g., in data science and analytics, revenue management, culinary course, etc.) helped them tremendously to become an expert in their field and in their career advancement. This finding is consistent with human capital theory whereby employees who invest more in their human capital (i.e., education, experience, skills) were more likely to have more organizational tenure opportunities (Tharenou et al., 1994; Garavan et al., 2006).

Eight of the managers stated that education had not been instrumental or had little effect on their career advancement because they already received a bachelor's degree from completely unrelated disciplines to the hospitality field. On the other hand, most of these managers took classes and certifications from prestigious hospitality colleges such as Cornell to prepare for leadership positions. These classes and certification programs in the hospitality field provided racial and ethnic minority managers the opportunity to gain knowledge that their bachelor's degree coursework did not provide. Three of the managers held bachelor's and master's degrees in the hospitality-related field, and they emphasized that education was instrumental in their career progress. Previous studies found disparate results regarding the impact of education and training on career advancement. Solnet et al. (2010) conducted a study with 246 senior and mid-level managers and found that formal education moderately impacts hospitality career progress. On the other hand, Garavan et al. (2006) found that investment in education and post-graduation is positively associated with the level of management reached, which aligns with the current study findings. Even though most of the participants in this study expressed that education was not instrumental in career progress, all 11 managers had college degrees, and several of them had completed graduate-level degrees. These findings support the literature that racial and ethnic minorities who achieved leadership positions in the industry are more educated and trained (Caba, 2018; Cook & Glass, 2015).

Mentoring and Networking. All the managers stated that mentoring and networking were critical components in advancing their leadership, and networking was imperative for the upward mobility of racial and ethnic minorities into senior and executive leadership. All 11 managers had mentors and emphasized that their guidance and encouragement helped them achieve their career leadership positions. The participants described finding a true mentor as the

most important component of their growth and development. They stated that if it were not for the encouragement and advice of their mentors, they might have given up on this journey. The literature likewise stated that a lack of quality mentoring was an important reason behind the underrepresentation of racial and ethnic minorities in leadership (Espino & Zambrana, 2019; Essien, 2003). This study supported the finding that true mentors have the potential to guide employees in the right direction, and can shape the employees' career with positive encouragement, help navigate negative perceptions against the employees which may become barriers to success, provide coping strategies for dealing with these barriers, and help the employees overcome these challenges successfully.

Three of the managers expressed that having an approachable mentor (mentoring by minority leaders) who understands what they have gone through could be imperative for the career advancement of racial and ethnic minorities. On contrary, several researchers reported importance for minorities to develop a broad network of mentors, those who may be belong to a different race (Jenkins, 2005; Olian et al., 1998). However, Kogler Hill and Grant (2000) highlighted that same race mentor relationship may provide more psychosocial benefits for mentee that cannot be achieved in mixed-race mentor relationships. Participants in the current study, described the tremendous learning received from mentors who looked like them. The managers emphasized that their mentors were also representative of minority groups, which helped them more easily connect. The relatable experiences created a stronger bond and deeper understanding between the mentors and managers. This finding aligns with Kogler Hill and Grant's argument that same race mentor relationships provide far greater psychological support.

Eight of the managers indicated that they were active members of professional networking groups such as Meeting Professional International, National Association of Black

Owners and Operators Developer, Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association, Lodging and Restaurant Association, Chamber of Commerce, Society for Human Resources Management, and American Culinary Federation. Managers claimed that being part of these networking groups was important for developing relationships and creating professional and social connections. The benefits of networking include learning about job openings and promotion opportunities and achieving access to information and sources. This finding is consistent with social capital theory, which proposes that certain resources are available to individuals with better network relationships with their peers, subordinates, and superiors (James, 2000). The managers believed that the old boy's network still existed in the industry where Caucasian men are more likely to help like-oriented men, continuing to create those access barriers for racial and ethnic minorities. To overcome career obstacles, minorities should develop better network relationships and build rapport with individuals from work and professional organizations. The managers communicated that attending networking events, career fairs, and social events at work and outside of work were vital for exposure. This finding supports previous studies that racial and ethnic minorities' proactive engagement in social networking could be essential to acquire important information and skills necessary for career progression (Battilana & Casciaro, 2012; Ragins &Winkel, 201). Participants also said that good mentors and good support systems (within the industry or the family) were critical. Previous research found that engaging in formal and informal networking behaviors by developing and maintaining relationships with others who may provide career assistance is considered an important career management strategy (Forret & Dougherty, 2004).

