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Diversity Matters: Federal Executives' Influence

A Dissertation Presented
to the Faculty of the
Department of Public Policy and Administration
West Chester University
West Chester, Pennsylvania

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of
Doctor of Public Administration

By
Garman (Will) Williams
December 2023

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my dad, Mr. Eduard Taylor, who encouraged me while he was still living and even during his earthly transition to stay the course; and to my mom, Mrs. Portia Taylor, who has supported me throughout this endeavor daily.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Angela Kline, for all her support throughout this entire dissertation experience. When I needed to enroll into DPA 803, she was willing to listen to my ideas about why this research study was important, and it is something that should definitely be explored. Thank you to Dr. Kristen Crossney and Dr. Mia Ocean for being willing to serve on as committee members, not only providing sound advice to improve this research study, but also support and encouragement to keep going and pushing forward.

To my son, Jamelle, always know that the sky is the limit, and you can achieve and attain all your educational and career goals.

To my spiritual father, Pastor Carlton Crudup, I want to say thank you for keeping me lifted in prayer and always providing a word of encouragement throughout this journey since the beginning.

To my biological and adopted family, I want to say thank you all for supporting me, especially my church family. This definitely became harder after my dad got sick and passed away, but different ones would keep me lifted in prayer and also encouraged me not to quit. To God be the glory for the things that He has done!

Abstract

Bureaucratic representation directly impacts the federal workforce diversity; however, most federal agencies have struggled to recruit and retain a diverse workforce that resembles the population in the United States. The federal government has consistently applied different methodologies and strategies to increase diversity efforts over time, but who has the ability to actually influence all activities at each of the federal agencies. Senior Executive Service members are positioned across the federal government by the Office of Personnel Management, and they provide oversight of all federal policies and programs that benefit the constituents in this country. To examine this dilemma related to the federal workforce inability to build a diverse workforce, this study uses quantitative methods to explore if the quantity of Senior Executive Service members impact diversity differently across the federal agencies under the Department of Health and Human Services. This study uses bivariate correlation and independent t-test to determine if the hypothesis is valid. Findings determine that this research area should be further explored due to the intricate role of the Senior Executive Service members. Determining who has the ability to influence federal workforce diversity will be most beneficial to the constituents since all federal programs and policies impact everyone in this country.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The federal government workforce should be the model for diversity in the 21st century since it is the largest employer in the nation (Soni, 2004). Diversity representation matters within the federal government; however, where does responsibility for this requirement reside? Diversity goals and mandates are included in policies, directives, and executive orders; however very little progress is observed in the federal government's workforce. After examining the population trends observed by the U.S. Census Bureau, this chapter will focus on communicating the overall problem with diversity in the federal workforce, the research question, and the purpose of this study.

Population in the United States – A Census Bureau Review

In this country, the U.S. Census Bureau takes an official survey every 10 years to account for the entire population (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). The mission of the U.S. Census Bureau is to provide quality data about the country's people and the economy (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). The U.S. Census Bureau also collects other pertinent information, such as individual's name, ethnicity/race, gender/sex, date of birth, and the type of residence for all individuals living at that residence (n.d.). The U.S. Census Bureau tracks racial and ethnic demographics in many different categories to capture the diversity of this country, such as Whites, African Americans/Blacks, American Indians and Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders, Some Other Races, and Two or More Races (n.d.). Whites only communicate those individuals who don't claim to be part of any other racial or ethnic group, and all other racial and ethnics groups will be considered Minorities (or Non-Whites). The U.S. Census Bureau reported that the U.S. population was 281,421,906, which was made of 211,460,626 Whites and 69,961,280 Minorities (or Non-Whites) in 2000 (n.d.).

The U.S. population in 2010 was reported as 308,745,538, which consisted of 223,553,265 Whites and 85,192,273 Minorities (or Non-Whites) (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). In 2020, the U.S. population was 331,449,281, which was composed of 204,277,273 Whites and 127,172,008 Minorities (or Non-Whites) according to the U.S Census Bureau (n.d.).

Table 1

U.S. Population 2000-2020 from U.S. Census Bureau

Population	2000	2010	2020
United States (Total)	281,421,906	308,745,538	331,449,281
Whites	211,460,626	223,553,265	204,277,273
Non-Whites (Minorities)	69,961,280	85,192,273	127,172,008

According to the U.S. Census Bureau data, the trend from 2000 to 2020 shows that the percentage of Whites changed by -13.5 points (75.1% to 61.6%), while the percentage of Minorities (Non-Whites) changed by +13.5 points (24.9% to 38.4%) (n.d.). These diversity changes are visible within the entire country, and the U.S. Census Bureau is directly responsible for capturing this data.

Problem Statement

Diversity in the federal workforce has consistently lagged behind the country's diversity, specifically the racial/ethnicities percentages, based on population data presented by the U.S. Census Bureau (Soni, 2004). There are other areas, such as individuals with disabilities, where the population is more diverse; however, this study will focus on the federal workforce racial and/or ethnic diversity and who has the ability to influence the diversity within each federal agency in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). As stated, U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is the ultimate federal

hiring authority for all federal agencies, but they don't oversee the day-to-day actions in each federal agency across this country. However, the Senior Executive Service (SES) members work with the political appointees while leading and providing oversight of the entire federal workforce on a daily basis. Do the SES members have the ability to influence diversity within the federal agencies across DHHS?

There are numerous challenges and/or opportunities facing the federal government in the 21st century, and it is going to take a diverse workforce to create policies and programs that will solve problems, and benefit most Americans (Soni, 2004). Even with a decline in confidence of government across the country, there have been several instances where the government has become instrumental in leading the way to a path forward, such as the treatment of Ebola cases in the U.S. This has impacted the success of recruitment and retention programs, therefore limiting who considers the federal workforce as the employer of choice (Soni, 2004). The SES members have the ability to influence this perception across the DHHS and the rest of the federal government. In order to build a high performing government where constituents agree with that perception, it will take a federal workforce with varying skills and abilities that promulgates diversity (Adatsi et al., 2020). Should the SES members have more involvement in building a more diverse federal workforce? Yes, SES members have the ability to influence the federal workforce diversity in the federal government, specifically focusing on DHHS for this research study. Does the varying quantity of SES members affect the federal agencies differently across DHHS? These questions will be explored during this research study to determine how the SES members have the ability to influence diversity at DHHS.

