Has the Concrete Ceiling Cracked Yet?
A Systematic Review of the Barriers Faced by Minority Leaders in Higher Education

Marwa Younes, University of Alberta, Canada

Abstract: A growing number of higher education (HEs) are focusing on diversity initiatives in the 21st century. However, rhetoric does not always correspond to reality. For example, diversity is still not reflected well in academic leadership (Williams, 2013). HEI organizational structures continue to reflect a society where most power and resources are held by White men (O'Connor, 2017). In response to minority groups' marginalization, HEs have initiated diversity initiatives, but these initiatives often result in well-written mission statements and superficial improvements (Henry et al. 2016). According to Stanley (2006), diversity and inclusion are not aligned with their application in Canadian HEs. In HEs led predominantly by White men, where minority leadership is underrepresented, understanding the barriers minority Faculty face in advancing to leadership roles can provide insight into how their identities have shaped their opportunities. This study examines recent research on minority leadership in HEs conducted between 2017 and 2022. It sheds light on critical issues facing HEs today as well as the enablers to overcoming these barriers.

Keywords: Academic Leadership, Academic, Higher Education Institutions, Barriers, Minorities, Race, Gender, Intersectionality

Introduction

As we approach the next decade of the 21st century, higher education (HEs) are increasingly focusing on diversity initiatives. Minority identity is not determined by birth, but rather by circumstances that place minorities in a less privileged position (Harper, 2013). Recently, diversification among students and Faculty appears as an integral part of the missions of many HEs (Chen & Yang, 2019). Yet, rhetoric in this area does not always correspond to reality (Stanley, 2006). Currently, the landscape of HE organizational structures still reflects a larger society where White males hold most of the power and resources (O'Connor, 2017). Thus, the inequality spiral in HE's leadership hierarchy has still impacted minority groups of Faculty who have traditionally been marginalized by White males (Williams, 2013). In response, HE has responded to the marginalization of minority groups by initiating diversity initiatives, but these initiatives often result in well-written mission statements and superficial improvements (Henry et al. 2016). In Canadian HE, there is a disconnect between institutions' missions of diversity and inclusion and the ways in which they apply them (Stanley, 2006). To this end, this study reviews recent research related to the leadership of minority groups in HE to shed light on the pressing issues facing them.

Background of the Problem

Despite plenty of evidence to the benefits of having diverse educational leaders, there is an underrepresentation of minority groups in educational leadership positions in HE. In the US, College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) (2017) reported that White male leaders held leadership positions at 1,160 HEs in the US. The report also revealed that only 13% of top leadership roles are composed of people of color, and 40% are women. In a small-scale study that examined the senior leadership pipeline at five Canadian universities, Johnson and Smith (2020) examined 1,299 senior educational leaders. The report revealed that 45.8% of senior leadership roles are held by White men, 43.4% by White women, 7.2% by men of colour, 2.4% by women of colour, and 1.2% by Indigenous. Upon examining the U15, a collective of 15 of Canada's most research-intensive universities (U15, 2022), Smith and Bray (2019) found that the majority of senior leaders and the pipeline of future academic leaders is predominantly White and male. In the U15 group, data revealed that 80% of presidents are White and 86.7% are male, while 92.2% of deans are White, 32% are women, and 7.7% are minorities and Indigenous people. Overall, these statistics reflect poor efforts by universities to include leaders of marginalized groups (Madsen, 2012). The aforementioned data come as no surprise, since studies have frequently witnessed that minorities face a "concrete" ceiling in HE (Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009). The metaphor of a concrete ceiling is that of an imaginary barrier created to exclude certain groups from leadership (Bachman, 2018). Although such a ceiling is imaginary, it can hinder individuals from developing their self-concept of being a leader (Day et al., 2016).

Rather than being viewed as individual barriers for each leader, these experiences should be discussed as shared experiences. Yet, only limited peer-reviewed research has been conducted on underrepresented educational leaders of minority groups in HEs (Cukier et al., 2021). This paper provides a systematic review of the existing literature

conducted over the past six years to map the barriers and enablers faced by minority leaders in HE in different contexts. The findings of this study may be useful to minority leaders to gain a better understanding of the barriers they may face when leading HEs. In addition, HEs can take these barriers into account to effectively address them within their commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Research Method

This systematic review provides advantages in terms of defining inclusion and exclusion criteria, specifying the time of evaluation, and coding information for further research (Sierra-Correa & Kintz, 2015). The approach to this systematic review study involved the following: a) identified keywords and search strings, b) screened them based on eligibility and exclusion criteria, c) determined eligibility and inclusion, and d) conducted a thematic analysis of the articles reviewed. To explore niche literature related to the area of study, I focused my search using the University of Alberta's central search engine that allowed simultaneous searches of Scopus, JSTOR, and ERIC. First, I specified the following key words to be included: lead, higher education, gender, and race. To broaden the search, I used two Boolean operators, including "AND" to include multiple related keywords and "OR" to search for synonyms for these keywords. A total of 2,253 articles were produced based on these two Boolean operators and the specified keywords to be contained in the title, keywords, or abstract. The search was narrowed using several filters and limiters. The inclusion and exclusion criteria for screening the 2,253 articles are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Results of The Initial Search