Sub-Question 4: What are the perceptions of racial and ethnic minority managers regarding what specific skills, attributes, and strategies influence their career advancement in the lodging industry?

Finally, the participants were asked which specific skills, attributes, and strategies influenced their leadership journey. The skills and attributes emphasized by the participants included (a) effective communication skills, (b) openness to learning and availability when opportunity arose, (c) adaptability, (d) hard work and strong work ethic, (e) a need to exceed basic requirements of the position, and (f) having a strong demeanor.

Three of the managers expressed that effective communication skills were essential for career success. They indicated that the art of talking with subordinates, peers, and superiors could affect the manager's success. This result is consistent with the literature that communication skills are crucial for successful leaders, considering that lodging managers spend nearly 80% of their day communicating with guests, subordinates, peers, and superiors (Lolli, 2013).

Moreover, three managers said that being open to learning about different departments in the hotel and several aspects of the job, as well as making oneself available to others were important attributes for success. These managers suggested that minorities should learn as much as possible, "cross-train" in other departments, and be available and willing to help their colleagues. The managers highlighted that the more information an employee acquired, the more valuable they became to the organization. In the lodging industry, ideal employees are described as those who are always flexible, be able to accommodate work demands, and work around the clock (Acker, 2012; Costa et al., 2017). These findings supported study participants'

recommendations that minorities need to be proactive in gaining work experience and skills to seize opportunities when they become available (Stainback et al., 2016).

Previous research has found that a staggering number of individuals from racial and ethnic minorities feel like they must work harder than White employees (News Desk, 2022). Several managers expressed the need to work harder than White employees before any recognition could be expected. This study supports the literature that women and racial and ethnic minority employees must work much harder than White male coworkers (Melancon, 2016).

Almost half the managers indicated that remaining positive and motivated, and having a strong demeanor were important skills for success. For example, P4 said that she had been in many stressful situations where she had to portray a strong image and not let other individuals see her upset. She said the moment she became upset, she knew she would receive the label of an angry Black woman. To that end, previous literature supports that displaying too much emotion could be detrimental to career progress (Ragings &Winkel, 2011). Several studies have shown that emotional norms may be selectively applied to individuals of different races (Harlow, 2003; Wingfield, 2010). Wingfield (2010) conducted a study with African American professionals in various occupations and found that African American workers could not express feelings of anger and frustration in a way that was accessible to white colleagues. Furthermore, most participants were sure of severe punishment (e.g., being fired, exclusion from peers, negative sanctions from supervisor) in case of if they chose to display too much emotion and anger (Wingfield, 2010).

Recommendations

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to explore and understand the lived experiences of 11 racial and ethnic minority managers who had reached a management level in the lodging industry. The study revealed challenges that racial and ethnic minority managers experience in the lodging industry, and it provides strategies for improving the diversity of managers in the lodging industry.

Recommendations for Racial and Ethnic Minorities Aspiring to Leadership

Based on the findings derived from the lived experiences of the managers who participated in this research study, the following recommendations are presented for workers who identify with racial and ethnic minorities aspiring to senior or executive positions in the lodging industry.

1. Aspiring leaders from racial and ethnic minorities should take a proactive approach to prepare themselves both personally and professionally for their own career advancement.