Research Question and Purpose of Study

There is one research question for this study that examines diversity and the influence of SES members in the federal workforce. The research question is: *Do higher quantities of SES employees increase overall workforce diversity within the different agencies in the Department of Health and Human Services?* Assuming that all agencies in DHHS have SES members onboard on September 30, 2022, which will allow each agency to be classified into one of two categories – low or high quantity of SES members.

Chapter 2 (Review of Literature) of this study defines federal workforce diversity, while considering bureaucratic representation and the ability to recruit and retain a diverse federal workforce using an effective talent management program. Chapter 3 (Data and Methods) of this study using quantitative methodology examines if the quantity of SES members has an impact on diversity based on the outcomes from two bivariate correlations and one independent t-test, while Chapter 4 (Results) presents the actual data from the three different tests and discusses some recommendations and limitations directly related to this specific study. Chapter 5 (Diversity, Future Research, and Conclusions) of this study discusses some future diversity areas that are visible across the federal government, building diversity accountability, and why diversity benefits all constituents, plus recommending future research topics related to the federal government and diversity.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

In this literature review, there will be a review of the definition of workplace diversity and the different diversity initiatives and hiring flexibilities being used in the federal government to build an effective talent management program. This study will review what is bureaucratic representation, and why is it important while implementing Executive Order 13985. In conclusion, there will be discussion about the different facets of a talent management program that can be instrumental building a more diverse federal workforce, which ultimately can be influenced by senior leadership within each federal agency.

Bureaucratic Representation

Bureaucratic representation is a commonly known theory that public officials at all levels of the government should represent the constituents, especially gender and racial and ethnic categories, in order to have the most impact for the individuals whom they serve (Elias, 2013). Bureaucratic representation in the federal government should also be visible when implementing and examining the policies and programs that directly impact the people who reside in the United States. There has been some research that questions if bureaucratic representation matters when examining the demographics of the individuals overseeing policies and programs, but there has been evidence that bureaucratic representation does affect public organizational performance (Ding et al., 2021). Rationalism would state that as humans would believe that those individuals who are from the same community are most likely to create and oversee policies and programs that will be most beneficial to the people who are from the same community (Ding et al., 2021). Some feel that bureaucratic representation focuses more on democratic outcomes and successes versus ensuring equity and effectiveness for all constituents (Ding et al., 2021).

Public administrators hired within the federal government lead programs and oversee policy enactment based on their own perspectives, which has the capability to not benefit the most constituents in the United States unless they have knowledge and experiences from all racial and ethnic backgrounds. It varies if active or passive representation has the most impact in the federal government, which is viewed as complicated and perplexing. Active representation is when the hired public administrators promote the interest of the constituents for which they share the same characteristics or backgrounds. Passive representation occurs when there is a subtle sense of influence with no direct promotion; however, the hired public administrators reflect social characteristics on the constituents for whom they represent and serve. The Indian Health Service and Health Resources and Services Administration are two federal agencies that demonstrate active and passive representation with their daily operations. The Indian Health Service recruits Native Americans, whenever possible, to fill public servant positions. The Health Resources and Services Administration focuses on improving healthcare access for lower socioeconomic individuals who are considered vulnerable.

Workplace Diversity

Diversity is defined as the general practice of inclusion where characteristics or traits range from different ages, ethnics, genders, and/or social backgrounds; pretty much anything that composes of variety or differing elements (Maranto et al., 2019). There are several ways that diversity can be viewed, which consist of racial, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, cultural, and religion. Cultural diversity examines the differences connected to ethnicities and societal norms from familial backgrounds (Moon, 2018). Others have defined diversity where it includes human differences, such as gender identity,

national origin, ethical value system, and political beliefs (Cech & Rothwell, 2020). All of these demographic-related items technically make us diverse and have an impact on the workplace (Iwanaga et al., 2021). Workplace diversity is the term used when diversity is exemplified in the work setting (Schultz et al., 2019). Technically, some organizations group the different aspects of diversity that can be displayed in the workplace into worldview, organizationally, external, and internal categories (Buttner & Tullar, 2018).

Workplace diversity, sometimes referred to as organization diversity, applies to the federal government. Each employee in the federal government has differences based on several characteristics and those are carried into the workforce to develop and implement all policies and programs for the constituents in the United States. There are several differences due to varying job functions, positions, place of work, employment status, pay and seniority that also affect workplace diversity. This type of influence provides some bureaucratic representation, but it is limited to the public administrators who were successfully hired into the different federal agencies.

Federal Hiring and Diversity Initiatives Flexibilities

Federal hiring is a result of complicated hiring practices that vary one vacancy announcement to the next, but this also creates an environment with flexibilities. There are different categories for the various appointments into the federal government, which collectively build the different hiring flexibilities. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) was the foundation to diversity initiatives in the federal government.

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

With the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII created the EEOC, and its main purpose was to lower workplace discrimination (Rubin & Alteri, 2019). The EEOC

has oversight of the private and public sector (Rubin & Alteri, 2019). When the EEOC was officially established, it focused on discrimination complaints. Most of the complaints were centered around race, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, children, and genetic information (U. S. Equal Employment, 2003). The EEOC requires employers to submit all racial and/or ethnic data for their employees to help minimize racial discrimination in the different organizations (Rubin & Alteri, 2019). After the creation of the EEOC, there was a backlog from all the discrimination cases due to limited funding; however, this was mitigated as funding increased (U. S. Equal Employment, 2003). There was limited research on the effectiveness of diversity programs, even though diversity research traces back over 50 years according to Kellough and Naff (2004). According to Rubin and Alteri, they have added research related to the trends due to various discrimination cases following the creation of the Notification and Federal Employee Anti-discrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (2019). In the next section, there will be a consideration of the Management Directive 715 (MD-715) program and how it has impacted the overall federal government hiring initiatives.