Inclusion Criteria	Databases	Total Studies
• *Search terms*: "Lead*" AND "higher education" AND "gender" AND "race*	Scopus	296
	JSTOR	50
• *Time: Articles that are published between 2017-2023*		
• *Academic journal related to Education and leadership.*		
• *Articles (finally published peer-reviewed).*	ERIC	301
• *Demographics: Higher education*	Total	647
• *Written in English*		

With the aim of finding niche articles related to the research area, the search was limited to peer-reviewed academic papers that were finally published in journal articles, which included a total of 1,495 articles. To obtain information on recent issues and barriers faced by minority educational leaders in HE, the search was limited to articles published between March 2017 to March 2023 (647 articles) in the English language (629 articles). The literature review was limited to journals relating to education and leadership (99), which isolated 15 core journals. For determining eligibility for research papers, I read the abstract or the full article describing the purpose, results, and conclusions of the study. As a result, 20 articles were included for analysis to address the research question. These articles were most relevant to the research question of barriers and enablers of minority leaders in higher education. Therefore, it was necessary to analyze each article for relevance to the topic in reference to leadership, and minority representation to include only studies that offered qualitative or quantitative data or a scholarly review on the subject. To ensure that as many views as possible were included, the articles selected covered a range of environments including different countries and various institutional settings, and research paradigms including qualitative, quantitative as well as mixed method and research approaches. It was a deliberate exercise to ensure that the articles offer a diversity of experiences and scenarios in the leadership of their respective institutions to gain a holistic understanding of the current state of leadership challenges and directions of development for minority leaders in higher education institutions.

Data Analysis

The general results of the studies reviewed are presented in Table 2 (see Appendix A), which is organized based on the main focus of the articles. Five studies out of 20 selected articles were published in the US [3, 11–13,19], three studies were conducted in two countries (Australia and UK [2], Australia and New Zealand [4,5]), and two studies were published in the United Kingdom [10]. One study was conducted in each of the following: Pakistan [1], India

[6], Vietnam [7], South Africa [15], Indonesia [4], and Latin America [16]. Table 2 shows qualitative methods (n = 18) were most commonly used, followed by mixed methods (n=2). The studies demonstrate that within the five-year period, there was a steady increase in peer reviewed journal articles that focused on minority educational leaders in HE. The two years with the greatest number of articles published were 2020 [2, 5, 8, 16, 18] and 2021 [1, 4, 6, 12, 14, 19], with a total of ten articles. The second highest publication year was 2019 [9, 11, 13, 15]. Two studies were published in 2022 [7, 17] and 2018 [4, 10], while one study was published in 2017 [3]. Based on conducting a thematic analysis, three main themes emerged, namely, barriers to minority leaders based on gender, race, and transnational identity.

Barriers Facing Female Leaders in Higher Education

The first theme that emerged from this systematic literature review was the barriers faced by women leaders in HE in various contexts. In Western countries, there were several studies on women's leadership barriers. In a Canadian context, for example, O'Dea (2020) analyzed the challenging experiences of women deans drawing on their personal reflections and perspectives, including the author's own reflections. In describing their leadership in HE and how the perceptions of their careers were impacted, these women leaders, across different generations, expressed their opinions by using a variety of descriptions. The women leaders described feeling "othered" (O'Dea, 2020), reflecting their marginalization within dominant masculinist discourses. The older generation of women leaders noted that they had to work harder than their male counterparts to be acknowledged for their success. The younger generation of women leaders felt unsupported by institutional, mediocre leaders, burdened by organizational restructuring, and focused on surviving. Therefore, they refused to accept the masculinist leadership model which they perceived as ineffective, outdated, and unsuited to their needs.

Rogers and Rose (2019) shed light on women's experiences to create a more inclusive outdoor education field. Similarly, Burkinshaw and White (2020) analyzed two research studies conducted separately in 2012 and 2013. They aimed to explore how different generations of women leaders perceive their leadership roles and describe how their perceptions influence their career goals. The 2012 study interviewed 18 senior female educational leaders from HE institutions in the UK, while the 2013 study surveyed 85 young women Faculty at an Australian university about leadership programs. Upon analyzing both studies separately, themes emerged pertaining to how these different generations of women leaders described their leadership roles and how these roles impacted their career goals. In the former study, the senior women leaders described their leadership style as masculine. They also accepted the current masculinist leadership culture, yet they acknowledged they had to work harder and follow male leadership styles to succeed. In the latter study, young women leaders described their experiences of disempowerment and lack of support from male leaders. Similar to O'Dea's (2020) findings, Burkinshaw and White (2020) found that younger women leaders rejected the male-dominated leadership approach, which they considered inefficient.