2. Aspiring leaders from racial and ethnic minorities should take advantage of programs and training opportunities (e.g., management readiness program, leadership program, management in training, language training, wine training, tuition reimbursement program, etc.) offered by their organization. Participants in this study emphasized the tremendous help these programs had in their career advancement.

3. Aspiring leaders from racial and ethnic minorities should seek opportunities in their field such as training, workshops, and certification programs, beyond those offered by their hotels to build a more well-rounded set of career achievements, thereby strengthening their chances for greater future success. The racial and ethnic minority managers in this study indicated that acquiring professional certifications and attending workshops and various training

events increased the depth of their knowledge, which led to higher achievements of competence and expertise in their field and, eventually, to more promotion opportunities.

4. Aspiring leaders from racial and ethnic minorities should obtain higher education in the hospitality field. Most participants received some level of college education or took classes in the hospitality field. They believed that education was an instrumental factor in their career advancement and was a key component of their success.

5. Aspiring leaders from racial and ethnic minorities should participate in formal and informal organization networks. Being part of formal and informal networks is crucial for the advancement of leaders from racial and ethnic minorities. The managers participating in this study expressed that networking would create greater opportunities to develop relationships as well as create deeper professional and social connections with peers, which could lead to greater insights about job openings, promotion opportunities, and access to important information and resources.

6. Aspiring leaders from racial and ethnic minorities should seek a mentor(s) who could provide personal and professional support in the development and achievement of their desired career objectives. The managers in this study described how crucial having a true mentor was in their career growth.

7. Aspiring leaders from racial and ethnic minorities should convey a strong, professional demeanor and maintain a good support system.

8. Aspiring leaders from racial and ethnic minorities should be aware of, understand, and prepare for the potential barriers they may encounter based on their social and cultural identity, their race, or their ethnicity.

Recommendations to Hospitality Operators

Based on the findings of this study and the literature review, the following recommendations are made for hospitality leaders who endeavor to promote racial and ethnic minority leaders. Hospitality operators can better understand the challenges and barriers facing aspiring leaders from racial and ethnic minorities in the work environment and in their pursuit of higher-level management positions. The findings of this study revealed that all participants experienced career barriers related to their social identity (race and ethnicity) at some point in their journey in the lodging industry. For example, most of the managers stated that discriminatory treatment was a barrier to advancement, and they did not have the same opportunities, were not provided the same training, and were overlooked because of their identity. Hospitality operators and executives can use these insights to build and implement programs, policies, and management activities, which can create more inclusive environments that allow people from all backgrounds to be treated fairly, to be valued, and to be included in the decision-making process (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015; Nishii, 2013).

Hospitality operators can use the findings of this study to create more diversity in their senior and executive positions. The participants in this study described how most entry-level positions are currently filled by all races and colors, but the management of their hotel was not as diverse, particularly at the senior or executive level positions. They added that diversity was almost nonexistent in higher-up positions. The findings of this study revealed that hospitality operators have efficient diversity management practices to bring racial and ethnic minorities workers into the organization. However, a void exists when it comes to creating and implementing more inclusive practices, such as equal access to information, decision-making, resources, and opportunities for upward mobility (Shore et al., 2018). The hospitality industry

has rebuilt the jobs that have been lost during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hospitality operators must develop career opportunities for women and racial and ethnic minorities. AHLA (2021) reported that despite lodging industry statements supporting an inclusive work environment and increasing the representation of minorities, Black employees lost their share of hospitality industry employment and remained underrepresented post-pandemic. The participants recommended that hotel operators should be more inclusive, treat all with mutual respect, create a welcoming environment for minority employees, and provide opportunities to those who exceed work expectations. Hotel operators can develop programs that focus on increasing the representation of racial and ethnic minorities in leadership positions. For instance, one of the managers in the study mentioned that promoting within helped to increase diversity in management positions at his hotel. The findings here suggest that hospitality operators should focus on initiatives increasing internal training and incentives for employees to improve themselves, such as tuition reimbursement for education. The data revealed that only one organization offered career advancement opportunities specifically for racial and ethnic minority employees. Hospitality operators should increase efforts and initiatives that aim to elevate and provide resources for minority employees.

