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TITLE An Examination of Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Competencies among Black and White Female Middle Managers

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OBJECTIVE The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership among black and white female middle managers.

METHODOLOGY The study population for black female middle managers included graduate members of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. (AKA) and for white female middle managers consisted of the mentors with Menttium Corporation. There were 68 white female respondents and 70 black female respondents, who completed the Leadership Practices Inventory, the EQ-i (Bar-On, 2004), and provided demographic data. Mean age for the black female sample was 42 years and 47.6 years for the white female sample. Whites had a mean of 20.3 and Blacks a mean of 15.5 for years in current position. Both groups had somewhat similar averages for number of direct reports (3.3-Black, 4.1-White), number of levels below (Black-2.7, 2.7 -White), number of levels above (3.2-Black, 2.5 – White), number of promotions sought (2.8 -Black, 3.2 –White), and number of promotions (1.0-Black, 1.4-White). Whites had a mean of 4.9 and Blacks a mean of 2.3 for number of promotional opportunities. White women were more likely to work in the financial and IT sectors, while black women were more likely to work in the professional/technical and healthcare sectors. More than half of the white women (54%) and black women (56%) had master's degrees, with 31 percent of the former and 29 percent of the latter having college degrees.

KEY FINDINGS

Black women exhibited higher mean scores on all five leadership practices than white women; however, none of these differences were statistically significant. Emotional Intelligence (overall) was significantly correlated with each of the five leadership practices. Point biserial correlations were used to estimate the relationships between race (group) and the five leadership practices. The results did not support a relationship between race and any of the leadership practices. Regression analyses indicated that the EQ-i predicts all five leadership practices such that higher EQ-i scores were related to higher LPI scores. The hypothesis that EI predicts leadership competencies was supported, but race was not a factor in this relationship. *T*-test results indicated no significant difference in emotional intelligence scores by race.

The author suggests that:

Leaders who can model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable employees to act, and encourage the hearts of employees can help organizations initiate and manage change, respond to internal and external threats, and foster an environment that encourages creativity. The significant relationship between EI and leadership indicated that higher EI correlated to higher leadership competencies....Study results supported the strengthening of transformational leadership competencies for middle managers (p. 132).

Results failed to support common perception and theory that women exhibit high emotions and high soft skills....If perceptions that black and white women exhibit high emotions and high soft skills has a role in the lack of promotions to senior ranks for women, then the perceptions lack empirical support based on this study's findings (p. 137).