In a similar Western context, Fitzgerald (2018) identified a number of gendered expectations that impede women from pursuing educational leadership positions in HE. These expectations include both external and internal standards that pose pressure on women to be perceived as competent leaders. Fitzgerald uses the phrase "looking good" (p. 1) to refer to physical appearance, such as man like attire dress, while "being good" (p. 1) refers to performance-related expectations, such as displaying confidence, and assertiveness in their professional roles. Fitzgerald illustrates that women when leading organizations are expected to dress modestly, and with little or no makeup so as not to be associated with being overly feminine. Kathleen, a senior woman leader in the study expressed how once nervously concerned with what to wear before attending meetings chaired by men. She had to wear suit in order to look neat and professional, but having put on a colorful scarf, she felt "*frivolous. ...[she] was not one of them and never could be*" (Fitzgerald, 2018, p. 5). This study interviewed 30 senior women leaders who had worked for more than a year in HEs. There were 17 leaders from Australia and 13 from New Zealand. Additionally, Fitzgerald conducted semi-structured interviews with 25 aspiring women leaders in their early careers. Participants' narratives focused on external elements such as "dress, appearance, and behavior" (p. 3). Data revealed how women leaders represented themselves, their work, and their activities to navigate masculine expectations. Those women leaders explained that to succeed in male-dominated sectors, they had to conform to the gendered expectations of how a leader should behave and appear.

In a later study, Fitzgerald (2020) used the phrase "Inside/Outside" (p. 221) to emphasize the complexity of women's leadership roles in HE. Over two years, 30 executive women leaders in HE in Australia and New Zealand participated in semi-structured interviews. Based on the analysis of the interviews, several key themes emerged regarding barriers to women's leadership and the ways these could be overcome in HE. One of the barriers participants

Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education
Revue canadienne des jeunes chercheures et chercheurs en éducation

Volume 15, Issue / Numéro 3
Special Issue / Hors série 2024

faced was their male counterparts' exclusionary behavior. One example, Sue, a senior woman leader, narrates how she was locked out of all the discussions involving male employees, and no one paid attention to her. In addition to their use of regressive body language where the male counterparts would shrug their shoulders, roll their eyes, carry outside conversations, and even interrupt her. These behaviors were systematic that Sue described her efforts as trying to "knocking on a closed door" (Fitzgerald, 2020, p. 225) in an effort to illustrate the feeling of not being included as a leader. Wither similar experiences, participants felt invisible and struggled to fit into a masculine-dominated sector.

Other studies explored women's leadership issues in HE in non-Western contexts. For instance, Gandhi and Sen (2021) conducted a phenomenological study to explore the barriers women Faculty face in accessing HE leadership roles in India. They argued that, despite an increase in women graduates, women are mostly limited to middle-ranking leadership positions (i.e., department heads, deans, examiners, and registrars). In the study, eleven women leaders from North India responded to semi-structured interviews. These participants had 18-30 years of experience across different disciplines in Indian HE. A thematic analysis of the data collected revealed common themes and patterns, namely: "Experiences, organizational challenges, personal limitations, family and societal obstacles, and strategies and enablers" (Gandhi & Sen, 2021, p. 354). The first two themes presented several factors such as a lack of vision and biased policies that inhibit women's leadership. Other factors included a male-dominated organizational culture, lack of mentors, and limited support systems. The third theme outlined how women were torn between leadership benefits (i.e., financial income and higher status) and disadvantages (i.e., life imbalance and lack of time). The fourth theme revealed a traditional social stigma that restricts women's leadership to household management, while reserving organizational management for men.

In another Asian context, Bhatti and Ali (2020) examined women's experiences of academic leadership in Pakistan HE. Through a qualitative study, they sought to document how women constructed their leadership identities within a dominant masculine academic culture. This study was based on ten in-depth semi-structured interviews with female leaders from universities in Rawalpindi and Islamabad in Pakistan. Data revealed how women are expected to possess masculine characteristics when representing themselves as successful leaders, which is consistent with the studies conducted in Western contexts (e.g., Burkinshaw & White, 2020; Fitzgerald, 2020; O'Dea, 2020). The scholars also noted that while female leaders did not feel constrained by their gender when creating their leadership identities, they stated that their styles were not accepted within masculine academic cultures. The scholars attributed this rejection of female leaders to Pakistan's cultural and religious values, which value women's unique feminine qualities such as being emotional, ability to care, be gentle and soft hearted as opposed to being bossy, commanding and competitive as string leaders are expected to be.