Recommendations for Future Research.

This phenomenological qualitative study explored and sought to understand the lived experiences of 11 racial and ethnic minority managers who had overcome career barriers and had reached a management level in the lodging industry. Despite the success achieved by the participants in reaching and retaining management positions, racial and ethnic minority managers are subject to career barriers such as discriminatory treatment and racism. The findings of this study revealed the need for future research. Future studies should explore the lived experiences

and perceptions of racial and ethnic minority front-line employees who have not yet faced or broken through career barriers in the lodging industry. Exploring career barriers from their perspective could provide new meanings and themes to understand why racial and ethnic minority employees are underrepresented in leadership roles in the lodging industry.

While this study focused on the experiences of racial and ethnic minority managers (e.g., Hispanic, Black, and Asian), as a whole, future researchers may consider conducting a phenomenological study that focuses explicitly on each race or ethnicity separately and compare the results within each racial or ethnic group. This study's findings revealed a potential difference in experiences of perceived career challenges and barriers within each racial or ethnic group. For example, the lived experiences of Black managers and their perceptions of diversity climates tended to be more negative than the participants from other ethnicities. In addition, future studies should consider conducting phenomenological studies focused on racial and ethnic minority female executives.

The participants in this study held various positions, including general manager, sales manager, food and beverage manager, operation manager, and banquet manager. Future studies may consider sampling only racial and ethnic minority CEOs in the lodging industry. Exploring this phenomenon from the CEO's perspective may provide a deeper understanding of why racial and ethnic minority leaders continue to face barriers to advancement and are all too often passed over for promotion. Additionally, that proposed study could provide an understanding of the culture of top leadership in the lodging industry and how that organizational culture can be improved. Finally, the perspectives from the CEOs could provide a further comprehensive understanding of how these career barriers evolved and how they can be abolished.

A final recommendation for future study is conducting separate studies on each of the five themes found in this phenomenological qualitative study. In-depth investigation of each theme may lead to a greater discovery of how they create obstacles and how they can be diminished or eliminated by leaders in the lodging industry. For example, all 11 participants expressed the importance of networking and mentorship to overcome obstacles, so a recommendation for future research is to investigate whether hotels encourage such a business practice. The findings of this study showed that networking and mentoring lead to career growth and progress. Research could investigate whether hotels implement formal or informal networking opportunities and mentoring programs for those employees who want to participate.

Limitations

The researcher recognized several limitations to this study. Most of the participants were Hispanic male managers. Therefore, future research with a larger population and a more diverse sample might have provided greater detail and understanding of lived experiences. Another limitation of this study was that findings from a phenomenological study may not be generalized to a larger population due to the small sample size. In addition, this study was conducted to explore the lived experiences of racial and ethnic minority managers in the lodging industry post-COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the necessary organization and determination of the time of the interview, there was often a need to cancel or reschedule the interviews due to the participant's managerial roles in their hotels.

Conclusions

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to explore the lived experiences of 11 racial and ethnic minority managers who had reached a management level in the lodging industry. Study findings indicated these managers reached the management level

after overcoming a variety of career barriers. The study explored the variables that have contributed to the underrepresentation of racial and ethnic minority leaders in the lodging industry and those that have helped the industry overcome potential career barriers. The study also investigated essential skills and attributes that were important for success. The participants shared their perceptions, feelings, and lived experiences regarding challenges, barriers, and obstacles to career advancement in the lodging industry. The lived experiences of each racial and ethnic minority leader provided a depth of insight regarding the career barriers they have faced in the lodging industry. The data analysis revealed essential ideas to overcome these challenges, barriers, and obstacles.