The MD-715 provided the framework to establish and maintain equal employment opportunity programs within the federal government. In the MD-715 created by the EEOC, this program has ten major parts that serve as the overarching framework. In Part A-D, the MD-715 focuses on the total number of employees, program coordinators that specialize in equal employment opportunity, and it covers all sub-organizations within the different departments in the federal government. Part E provides an executive summary to the federal government, and it includes a self-assessment for review of the current equal employment opportunity program. In this section, there should be specific and clearly

identified mediation activities that are being used to resolve any barriers listed in this self-assessment. Part F establishes who should sign the actual MD-175 report for completion certification and it must be the Secretary or his/her designee. Part G communicates all the activities that were completed as part of the self-assessment checklist. All items that were not marked as complete require an explanation why in the Part H. Part I will include specific language on how barriers will be resolved. The last part (Part J) focuses on specific goals that build diversity among individuals with disabilities, especially the disabilities that are categorized as targeted by the federal government. The MD-715 is an annual requirement and it must be completed by all federal departments. Barriers identified in the annual reports may vary from each department depending on their own workforce challenges and requirements as they relate to the department's diversity goals. At the National Science Foundation (NSF), this agency created a program that focused on initiatives that benefit society by building in plans to address underrepresentation of women, disabled, and minorities.

Federal Personnel Management

Office of Personnel Management (OPM) plays a key role with developing the overall diversity, equity, and inclusion programs in the federal government. OPM is responsible for human capital management, which includes all recruitment and retention initiatives that impact the federal employees. Most of the times human capital goals are directed via Executive Orders when the presidents set different priorities, but OPM also has the ability to initiate human capital goals for all of the federal government. President Obama placed an emphasis on the federal government increasing the number of employees with disabilities in 2010. OPM created a strategic plan for 2010 to 2015, which specifically added diversity

and inclusion goals. The main focus was centered around being more inclusive of all racial categories and increased hires for individuals with disabilities; however, the goals also impacted senior executives and student programs. Ogrysko (2016) had encouraged federal agencies to review and expand the definition of diversity and inclusion beyond personnel management. The Obama administration also was instrumental with minimizing the barriers that were limiting Hispanics and Latinos from being hired in the federal government. These new efforts from OPM wanted all the leaders to focus more on diversity and inclusion in the various agencies. Even with all these clear goals and efforts, the Government Accountability Office communicated that there are more opportunities for the different agencies to promote diversity and inclusion. GAO wanted OPM to take a lead with building a diversity and inclusion policy that would include specific guidance that will be implemented across the federal government and lay the foundation to meet EEOC directives. There is potential to create more effective diversity programs with OPM and EEOC according to GAO. Specifically, GAO recommended that the two different entities meet more often, and they build accountability by streamlining reporting to build efficiency and effectiveness. All of the recommendations were implemented, except the one item that required congressional action.

Title 5

The federal government uses Title 5 in the United States Code to provide official regulations and operational oversight for federal employees (Federal Hiring, 2016). Title 5 also communicates the official holidays observed by the federal government (Federal Hiring, 2016). Title 5 is the hiring authority that most federal employees are offered employment, and Title 5 can be competitive or non-competitive (Federal Hiring, 2016).

Title 5 uses the pay tables listed on Office of Personnel Management's website commonly referred to the General Schedule (GS). This creates a transparent environment where the position pay is not complicated, and anyone can negotiate accordingly during the recruitment phase. However, most individuals feel that this transparent system promotes tenure over performance, which is not the best for retaining high performers in the federal government.

Title 38

Title 38 is a hiring authority that resembles the Title 5 program with enhanced salaries since this program is geared to practitioners (physicians and dentists) who are directly involved in patient care within the federal government (Federal Hiring, 2016). There are several federal departments that use Title 38 hiring authority in a few different ways. Increased salary benefits using different special pay rate tables exist that were above the Title 5 salaries (Federal Hiring, 2016). Another benefit of the Title 38 hiring authority is centered around premium pay for those individuals based on knowledge, experience, and expertise (Federal Hiring, 2016). Premium pay has special rates for weekends, holidays, overnight, and overtime. The last main aspect of this program allows physicians and dentists to receive Title 5 pay plus additional compensation at market pay depending on the physician or dentist specialties and board certifications (Federal Hiring, 2016). Title 38 was originally used by the Veterans Health Administration in order to recruit and retain physicians; however, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Homeland Security both have started using this hiring authority for positions that have direct patient care (Federal Hiring, 2016).

Title 42

Scientific positions and health professionals are sometimes hired under the Title 42 authority in the federal government (Federal Hiring, 2016). This hiring authority is mostly used when other appointment mechanisms will not successfully recruit the individuals with the right skillsets to achieve the mission. At this time, Title 42 is only used within the Department of Health and Human Services for external or internal hires. Individual fellowships, Senior Biomedical Research Service (SBRS), and special consultants are the categories that fall under Title 42 (Federal Hiring, 2016). Special consultants are scientific expertise hired to assist with public health missions and these individuals do not have to meet the competitive service guidelines. Title 42 exists for these special hires; however, DHHS has to exhaust all other appointment mechanisms before using Title 42 (Federal Hiring, 2016). SBRS is used to recruit top scientists or experts who are known throughout the scientific community as recognized experts by peers (Federal Hiring, 2016). The scientists are nationally recognized experts usually heavily involved in clinical or biomedical research, including peer review publications. SBRS appointments and special consultants are exempt from the competitive process, but SBRS individuals have to still meet minimum qualification requirements for GS-15 grade level based on the OPM criteria (Federal Hiring, 2016). Individual fellowships are used to recruit health scientists or physician scientists who will accept a limited time funded appointment in a federal agency within DHHS (Federal Hiring, 2016). These are approved mostly for specific studies or investigations, and they can be domestic or abroad opportunities. Lastly, Title 42 appointments are available to citizens and non-citizens (Federal Hiring, 2016).