In a Vietnamese context, Maheshwari and Nayak (2022) conducted qualitative research to explore the barriers women leaders encountered in the HE sectors. They interviewed 21 leaders, 19 women and two men, who worked at various levels of leadership at nine universities in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. The thematic analysis of the gathered data revealed four main themes relating to barriers women experience in their career advancement: work-life imbalance where women are expected to fulfill family responsibilities, the undermining perceptions of subordinates regarding female leaders, the lack of inclusion of women in social networks, and personal factors such as lack of self-confidence. The authors observed that Vietnamese Confucian society views housework and childcare as women's roles, which impacts self-confidence among women in the HE workplace. In Indonesia, Cahyati et al. (2021) examined the obstacles women leaders in middle-level HE positions faced to advance into top leadership positions. Through purposive sampling, eight female leaders from Raden Intan State Islamic University were recruited. This university has never appointed a female leader to a top position. Researchers found that women experienced obstacles due to "family responsibilities, a patriarchal culture, and a lack of support" (Cahyati et al., 2021, p. 7).

The previous section showed the barriers women leaders face in HE, examined in different contexts. In North America, O'Dea (2020) and Burkinshaw and White (2020) observed that women leaders are excluded, forced to adhere to masculine norms, and not supported by their institutions. Similar issues are noted internationally. For instance, Fitzgerald (2018, 2020) described how women in Australia and New Zealand faced exclusionary behaviors and gendered expectations. Other studies from India, Pakistan, Vietnam, and Indonesia find other cultural and social barriers to women's leadership (Gandhi & Sen, 2021; Bhatti & Ali, 2020; Maheshwari & Nayak, 2022; Cahyati et al). Despite different cultural contexts, the overarching issue remains consistent: woman in higher education experience barriers at the international level that limit their advancement to leadership positions.

Barriers Facing Racialized Leaders in Higher Education

A second theme arose from the review literature regarding several barriers contributing to the underrepresentation of racialized minorities in HE. Several studies addressed racialized leaders' barriers across different HE context: North American (2), United Kingdom (1), South Africa (1), and South America (1). Cukier et al. (2021) addressed the inconsistency between Canadian HEs' commitment to diversity and inclusion and the underrepresentation of racialized leaders in Canadian HEs. This study examined the demographic composition of public university leaders (e.g., provosts, vice-provosts, presidents, and vice-presidents) in Canada based on a dataset comprising 324 senior educational leaders. According to the data, 13.3% of top leadership positions were held by racialized individuals, though only 2.2% out of the 13.3% by racialized women. The data also revealed that the White women leadership group was the second largest after the White male leadership group. These findings are consistent with the "pyramid of exclusion" (Cukier et al., 2021, p. 566), where the representation of racialized people decreases as one moves up the hierarchy. The scholars examined factors that tend to hinder racialized leaders from moving up the leadership ladder at Canadian HEs, focusing on three dimensions: society, organization, and individual. They criticized the societal treatment of racialized Faculty and called for societal change through increasing awareness of their difficulties Cukier et al. (2021). Furthermore, they discussed organizational level restrictions on Racialized groups' ability to take on leadership roles, such as limited networks and restricted rules within universities. At the individual level, they outlined that discriminatory practices may hinder an individual from performing additional institutional tasks and becoming a leader.

In the US, Chen and Yang (2019) discussed barriers that prevent minorities from reaching top leadership positions in HE despite efforts to increase diversity. They conducted a qualitative study to explore the barriers that frustrate Faculty and leaders of colour in HE, as well as the enablers that assist them. To support their research, they interviewed 13 Faculty and educational leaders of colour from different academic backgrounds at three universities in the United States. Of these participants, six were men and seven were women. The inductive analysis approach to the data gathered revealed three main themes. First, the theme "race still matters" (p. 43) outlined the barriers faculty and leaders of colour face during the hiring process and in the workplace. The second theme discussed how career opportunities for faculty and leaders of colour are often couched in lofty phrases that do not translate into action. Accordingly, the scholars advocated for a genuine commitment to diversity into the workforce. In the third theme, leaders of colour emphasized the importance of promoting social equity within American HE.

Similarly, in the United Kingdom, Arday (2018) addressed the disparity in the recruitment and promotion of Racialized Faculty to senior educational leadership roles within HEs. Using interviews and focus groups, Arday analyzed the narratives of three senior Racialized academic leaders at different universities in the United Kingdom. The analysis of the data revealed several themes including participants' experiences of racial discrimination and their strategies to navigate their leadership roles while dealing with racial stereotypes. The findings showed that Racialized educational leaders face significant barriers, such as being undervalued, underrepresented, and isolated, and experiencing racial discrimination.

The barriers that racialized minorities experience can also be subtle and deciphered in other ways as well. For example, Sadiq et al. (2019) investigated the system of academic promotion in relation to inequalities among underrepresented groups. They noted that while academic promotions are supposed to recognize staff achievement, they may also reveal hidden inequalities. A major motivation for the authors of this study was the dominance of White men in senior academic positions in the global North. They examined data on the promotions over a period of 11 years at the University of Cape Town (UCT). The UCT's historical roots are colonial, and while the number of Black scholars has increased substantially, it still has a majority White faculty, which has, as Sadiq et al. (2019) have suggested, intensified its efforts to transform. Upon conducting a quantitative analysis, the findings revealed gender did not play a noticeable role in the speed of receiving a promotion for international employees, junior staff, those with higher qualifications and those in certain faculties. The aforementioned research examined several barriers that leaders of racialized minorities encounter in HEs.