Based on the data analysis, the following themes were identified: (a) career advancement barriers, (b) perceived diversity climate, (c) personal and professional preparation, (d) networking and mentoring, and (e) essential skills and attributes for success. The results revealed that the lack of representation of racial and ethnic minorities in management in the lodging industry was directly related to perceived career advancement barriers, including discriminatory treatment, unequal opportunities, access barriers, language challenges, implicit bias, ageism, difficulty being accepted, and channeling to lower-level positions. Findings revealed that to overcome career barriers, racial and ethnic minorities should work harder, have effective communication skills, be adaptable, exceed requirements, have a strong demeanor, be open to learning and be available to support their colleagues. In addition, the results showed that networking and mentoring were important in career growth and career advancement for racial and ethnic minorities. Finally, findings stated that personal and professional preparation (e.g., participating in organization-offered programs, taking job-specific training, certifications, and education) was an important factor in overcoming obstacles.

The body of knowledge in this study provides recommendations to racial and ethnic minorities aspiring to a leadership position in the lodging industry. Racial and ethnic minorities may use the insights from this study to learn how to cope with career advancement barriers. The insights from this study may help aspiring leaders from racial and ethnic minorities prepare for career advancement opportunities. In addition, the study provided recommendations for hospitality operators, who may use the information in the study to develop initiatives, programs, and strategies which focus on improving the representation of racial and ethnic minorities in leadership. Finally, the findings of this study recommended the need for future research that focuses on the qualitative exploration of lived experiences of various stakeholders.

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Appendix A - Criteria-Based Pre-Questionnaire

1.   Are you a manager in a/an Chain or Independent hotel?

- Chain Hotel

- Independent Hotel

- Neither

2.   Do you hold a first/mid-level or executive/senior-level position?

- First/mid-level

- Executive/senior

3.   What is your racial/ethnic background?

- Black

- Caucasian

- Asian

- Hispanic

- Native American

- Mixed Race

4.   How long have you been a manager at your hotel?

- 1 year or less

- 2-5 years

- 6-10 years

- 11-15 years

- 16- 20 years

- >21 years

5.   What is your age?

- 21-29

- 30-39

- 40-49

- 50-59

- 60-69

- >69

6.   How many employees work for your employer?

- 1-100
- 101-500
- 501-1000
- >1000

7. How many individuals do you manage?

- 1-4
- 5-9
- 10-25
- 26-50
- 51-99
- >100

8. What is your education level?

- GED or HS Diploma
- Some College
- BA/BS Degree
- MA/MS/MBA

Appendix B - Interview Guide

Opening remarks: Thank you so very much for participating in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to learn about your experience as a manager in the lodging industry. I will ask you a set of questions, and you can speak freely on the questions for as long as you would like and be as thorough as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. As we talk, I may ask some follow-up questions to clarify your points and also to encourage you to think more deeply. If there are any questions during our session today, please feel free to ask at any time. I don't mind being interrupted at all. To make sure I don't miss anything, I would need to record our discussion. Would you give me permission to record our conversation?

<div align="center">Yes   or   No</div>

Thank you. Let's begin:

1. Tell me briefly about yourself and your position.

2. How many years have you worked in the lodging industry, how did you start, and what do you do now? (The participant will be encouraged to tell stories about their life/career path journey, including turning points and why these turning points were considered critical.)

   a) Please describe your lived experiences on the journey to becoming a manager in the lodging industry.

3. Thank you for sharing your experience. Now, let's talk about the future. What is your aspiration for your professional career in the future?

   a) Do you plan to pursue a senior/executive leadership in the lodging industry?

   b) What personal preparation did you undertake to support your future? (i.e., specific memberships in organizations, training, seminars)

c) What organizational support was offered for your professional development? (i.e., mentoring, training)

4. Did you invest in any personal development or activities that you felt would benefit your career goals?

   a) Were these investments helpful, and how?