Veterans

Veterans who have served honorably have two programs that allow them to enter the federal government after serving this country. One program is called the Veteran's Recruitment Appointment (VRA), which allows veterans to be hired into the federal government without going through the traditional competitive process (Federal Hiring, 2016). The veteran still has to qualify for the position based on resume qualifications review, but the veteran doesn't need to apply to the official announcement. Also, veterans are eligible to apply for vacancy announcements that are limited to federal employees using the VRA (Federal Hiring, 2016). The veterans are required to pass a minimum qualification review for the specific position conducted by the human resources staff (Federal Hiring, 2016). Veterans who use VRA to be hired into the federal government are limited to GS-11 or below positions that have been advertised and will enter under an excepted appointment initially (Federal Hiring, 2016). Veterans hired into VRA positions can have promotion potential beyond the GS-11, but the initial appointment is limited during the first two years (Federal Hiring, 2016).

The Veterans' Employment Opportunity Act (VEOA) is the other federal program specifically to allow veterans to enter the federal government (Federal Hiring, 2016). All vacancy announcements that are advertised as merit promotion for federal employees only are opportunities that veterans are able to apply using the VEOA authority. The main difference between VRA and VEOA is that with VEOA, veterans can apply and be appointed to any GS grade level and the vets receive career conditional appointments (Federal Hiring, 2016). Veterans who are 30 percent disabled and VEOA are very similar opportunities; however, veterans who are disabled 30 percent or more can be appointed to

temporary or long-term federal positions without any formal competitive process (Federal Hiring, 2016).

Senior Executive Service

In 1979, the Senior Executive Service (SES) was created by the Title IV of the Civil Service Reform Act, and these classified positions are equivalent to the military rank of a flag officer in the Department of Defense (Marvel, 2018). These key positions were appointed to serve in executive leadership roles that were the top of the organizational hierarchy right below the political appointees in the federal government. Limited to ten percent of the entire federal workforce, the SES positions can be filled by general public appointees or career servants. However, most SES positions are filled with career appointees. The SES members are required to be responsive to legislative, policy, and programmatic changes within the United States (Piotrowski & Ansah, 2010). Usually, the political appointees will be directly responsible for the policy changes and administration goals, and they depend on the SES members to help carry out those directives, goals, and initiatives working directly with the lower ranks at the various agencies (Brummer & Strine, 2022). OPM manages the federal executives across the federal government, and they are directly responsible for the recruitment, management, and development of these senior leaders (Pecaric, 2020).

Competitive Service

Title 5 in the United States Code allows the federal government to hire new employees using the competitive service within the Executive Branch (Office of Personnel Management, 2018). All positions within the federal government are not part of the competitive service. The applicant must go through a competitive process, where eligibility

will be determined by human resources staff within the federal agency. However, this process may seem confusing and convoluted to applicants, and it must be implemented in line with the guidelines provided by OPM. All applicants have to be minimally qualified in order to be considered as a potential candidate based on the review conducted by the human resources staff member. In order to determine minimum qualified, human resource staff will examine the education and experience provided in the resume submitted. Plus, the self-assessment will be used as the initial screening of applicant's current knowledge, skills, and abilities. Competitive service has two main hiring authorities that are used in the federal government – Veteran Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA) and Direct Hire Authority (DHA) (Federal Hiring, 2016). VEOA is used to appoint veterans who have served honorably into the federal government; however, it is limited to certain positions (Federal Hiring, 2016). DHA allows federal agencies to hire civilians into the federal government and it uses an expedited process for appointment authority, if the civilian is qualified for the position based on the resume (Federal Hiring, 2016). DHA is reserved to fill critical positions that will impact the mission and cannot be filled using the traditional competitive processes (Federal Hiring, 2016).

With the creation of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, three organizations are directly responsible for oversight of the civil service program in the federal government (Federal Hiring, 2016). OPM is directly responsible for providing management guidance to all federal agencies within the Executive Branch and regulates all human resources activities. The Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) serves as an appeal board for federal employees involved in a disciplinary proceeding and have been removed from their current position (Federal Hiring, 2016). Discrimination that is supported via personnel

actions can be disputed since they are prohibited by the Civil Service Reform Act (Federal Hiring, 2016). The Federal Labor Regulations Authority was created to provide oversight of federal employees who are bargaining employees, which means they participate with the union (Federal Hiring, 2016).

Excepted Service

Excepted service is a hiring mechanism within the federal government that does not follow the traditional competitive service guidelines due to different laws and the staffing of presidential positions and appointments (Office of Personnel Management, 2018). Congress also has the ability to make excepted service positions in order to effectively hire and recruit and retain the right talent (Office of Personnel Management, 2018). Human resources staff at different federal agencies will request excepted service authority when traditional assessments are not effective using the competitive process or the position description was not fully developed to clearly explain the requirement to align with the assessments (Office of Personnel Management, 2018). Schedule A and Schedule B positions are the two appointment categories that will use excepted service, but there are a total of four different schedules used in the federal government. Schedule A involves appointing an individual into the federal government using a non-competitive authority. This appointment mechanism is mostly reserved for individuals with disabilities; however, this authority can be used for short-term, remote, or temporary hires. Schedule B appointment mechanism is mostly used for different developmental programs like the SES developmental program. Schedule C authority allows all political appointees to enter the federal government, and Schedule D is the appointment mechanism for student programs. The student intern

programs are consolidated under the different Pathways programs in the federal government.

Executive Orders and Diversity

The President of the United States have the ability to issue executive orders as the head of the executive branch. These executive orders direct the federal officials or heads of federal agencies to take a specific action or restrict specific activities. Several presidents have created executive orders to favor certain demographics or populations to influence hiring recruitment and retention strategies affecting the federal workforce (Sims, 2018). Executive Orders 13078, 13163, and 13548 focused on creating more opportunities for individuals with physical and mental impairments that drastically limit major life activities to be employed in the federal government (Chordiya, 2022). Executive Order 13171 directed all executive departments and agencies to recruit and retain Hispanics in the federal workforce (Borry et al., 2021). Executive Order 13518 creates the new Veterans Employment Initiative, which focused on hiring veterans (Vanderschuere & Birdsall, 2019). Executive Order 13585, signed by the former President Obama, continued certain federal advisory committees, and renewed support for prior executive orders. President Biden has signed Executive Order 13985, which is requesting federal agencies to advance equity by eliminating barriers contained within government programs and policies that prohibit equal opportunity in lower socioeconomic communities. This executive order reaffirms that advancing equity, civil rights, equal opportunity, and racial justice is responsibility of the entire government. In June 2021, President Biden signed Executive Order 14035. This order tasked the federal government to strengthen its ability to effectively recruit and retain a workforce that reflects the diversity of America. A more diverse, inclusive, and equitable

federal workforce in America will yield a high-performing federal entity (Adatsi et al., 2020).

Federal Talent Management Programs

Talent management programs have remained relatively consistent over the last two decades, and they consist of workforce planning, recruitment, onboarding, training and development, performance management, compensation and benefits, and succession planning (Buttner & Tullar, 2018). Workforce planning is an organizational process that involves analyzing its workforce to identify skill gaps to help determine current and future staffing needs. Depending on various supply and demand issues related to the talent pool, sometimes it requires continuous forecasting and assessing to determine appropriate targets to effectively manage the organization's talent (Jabbar, 2018). This ensures that the organization maintains efficient and effective operations, while achieving its overall goals. Recruitment is the acquisition process that consists of employer brand representation to reach the right applicants with the most potential, so that they become candidates who can fill the different vacancies timely (Thompson, 2021). Effective recruitment requires the human resources team to consistently source candidates that can fill open positions in the shortest amount of time, preferably within budget (Soni, 2004). Onboarding is an essential part of the talent management program that starts immediately after the candidate accepts the job. This process involves assimilating the new hire into the organization. During the onboarding process, normally about six months to a year, the new hire will complete the new orientation process, all mandatory trainings, and learn about the organization's culture and structure, including mission, vision, and values. Some federal organizations use a four-prong approach to onboarding. During phase one, pre-onboarding starts when the candidate

accepts the new position. Phase two is the actual welcoming of the new hire, while phase three is the specific on-the-job training for the new role. Phase four is ensuring that the new hire learns the key aspects of the new role.

Training and development is the next major phase of the talent management program. Employers provide training, tools, and guidance for all employees, which will allow all staff to develop and refine skills necessary for their respective positions in the organization (Hassett, 2022). In addition to training staff, organization's need to plan for leadership development (Maltempo & Robinson, 2014). Leadership development includes establishing a formal development plan that builds leadership competencies, which should effectively create a pipeline of talent that can be viewed as viable candidates for succession planning (Ballaro et al., 2020). Training and development is connected to overall success of the employee's performance management. Performance management consists of periodic reviews and conversations with team leads and/or supervisors to help build employees strengths. This increased engagement reduces turnover, which builds morale making it possible for organizations to meet mission related goals (Foley & Williamson, 2019).

Compensation and benefits are important to all employees, and fair compensation will attract and retain the right talent. Benefits are essential because those perks provide a holistic approach to well-being beyond a paycheck for the employee and possibly the family (Smulowitz et al., 2019). When considering who to recruit and retain, compensation and benefits will determine the talent pool and also limit or reduce an organization's attrition (Phipps & Prieto, 2020). When organizations offer adequate compensation and benefits, it will retain key talent and build an effective strategy for succession planning. Succession planning is the last major phase in a talent management program. Succession planning is an

intentional program that prepares current workforce talent to fulfill future positions within an organization over the next 12 to 36 months. This is not a form of pre-selection, but more of preparation to ensure critical positions remained staffed to ensure continuity of operations (Sabharwal et al., 2019).

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this study is to determine whether or not the quantity of Senior Executive Service members have the ability to influence the federal workforce diversity and inclusion, specifically the overall percentage of racial demographics within the different federal agencies with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). DHHS has the second highest number of Senior Executive Service members in the federal government after the Department of Defense. This project aims to explore if the agencies with high and low SES members are able to influence the overall racial diversity within their own respective agencies. The objective is to investigate whether the racial demographics are more influenced at the agencies with the highest quantities of SES members compared to the agencies with the lowest quantities of SES members.

Chapter 3: Data and Methods

Within the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), there are several operating agencies which are led by political appointees and Senior Executive Service (SES) members. The quantity of SES members varies across the federal agencies; however, they have the ability to influence first-line supervisors and the managers when it comes to setting priorities in the workplace. Executive Order 13985 signed by President Biden put emphasis on the importance of workplace diversity to benefit the constituents in the United States. Due to this increased awareness on advancing workplace diversity, the research question examines if higher quantities of SES employees within the different agencies within the DHHS translates to a more diversified workplace. In this methods section, the research design will consider the overall ability of the SES members to affect workforce diversity.

Overview

Representative bureaucracy is a theory that communicates that the public workforce at the local, state, and federal levels should be people that align with the racial and ethnic categories that resemble the population in the country (Elias, 2013). This is key because when the different federal agencies start implementing policies and programmatic changes that affect the overall citizens in the United States, the population deserves changes that will benefit all citizens in this country (Ding et al., 2021). It is believed that as humans through rationalism that individuals look out for those who resemble or have similar characteristics or demographics (Buttner and Tullar, 2018). This explains why the Department of Veteran Affairs mostly hire veterans because veterans will develop policies and programs that will be mostly beneficial to the veterans who receive benefits. The mission of the Department of Veteran Affairs is to care for those individuals and families who have battled for this country. Other veterans can relate to the experiences and trauma that has been endured by

other veterans. Within the DHHS, the Indian Health Service (IHS) agency hires mostly Native Americans or Alaska Natives, when possible. The mission of IHS is to build all aspects of health for Native Americans and Alaska Natives, and these individuals with those demographics understand the policies and programs that will benefit this population the most. This is why it is so important to have workforce diversity in the federal government to influence programmatic and policy related changes that may impact racial and ethnic populations differently (Maranto et al., 2019). DHHS is responsible for enhancing the health and wellness of all citizens, including advancing biomedical research and public health programs. Even within these different programs, there are cultural diversity barriers that need to be resolved related to health and human services within this country (Moon, 2018). Cech and Rothwell (2020) states that there are other diversity factors that need to be examined when building programs in DHHS, such as considering gender identity, national origin, ethnical value system, and political beliefs. There are many hiring flexibilities that the federal government uses to recruit and retain the workforce, which can help with building a diverse workforce. The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was created to ensure workplace discrimination cases were minimized while the federal government carries out these different hiring initiatives and responsibilities (Rubin & Alteri, 2019). Diversity research has been studied over 50 years; however, there are limited research on the effectiveness of diversity programs (Borry et al., 2021; Kellough & Naff, 2004). However, each agency has Senior Executive Service (SES) members that are carrying out policy and programmatic change based on internal and/or external factors. Political appointees could be viewed as internal or external factors depending on their respective role in the agency, but they are known for communicating policy change based

on the current administration in Washington, D.C. Those changes can be developed and implemented rather quickly depending on the administration's priority. Therefore, if workforce diversity was considered a priority or major initiative, the SES members have the ability to influence overall workforce demographics in the DHHS. This research study will examine how the quantity of SES members may or may not have actually influenced workforce diversity in DHHS.

Setting

For this research study, the setting is connected to the cultural and social context when examining the workforce demographics of the federal government. Culture is defined as the social norms, customs, behaviors, and ideas that consist of the diversity of the United States population. Individuals are composed of various racial and ethnic categories, such as White/Caucasian, African American/Black, Hispanic/Latino, Alaska Native/American Indian, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial. With the tenets of bureaucratic representation, cultural setting is the foundational framework of public service policies and programs in this country. People who are from the same background or culture will usually consider the different factors that will promote or hinder their own culture. The federal government policies and programs should benefit all citizens, especially those who are part of the racial and ethnic categories, which are slowly transitioning to a more diverse population in the United States. Social context applies since this research study is examining the public sector's workforce demographics at the Department of Health and Human Services, which serves the entire population or society with every agency's mission. Health and human services are unique to different cultures, and it is vital to continued life of each demographic to be sure representation exist in DHHS.

Concepts

In this research design, the main concept is the ability of the Senior Executive Service members to influence or direct federal government operations, including workforce hiring and retention. The ability to lead or influence the federal workforce is instrumental for the overall success for each agency to meet its mission. Every four years, the United States hold presidential elections to determine control of the Executive Branch. New political appointees are selected by the President of the United States and placed in the different federal agencies to oversee policy change working directly with the SES members in each agency. The SES members are quite capable at leading and implementing policy and programmatic changes. Even though most presidents communicate the need or importance to build diversity within the federal workplace, most federal agencies struggle with building a federal workforce that is diversified. This aligns with the concept of bureaucratic representation because the goal is for the public administrators and the government representatives that are part of the overall bureaucracy to design and develop programs that conduct business for the betterment of the individuals that they represent and serve. Considering the definition of bureaucratic representation for this research project, the federal workforce at DHHS should closely align with the demographics for the population in the United States. This will allow DHHS to incorporate the best policymaking and programs that will benefit the citizens in this country.

There is one hypothesis when it comes to looking at the research question that states do higher quantities of SES employees increase overall workforce diversity within the different agencies in the Department of Health and Human Services to see if it translates to a more diversified workforce. If the number of SES members are increased at the different

agencies within the DHHS, it will increase the overall workforce diversity. The hypothesis communicates that the more SES members that you have at an agency, the more racially diverse the agency should be since the SES members can split up the work requirements and accomplish more. The null hypothesis is if the number of SES members are decreased at the different agencies within the DHHS, the overall workforce diversity will be decreased. If the quantity of SES members has influence or the ability to direct recruitment and retention hiring practices, then the federal workforce at those agencies within DHHS will demonstrate higher racial and ethnic categories percentages to align with the higher quantities of SES members versus those with lower quantities of SES members will demonstrate lower racial and ethnic categories percentages. What determines the concept of influence during this research study? It is basically determined by the quantity of SES members at the different federal agencies within DHHS. Those agencies with higher number of SES members will be compared to the agencies with the lower number of SES members looking at the racial and ethnic categories percentages. The independent variables will be the agencies with low and high quantity of SES members. The dependent variable will be the different racial and ethnic category percentages in the federal agencies within DHHS federal workforce from the end of fiscal year 2022, which is September 30, 2022.

Operationalization and Measurements

Operationalization of SES influence or the SES members' ability to affect the federal agency's workforce recruitment and retention as it relates to the workforce diversity racial and ethnic categories. When you have small federal agencies, the SES members must oversee and ensure completion of the same requirements that the large federal agencies have to complete annually required by oversight agencies such as Office of Personnel

Management, Office of Management and Budget, and the Government Accountability Office. Depending on the program and the political involvement, many different activities would consume the attention and bandwidth of the SES members within an agency. However, large federal agencies have more SES members, which means they have the ability to divide the numerous tasks and projects. Therefore, the higher the quantity of SES members translates to an increased ability to possess greater influence and/or accomplish more at their respective federal agencies, which could include focusing on workforce recruitment and retention and diversity initiatives, if it was a priority.

In the United States, the minority racial and ethnic categories demographics percentages are increasing. Just reviewing the population demographics from 2000 to 2020, there is a decrease in the White population and an increase in the minorities. If SES members are prioritizing diversity in the federal workforce as bureaucratic representation communicates, there will be some resemblance in the different federal agencies in DHHS. Comparing the agencies with lower SES members racial and ethnic categories percentages versus the agencies with higher quantities of SES members racial and ethnic categories percentages will demonstrate if there is a significant difference in the federal workforce diversity in DHHS two categories. With the stated hypothesis, there should be a higher racial and ethnic categories percentage of Non-Whites in federal agencies with higher quantities of SES members. Otherwise, it can be stated that there will be a significant difference between the federal agencies in DHHS with higher quantities of SES members Non-White racial and ethnic categories percentages and the federal agencies in DHHS with lower quantities of SES members Non-White racial and ethnic categories percentages.

Data Sources

The primary independent variable for this research study is the federal workforce demographics, specifically the racial and ethnic categories percentages at the federal agencies in the DHHS. The federal workforce demographics, which is numerical data, has been reported on the individual federal agency websites and/or the Office of Personnel Management website. The other key independent variable that will be used to determine whether or not the federal agency has a low (agencies with 50 percent or less count of the average SES members in DHHS) or high (agencies with greater than 50 percent count of the average SES members in DHHS) quantity of SES members will be the official count of SES members at the end of fiscal year 2022. This low and high quantity of SES members will be used as categorical data based on the actual numerical data provided from the different agencies. However, if this secondary data without identifiable markers is not publicly available on websites, the data will be requested using a Freedom of Information Act request from each of the federal agencies in the DHHS.

Sampling Methods

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has the highest annual budget out of the federal departments in the United States, which consists of 12 operating divisions or federal agencies. This department has dealt with Ebola, HIV-AIDS epidemic, migrant children's health at the borders, medical insurance for the aged and vulnerable populations, and healthcare for the indigenous people, which are just a few of the missions led by the SES members across the DHHS federal agencies working with the federal workforce. The population was based upon the different departments in the federal government and DHHS has small and large agencies with varying quantity of SES members

at the 12 operating divisions. The sampling goal is to use an equal number of federal agencies with a low quantity of SES members compared to the same number of federal agencies with a high quantity of SES members. The minimum number of agencies allowed will be four agencies; however, this research study will collect racial and ethnic workforce data and SES count from as many as possible up to all twelve agencies under DHHS.

Federal workforce demographics racial and ethnic data is voluntary; therefore, the data could be limited or impartial. When you are considered an applicant for federal employment, there is an opportunity to provide racial and ethnic information. This part of the applicant process is not mandatory and will not hinder submission of your resume for employment consideration. When you are hired by a federal agency, the candidate has another opportunity to submit racial and ethnic data. However, this part of the process is not mandatory and will not hinder onboarding. This simple random sampling method has the potential to collect all racial and ethnic data, but the process is flawed since it allows each individual to submit it voluntarily. This method of convenience is great for the applicants or candidates, but it could be biased and lead to certain populations not submitting their racial and ethnic category information.

Data Analysis

The secondary data is collected from each federal agency, which will be converted to percentages after examining the various racial and ethnic categories. Although, these variables are similar with the percentage format, but it represents different levels of effort to recruit and retain a diverse federal workforce. These descriptive statistics provide a clear picture of the demographics of federal workforce at each agency. Depending on the number of SES members at each agency, the agencies will be categorized into low or high

depending on total counts of SES members for this research study. After categorization, the racial and ethnic categories percentages will be utilized in two different ways. The different racial and ethnic demographics percentages will be consolidated into White and Non-White overall percentages in order to communicate the workforce diversity at each agency. In the research design in the next section, this data will be used in a correlation and independent t-test.

Research Design

In this research design, we will look at two quantitative research methods to determine if the hypothesis is true or false. The correlation and independent t-test will be used to determine if the number of SES members are increased at the different agencies within the DHHS, it will increase the overall workforce diversity. However, the outcome of these tests will determine if the quantity of SES members actually have the ability to influence the workforce diversity in the different agencies.

The first research methods test will examine the correlation between the racial and ethnic categories percentages with the quantity or count of SES members. The x-axis will be the quantity of SES members and the y-axis will be racial and ethnic categories combined percentages for the Non-White demographics. For example, each agency will have a racial and ethnic percentage for African American/Black, Hispanic/Latino, Alaska Native/American Indian, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial that will be combined into one percentage. All of those percentages reflect the Non-White demographics percentage for the agency. Theoretically, once all of the individual agency's data points have been charted in a scatter plot, it will show the federal agencies in DHHS with lower and higher racial and ethnic categories percentages for Non-White employees,

commonly referred to as racially and ethnic diverse employees. If the hypothesis is correct, the correlation will show a relationship that displays a positive trend line.

The second research methods test will consider the correlation between the average racial and ethnic categories percentage for the agencies with low quantity or count of SES members and the average racial and ethnic categories percentage for the agencies with high quantity or count of SES members. All of the agencies with low quantity of SES members racial and ethnic categories Non-White percentages will be averaged together and all of the agencies with high quantity of SES members racial and ethnic categories Non-White percentages will be averaged together to identify two percentages. For example, each agency will have a racial and ethnic percentage for African American/Black, Hispanic/Latino, Alaska Native/American Indian, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial that will be combined into one percentage. First, averaging the low quantity of SES members agencies into one value. Secondly, averaging the high quantity of SES members agencies into one value. These two values will be plotted on a chart with the x-axis showing low to high as the two categories and the y-axis will be racial and ethnic categories combined percentages for the Non-White demographics. If the hypothesis is correct, the correlation will show a positive trend line moving from low to high categories on the x-axis.

The third research methods test will examine the two averages that consists of non-White racial and ethnic categories percentages using an independent t-test. This test will determine if high quantities of SES members and low quantities of SES members differ in their overall racial and ethnic categories percentages for Non-Whites demographics. For example, each agency will have a racial and ethnic percentage for African American/Black,

Hispanic/Latino, Alaska Native/American Indian, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial that will be combined into one percentage. All of the agencies with low quantity of SES members racial and ethnic categories Non-White percentages will be averaged together and all of the agencies with high quantity of SES members racial and ethnic categories Non-White percentages will be averaged together, which will identify two mean percentages. Using the independent t-test, it will determine if there is a statistical difference between the mean of the low quantity of SES members racial and ethnic categories Non-White percentages and the mean of the high quantity of SES members racial and ethnic categories Non-White percentages. If the hypothesis is correct, the independent t-test will show a statistic difference between the two means.