Barriers Facing Leaders with Intersectional Identities in Higher Education

The intersectionality of race, gender, and sex was first described by Kimberlé Crenshaw in a 1989 essay about black ~~immigrant~~ women of colour. Because certain groups are identified as minorities at different levels, these levels can intersect with discrimination (Moorosi et al., 2018) including women and non-binary groups within Indigenous and

racialized groups. The systematic review examined studies that discussed other barriers faced by educational leaders from underrepresented groups due to their intersectional identities as women of particular racial minorities. Based on the systematic review, three studies discussed the barriers encountered by leaders with intersectional identities in HEs in different contexts. In a hermeneutic phenomenological study, Chance (2021) looked at how Black women's intersectional identities (i.e., the intersection of gender and race) affected their leadership in academia. The scholar recruited nine African American educational leaders, which included "six presidents, two vice presidents, and one assistant vice president/provost" (p. 606) who worked at four-year American universities. Through semi-structured interviews and reflection activities, the scholar collected data about participants' lived experiences. Three main themes emerged from reported crucible experiences influencing Black women's leadership development in HE senior leadership, namely: "Adversity as the rule rather than the exception; education: college was never optional; and leadership: the fortitude to press on" (p. 609). The most reported adversities were verbal, physical, and emotional assaults. Some of the participants experienced adverse childhood experiences such as "poverty, being raised by single parents, bullying, losing loved ones, discrimination, and health problems" (p. 601). The participants noted that obtaining a university education was a resilient act that empowered them to overcome barriers and compete in the workplace.

Likewise, Townsend (2021) used a qualitative phenomenological lens to examine the lived experience of African American women leaders in HE. The scholar conducted semi-structured interviews with five African American women leaders at different public HEs across the US. Employing Critical Race Theory (CRT), this study investigated the lived experiences of these leaders and identified the barriers they faced in achieving successful leadership roles. An analysis of the participants' counter narratives revealed identity politics as a major theme. The participants described how they were always under pressure to prove themselves, assigned heavy workloads, and scrutinized for their work. They also experienced barriers to networking, lack of mentorship, insecurities regarding their authority, having their opinions overlooked and being passed over for promotions, all of which hindered their career advancement. Further, African American women leaders described the pressure placed on them to present a filtered version of themselves instead of presenting their "authentic selves" (p. 591). Due to this concern, they felt that they had to monitor their own speech and actions, which negatively affected their self-efficacy. In England, Showunmi (2020) examined the ways in which gender, race, and class may result in disadvantages or advantages in holding leadership roles. The study explored the understanding of both Racialized and White women leaders of these experiences, and it was conducted in public and private HEs in England. Drawing on several theories (i.e., feminism, intersectionality, and critical autobiographical). The findings showed that Racialized women encountered more obstacles as leaders than their White counterparts. Some of the major obstacles stated out is that the Racialized women experienced constraints in terms of professional growth and development opportunities when compared with White women leaders. Many Racialized women reported feeling lonely and disassociated from powerful networks that would have otherwise helped them manage leadership challenges adequately.

Similarly, Garcia (2020) discussed how Latina mid-level leaders' identities intersect with their leadership roles at community colleges. Throughout the article, Latina mid-level leaders discuss their challenges, unique skills, and experiences. In addition to drawing from literature, the scholar used a reflection method to describe Latina mid-level leaders' experiences in community colleges. Based on the data, Latina leaders offer a wide range of experiences and perspectives, which include supporting and understanding students' problems. The article discussed several challenges of navigating multiple identities, such as race, gender, and culture. Other challenges include navigating gender and race stereotypes and biases and balancing cultural expectations with leadership roles.

In a qualitative study, Kruse (2022) explored the demands and tensions faced by department chairs in HE institutions by conducting online interviews with 45 department chairs (24 men and 21 women, including seven persons of color, and four who identified as LGBTQ). The chairs had four years' experience as chairs at different universities in the United States and Europe. The inductive analysis of the collected data identified three themes of tension experienced by these leaders: task, organization, and relationships. In terms of task tension, chairs noted that they faced multiple demands in their work within a tight timeline that required a diverse set of skills. These demands included adopting both managerial and leadership approaches, representing both the administration and the faculty, and implementing change slowly. The data revealed that organizational tensions resulted from the need to balance university bureaucracy with informal leadership, convention with innovation, and coping with budgetary constraints. The last item of tension discussed was balancing faculty members' self-interest with the good of the community in their program planning and evaluation, replacing destructive conflicts with productive debates, and instilling confidence in the system even during difficult times, such as funding cuts. The reviewed research not only shed light

on the barriers faced by educational leaders, but also revealed several enablers that can be enforced to support minority leaders.