5. What is your educational background, and do you feel it has been instrumental in your career progress?

6. Have any organizations where you have worked offered career advancement opportunities specifically for racial and ethnic minorities?

   a) If yes, please explain more in detail. What were they? (i.e., training, support, education) Did you participate in the program? Why or why not? Were they successful in supporting professional development for racial and ethnic minorities?

   b) If it was not specified for minorities: Did you participate in the program? Why or why not? Were they successful in supporting professional development for racial and ethnic minorities?

7. Are you an active member of any professional organization, a networking group (formal or informal) peer support group?

   a) How have formal and informal networks been used that assisted and led you to the current positions?

   b) How important are these formal and informal networks for racial and ethnic minority managers' advancement to senior leadership positions?

c) Is there any specific person or people that have been helpful for your professional career advancement? Please explain. Who was this person and what position was this person held?

d) How did you get connected with these people?

e) What are some of the benefits of having these networks?

f) Have you ever had a mentor? Tell me about the person and how he/she helped you develop leadership skills or prepare you for leadership positions?

g) How important is mentoring for advancing racial and ethnic minorities to senior leadership positions?

8. In your opinion, what role has race/ethnicity played in this journey?

a) In your experience, how has your ethnic background helped your professional career?

9. What experiences have hindered or created barriers for you?

a) In your experience, have you felt that your ethnic background hindered your career advancement? Why or why not?

10. How would you describe the organizational diversity climate in your hotel?

11. Based on your experience, what makes organizational diversity climate successful in the workplace?

a) As a minority manager, share your perceptions of your experiences with the organizational diversity climate in the hotel.

12. In your opinion, what are the best strategies to achieve organizational inclusion of diverse management populations?

13. Do you have any suggestions for racial and ethnic minorities who are currently aspiring for leadership positions? What specific skills or attributes do you feel are essential?

14. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your experience as a minority manager that we haven't yet discussed?

Thank you so much for your time and insights you shared.

Appendix C - Consent Form for Interviews

I am a PhD student in the College of Health and Human Sciences at Kansas State University. As a requirement for my doctoral degree in Hospitality Administration, at Kansas State University, I plan to conduct research to study the lived experience of racial and ethnic minority managers who have overcome potential barriers and reached a management level in the lodging industry. The title of the research is *'Lived Experiences of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Lodging Industry: A Phenomenological Study'*. The purpose of the study is to explore lived experience of racial and ethnic minority managers who have overcome potential barriers and reached a management level in the lodging industry. The study will begin January 2022 and end April 2023.

I am soliciting your participation because you are a racial and ethnic minority manager who have reached a management level position. Your participation is voluntary. There are minimal risks in this study. Some possible risks include disruption of schedule due to interview time, discomfort or stress at answering personal questions about work or personal experiences or perceptions.

To decrease the impact of these risks, you can: skip or decline to answer any interview question. You may also stop participating in the study at any time.

If you decide to participate, there are no direct benefits to you, except to tell your story.

The potential benefits to others are: findings may extend knowledge of issues hindering racial and ethnic minorities from executive status and how they can overcome those issues. Racial and ethnic minorities may develop more effective strategies for advancement.

You will be contacted by email for an interview. The interviews will be conducted face to face or through Zoom of your choice. The interviews will be audio recorded and the audio will

be destroyed upon completion of the study. The results of this study may be published but your name will remain confidential and anonymous.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Hasan Birinci at (347) 757-2078 or email hasanbirinci61@k-state.edu. You can also contact my supervisor Dr. Junehee Kwon at jkwon@ksu.edu. If you have any concern regarding your rights as a participant in this study, you can contact the following individuals:

Lisa Rubin, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224

Brad Woods, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Hasan Birinci

Department of Hospitality Management

College of Health and Human Sciences

Kansas State University

Phone: (347)7572078

Hasanbirinci61@k-state.edu

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

Signature: Signature Date: