

TITLE The Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Black Women Leaders in Fortune 500 Companies

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OBJECTIVE The purpose of this study was to examine the self-efficacy beliefs of black women in leadership positions and to determine how Black women leaders' careers are influenced by their self-efficacy beliefs.

METHODOLOGY

The population was Black females who worked in mid-level or above leadership positions in Fortune 500 companies. They were identified as alumni of four historically Black college sororities Alpha Kappa Alpha, Delta Sigma Theta, Zeta Phi Beta, and Sigma Gamma Rho, and email addresses were available for 555 participants. The useable sample included 331 respondents (60% response rate); however, only 169 surveys were completed. Respondents provided demographic information and completed online the LPI, the Leadership Self-Efficacy Scale (Paglis, 1999), General Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995), and Wong and Law's (2002) Emotional Intelligence Scale. Black women leaders in this research were from 28 states and more than 30 companies, with 23 position titles involved, the highest being Vice President. The typical respondent had been in her current role for 1-3 years (53%), had 10+ years of work experience (91%), held a leadership position for 1-3 years (33%), had participated in some type of leadership development program (74%), was between 25-64 years old (91%), never married (51%), held a graduate degree (80%), and earned over \$100,000 (60%).

KEY FINDINGS

Enable was the leadership practice most frequently reported being used by Black female leaders, followed by Model, Encourage, Challenge, and Inspire. The proportion of the variance in the emotional intelligence variable explained by the leadership practices subscales was 35.4 percent.

No significant relationships were found between age, tenure, experience and the total leadership practices inventory scale of Black women in non-Fortune 500 companies. The proportion of the variance in the emotional intelligence variable explained by the leadership practices subscale was 23.0 percent.

The use of emotion subscale for emotional intelligence was the only emotional intelligence variable that showed a significant relationship with the leadership practices inventory. The author contends that "the use of emotions can be leveraged to drive demonstrative leadership behaviors like challenging processes, inspiring vision, and

enabling action. Modeling the desired leadership behavior and encouraging the heart of others is also impacted through the ability to use emotions among Black women leaders” (pp. 134-135).

Regulation of emotion also showed a positive relationship with the LPI indicating, according to the author, “that individual beliefs regarding current leadership behaviors are related to the ability to regulate emotion in others. This suggests that Black women leaders who are able to demonstrate or model leadership behavior enable others to be able to act on their own emotion by providing a leadership example” (p. 135).

The others’ emotion appraisal subscale was also significantly correlated with the leadership practices of Model and Challenge. Beliefs about current leadership practices,” says the author, “are related to Black women’s ability to appraise the emotions of others through modeling leadership behaviors, shared values, and by looking at ways to improve their organization through experimentation and risk taking” (p. 135).