The Enablers of Minority Leaders in Higher Education

Several enablers emerged as the fourth theme of this systematic review to address minority leaders' barriers and issues in HEs. A review of studies suggested several enablers to increase women's representation in leadership positions. Gandhi and Sen (2021) identified enablers to increase female representation in HE in India, which include creating supportive university policies, mentorship programs, and gender-sensitive human resource practices. Creating supportive environments that address barriers and facilitate women's success in HE is another enabler (Gandhi & Sen, 2021; Maheshwari & Nayak, 2022). Further enablers that can motivate women leaders to advance in their careers include continuous mentoring, family support, changing the attitudes of employers about women leaders, and recognizing women's leadership competencies (Maheshwari & Nayak, 2022). To support women leaders, Brower et al. (2019) recommended professional practice that addresses attributional ambiguity through training, mentoring, and coaching. Kruse (2022) suggested that HEs should encourage gender-sensitive policies that can support women's leadership in HE. In an empirical study, Bystydzieński et al. (2017) discussed the underrepresentation of women leaders in STEM disciplines that includes science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields. To enable future leaders to pursue their careers, they developed "the transformational leadership model" (p. 2306) at Ohio State University (OSU). In this training project, the authors used both pre- and post-training surveys that revealed that administrators' perspectives can be changed through training. Interviews with participants and surveys of faculty indicated that this strategy changed the department's culture beyond policy and procedure, resulting in a more welcoming, inclusive culture.

Researchers have provided practical enablers for leaders of color or those with intersectional identities on how to reach real equity in HEs by reviewing a number of studies. Cukier et al. (2021) examined the overlapping "societal-, organizational-, and individual- level" (p. 565) factors that impede minority faculty from progressing in leadership roles in Canadian universities. To that end, they also made several recommendations. At the societal level, HEs need to report on employment during recruiting. In addition, they suggested recruitment quality be included as a formal evaluation criterion. At the organizational level, policies regarding how faculty get promoted to top leadership roles at HE need to be addressed. At the individual level, a discriminatory culture might be eliminated by including racialized faculty. Similarly, Arday (2018) suggested a change or disruption in the existing leadership landscape in the UK HE system by offering opportunities for professional development that promote the involvement of Racialized Faculty. Arday (2018) noted that diversity initiatives and strategies at HEs need to address organizational cultures that prevent Racialized Faculty from advancing.

Chen and Yang (2019) suggested that organizations address these barriers through mentoring, networking, and addressing biases. One of the common enablers that helped racialized leaders face adversity and compete in the workplace is having a university education which functions as a resilient act because it represents their determination to fight all sorts of structural factors and get a chance to growth (Chance, 2021). Through resilience and a drive to obtain higher education, racialized leaders overcame adversity and developed leadership skills. Policies that promote diversity and a supportive environment were the most commonly used enablers.

Discussion and Conclusions

My goal in this paper is to conduct a systematic review of the literature on minority leadership issues in HE published over the past six years. Despite institutions' continual efforts to promote diversity, it must be acknowledged that marginalization of minorities still exists. This systematic review reveals a clear underrepresentation of different minorities in leadership roles within HEs and the adverse experiences that they face. Women leaders are one of these groups that faced marginalization, cultural bias, peer judgment, disempowerment, lack of mentorship, and societal pressure (Bhatti & Ali, 2021; Burkinshaw & White, 2020; Gandhi & Sen, 2021; Fitzgerald, 2018, 2020; O'Dea, 2020). These challenges have shown that gender stereotypes are constructed from the perceptions of leadership roles traditionally associated with men. This stereotyping impacted women leaders' difficulty gaining legitimacy from their male counterparts in HE. Women leaders expressed how they felt pressured to conform to masculine gender stereotypes to succeed as leaders. Another group included Racialized leaders who were subjected to marginalization, discrimination, biased policies, and limited networks (Arday, 2018; Chen & Yang, 2019; Cukier et al., 2021). Having other elements of a leader's identity can make difficulties even more challenging; it therefore was not surprising that

Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education
Revue canadienne des jeunes chercheures et chercheurs en éducation

Volume 15, Issue / Numéro 3
Special Issue / Hors série 2024

the third group was leaders with intersectional identities (women from racialized minorities) who described adverse and traumatic experiences (Chance, 2021; Showunmi, 2020; Townsend, 2021). In reflecting on the diverse ways in which different groups are marginalized based on their gender or and race in higher education leadership contexts, it is important to acknowledge that the extent and nature of the barriers faced can vary significantly. For example, while white women face significant barriers, they often benefit from equity initiatives designed to increase female representation. Being white provides them with a relative advantage over their Racialized colleagues in terms of acceptance in White dominated institutions. This double oppression is expressed in terms of exclusion from leadership positions and lack of organizational support that results in increased underrepresentation of Racialized women. These experiences demonstrate that Racilized leaders face barriers, as they inevitably encounter discrimination (Arday, 2018; Chen & Yang, 2019; Cukier et al., 2021; Fitzgerald, 2018, 2020).

The reviewed studies reflected how different minority groups of Faculty faced a concrete ceiling, which excludes particular groups including female faculty, and Racialized faculty to favor a dominant White male faculty group, as they strived to become educational leaders in HE. This ceiling appeared to be connected to hegemonic discourses associated with White masculinity in HE. The dominance of the White masculine hegemony has been historically legitimized to such a degree that it no longer appears to be dominance, but rather a neutral, natural state. Such hegemony is evident in long-standing negative stereotypes about who can succeed, in bias in decision-making, and in the lack of networking opportunities for people of color, Indigenous communities, women, and LGBTQ people (Bachman, 2018). O'Connor (2017) suggested that this discourse of hegemony prevents minorities from attaining senior leadership positions in HE, which is evident in this systematic review. However, Non-Western universities still exclude women despite they are not overwhelmingly white. For example, leadership positions could still be associated with men only meaning similar problems exist for women who want to be promoted to better positions in organizations. Stanley (2006), the reviewed studies indicate that silence about minority issues remains the norm as diversity in academia appears to be more rhetoric than reality. Such silences may significantly impact minority Faculty's career trajectories in the current HE context (Henry et al., 2016) that could rob HE of a valuable diversity of individuals, knowledge, and perspectives. Therefore, HE should aspire to have full representation of women and visible minorities in educational leadership that, in turn, can enhance efficiency and innovation.

Furthermore, the results echoed similar concerns raised by Bowler (2004) regarding the possibility of creating a conducive environment for minority groups. To effectively address minority faculty members' barriers, a top-down commitment to diversity is integral to fostering an inclusive environment. Instead of stigmatizing leaders, they should be acknowledged and appreciated for their contributions. The findings of this study may enable educational policy makers to gain additional knowledge of approaches, techniques, and best practices, and allow minorities to be included, to contribute value and experience, and to overcome barriers. In order to achieve this, university policies must take into account the special roles of minority leaders. These policies can include establishing fair, bias-free, and accountable mechanisms in place for hiring, recruitment, and career advancement, establishing coaching and leadership development programs, and creating networking opportunities for educational leaders. I believe that full representation of women and visible minorities in leadership is crucial for the success of HEs. I also think that having comprehensive strategies that address societal, organizational, and individual change is necessary. I also think that having comprehensive strategies that address societal, organizational, and individual change is necessary, which could support better representation of underrepresented leaders and career progression opportunities for them.

The reason behind the need of representation of marginalized groups in leadership positions lies in its potential in bringing change to the higher education. Such diverse leadership can bring improved polices and understanding of the issues faced by underrepresented groups since more perspectives, experience, and insight would be available to the leadership body. This diversity is important as it address the unique needs of a diverse student body. One idea is that when students look for role models, they are helped by seeing individuals who look like them, which offer potential for inspiration and provide a sense of belonging. In addition, the representation of diverse leaders can disrupt and transform power relations existing in various institutions and organisations and increase the importance of meaningful equality. It is through this lens that the significance of diversity in leadership positions becomes apparent: it is not just about representation for its own sake, but about creating a HE that is reflects relevance, and fairness of higher education.

REFERENCES

Arday, J. (2018). Understanding race and educational leadership in higher education: Exploring the black and ethnic minority (BME) experience. *Management in Education, 32*(4), 192-200.

Bachman, E. (2018, February). Shattering the glass ceiling: Tips for combatting promotion discrimination. Zuckerman Law.

Bhatti, A., & Ali, R. (2021). Women constructing leadership identities in academia: Intersection of gender and culture. *Issues in Educational Research*, *31*(1), 1-18.

Bowler, M. (2004). *Creating inclusive environments in higher education: Addressing diversity in educational leadership. Diversity and Higher Education Review, 3*(1), 25-38.

Brower, R. S., Abolafia, M. Y., & Carr, J. B. (2019). *Organizational learning across boundaries: Changing power dynamics through mentoring, coaching, and training. Leadership and Organization Development Journal, 40*(5), 568-581.

Burkinshaw, P., & White, K. (2020). Generation, gender, and leadership: Metaphors and images. *Frontiers in Education*, *5*, 517497.

Bystydzieński, J., Thomas, N., Howe, S., & Desai, A. (2017). The leadership role of college deans and department chairs in academic culture change. *Studies in Higher Education*, *42*(12), 2301 - 2315.

Cahyati, D., Hariri, H., Sowiyah, & Karwan, D., H. (2021). Women's leadership in higher education: Barriers and opportunities in Indonesia. *International Journal of Education Policy & Leadership, 17*(9).

Chance, N. L. (2021). A phenomenological inquiry into the influence of crucible experiences on the leadership development of black women in higher education senior leadership. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 49*(4), 601-623.

Chen, D., & Yang, X. (2019). Are the walls really down? Perceptions regarding minority leadership challenges and opportunities. *The Excellence in Education Journal, 8*(1), 38-63.

College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR). (2017). *Our Signature Surveys*.

Cukier, W., Adamu, P., Wall-Andrews, C., & Elmi, M. (2021). Racialized leaders leading Canadian universities. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 49*(4), 565-583.

Day, C., Gu, Q., & Sammons, P. (2016). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: How successful school leaders use transformational and instructional strategies to make a difference. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 52*(2), 221–258.

Fitzgerald, T. (2018). Looking good and being good: Women leaders in Australian universities. *Education Sciences, 8*(2), 54.

Fitzgerald, T. (2020). Mapping the terrain of leadership: Gender and leadership in higher education. *Irish Educational Studies, 39*(2). 221-232.

Gandhi, M., & Sen, K. (2021). Missing women in Indian university leadership: Barriers and facilitators. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 49*(2), 352-369.

Garcia, L. R. (2020). The intersections of race and gender for Latina mid-level leaders. *New Directions for Community Colleges, 191*, 117-126.

Harper, S. R. (2013). Am I my brother's teacher? black undergraduates, racial socialization, and peer pedagogies in predominantly white postsecondary contexts. *Review of Research in Education*, *37*(1), 183–211.

Henry, F., Dua, E., Kobayashi, A., James, C., Li, P., Ramos, H. & Smith, S. M. (2016). Race, racialization and indigeneity in Canadian universities. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 20*(3), 300-314.

Jackson, J., & O'Callaghan, E. (2009). What do we know about glass ceiling effects? a taxonomy and critical review to inform higher education research. *Research in Higher Education, 50,* 460-482.

Johnson, G. F., & Smith, M. S. (2020). Mapping the leaky leadership diversity pipelines at five Canadian. *Awa Diversity Gap Campaign.*

Kruse, S. (2022). "I am the Chair": Women and Department Leadership in the Academy. *Frontiers in Education, 7*, 814-581.

Law, I. (2017). Building the anti-racist university, action and new agendas. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 20*(3), 332–343.

Madsen, S. R. (2012). Women and leadership in higher education: Current realities, challenges, and future directions. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, *14*(2), 131–139.

Maheshwari, G., & Nayak, R. (2022). Women leadership in Vietnamese higher education institutions: An exploratory study on barriers and enablers for career enhancement. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 50*(5), 758–775.

Moorosi, P., Fuller, K., & Reilly, E. (2018). Leadership and intersectionality: Constructions of successful leadership among Black women school principals in three different contexts. *Management in Education, 32*(4), 152–159.

O'Connor, P. (2017). *Gender, governance and the glass ceiling: A case study of barriers and bias*. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 10*(1), 10-20.

O'Dea, J. (2020). Hazardous manoeuvres: Thoughts on being a female university dean. *Irish Educational Studies, 39* (2), 205-219.

Rogers, S., & Rose, J. (2019). *Women in outdoor education: Navigating barriers and creating change*. *Journal of Outdoor Education, 5*(2), 102-115.

Sadiq, H., Barnes, K. I., Price, M., Gumedze, F., & Morrell, R. G. (2019). Academic promotions at a South African university: Questions of bias, politics and transformation. *Higher Education, 78*(3), 423 - 442.

Showunmi, V. (2020). The Importance of intersectionality in higher education and educational leadership research. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Leadership Studies, 1*(1), 46 - 63.

Sierra-Correa, P., & Cantera, J. (2015). Ecosystem-based adaptation for improving coastal planning for sea-level rise: A systematic review for mangrove coasts. *Marine Policy*, *51*.

Smith, M. S., & Bray, N. (2019, July 11). *U15 leadership remains largely white and male despite 33 years of equity initiatives*. Awa Diversity Gap Campaign.

Stanley, C. A. (2006). Coloring the Academic Landscape: Faculty of Color Breaking the Silence in Predominantly White Colleges and Universities. *American Educational Research Journal, 43*(4), 701–736.

Thiessen, V. (2009). The pursuit of postsecondary education: a comparison of First Nations, African, Asian, and European Canadian youth. *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue canadienne de sociologie, 46*(1), 5–37.

Townsend, C.V. (2021). Identity politics: Why African American women are missing in administrative leadership in public higher education. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 49*(4), 584 - 600.

U15. (2022, July 29). About Us. *U15 Group of Canadian Research Universities.* https://u15.ca/about-us/

Williams, D. A. (2013). *Strategic diversity leadership: Activating change and transformation in higher education.* Sterling: Stylus Publishing.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Marwa Younes: Younes is a Ph.D. candidate in Studies in Educational Leadership (SEL) at the University of Alberta. She holds a Master's degree in TESOL from the American University of Sharjah and dual Bachelor of Arts degrees in English Literature and Education. With over 15 years of teaching experience across the Middle East and North America, Marwa has taught in various educational institutions. Her expertise includes teacher training, curriculum design, and EFL/ESL teaching. Her core values are perseverance, lifelong learning, and compassion.