Threats to Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are ways to ensure that this research study has appropriate measures that are accurate and consistent. There are some potential threats to validity due to the actual data being generated by data systems; however, people populate diversity demographic reports (e.g., Management Directive 715) at the different agencies. The data is posted on different websites by various communications staff members if the information is posted on a public website. If the information is requested via a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, then it will require the information to be requested from the human resources or the diversity office to be sent to the FOIA government information specialist who will then send the information officially to the FOIA requestor. All of these potential threats to the validity are connected to human error as the data is transferred across the organization. However, the threats have been minimized by requesting data that is regularly

provided for other reports that are submitted to the Department of Health and Human Services and/or Office of Personnel Management.

The threats to the reliability were considered during the data collection process. I requested workforce data from a specific period of time. Every agency reports data at the end of the fiscal year, so that helped with the consistency. Also, provided data request in text format and included a sample data collection template to help minimize any threats to reliability. Only other threat to reliability is that someone provides the data for part of the agency's workforce or does not respond at all within the time period, which will reduce the number of agencies that will be included in the research study. The goal is to minimize the threats to validity and reliability; however, there are some conceivable threats that could potentially have an effect on the research study.

Limitation of Methodology

There are limitations of the methodology when developing a research study when public secondary data already exists, but there are benefits when you are aware of the data during the research design. Since most of the data that was needed for this research study is part of the Management Directive 715 annual reports, it reduced some of the challenge requesting this data. Most federal agencies have a mandate to provide open data on public websites; however, not all agencies keep this data current and available. What was the major limitation? Determining how influence and/or the ability to lead could be translated in this research study. Senior Executive Service (SES) members are the key policy and programmatic directors within the federal agencies, who work directly with the political appointees and the first- and second-line managers within the federal government. Each agency has a defined number of public workforce positions, including the number of SES

members depending on the size of the agency. Therefore, the quantity of SES members could be used to determine overall influence or the ability to lead in the different federal agencies. This data elements for all time periods are not readily available on each agency's website, which could require a FOIA request so that the number of SES members onboard at the end of fiscal year 2022 was official. There are 12 operating agencies within DHHS, and there is one agency who focuses on Native Americans/Alaska Indians. This agency's workforce is primarily Native Americans/Alaska Indians, which could potential misrepresent the actual racial and ethnic demographics when examining the DHHS workforce. Depending on how many responses are received from the different 12 operation divisions, that one agency may impact the overall research study in a negative way. However, if there are enough responses received, it may be beneficial to complete the research study with and without the Indian Health Service data. Understanding the workforce data and the federal government agencies helped mitigate some limitations that could have adversely impacted the results.

Summary

This research study methodology was structured to determine whether or not the quantity of Senior Executive Service members have the ability to influence the overall federal workforce diversity, specifically the overall percentage of racial demographics within four or more different federal agencies with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). DHHS was selected because this department has the second highest number of Senior Executive Service members in the federal government after the Department of Defense. This research study methodology will be using correlation and independent t-test to explore if agencies with high and low SES members are able to

influence the overall racial demographics within their own respective agencies. In order words, these methods will examine whether the racial demographics are more influenced at the agencies with the highest SES members compared to the agencies with the lowest SES members.

Chapter 4: Results

Overview

Diversity, equity and inclusion are key tenets why workforce diversity is important in the federal government due to the effects on constituents' programs and services across this country (Borry et al., 2021). The country is moving towards a more diverse society, and the federal public workforce needs to be more inclusive and representative (Borry et al., 2021). Since bureaucratic representation is a known theory, it is critical for the SES members to drive innovation and effectiveness within the federal government agencies and promote workforce diversity. Within any given day, SES members are charged with leading the federal agencies, officially executing the will of the administration working directly with the political officials. The SES members ensure the new policies, programs, and procedures align using rule-making. The SES members have the ability to influence all activities in the federal government. In this research study, it will examine if the SES members influence actually change the overall workforce diversity in the different federal agencies within DHHS. Influence is observed based on the quantity of SES members within a specific agency. A bivariate correlation and an independent t-test will be used to test the hypothesis to determine if there are higher quantities of SES members at the different agencies within the DHHS, it would also increase the overall workforce diversity.

Presentation of Bivariate Correlation Data

In the bivariate correlation that was examining SES counts and minority percentages, there were 10 observations. The mean of the quantity of SES counts is 29.50 and the mean of the 10 different agencies overall workforce minority percentages is 50.39. The independent variable was the quantity of SES counts and the dependent variable was the different agencies overall workforce minority percentages. With the quantity of SES counts

and the different agencies overall workforce percentages there is a correlation coefficient of -0.052 with a p-value of 0.887, which is not significant. Since the Pearson correlation is 0.052 (negative), it is very weak, if any correlation exists and it is not significant at any level.

In the bivariate correlation that was examining between the average racial and ethnic categories percentage for the agencies with low quantity or count of SES members and the average racial and ethnic categories percentage for the agencies with high quantity or count of SES members, there are five (5) observations in the low quantity of SES counts and five (5) observations in the high quantity of SES counts. The mean of the quantity of SES counts for the agencies with low quantity of SES counts is 9.00, and the mean of the quantity of SES counts for the agencies with high quantity of SES is counts is 50.00. The mean of average racial and ethnic categories percentage for the agencies with low quantity of SES counts is 52.50 percent and the mean of the average racial and ethnic categories percentage for the agencies with high quantity of SES counts is 48.3 percent. The independent variable was the average quantity of the SES counts for the low and high categories. The dependent variable was the average racial and ethnic categories percentage for the agencies in the low and high categories of SES counts. With the average quantity of SES counts for low and high categories and the average racial and ethnic categories percentages for the agencies in the low and high categories, there is a correlation coefficient of -1.00 with a p-value of <.001, which is significant. Since the Pearson correlation is 1.000 (negative), which it is very strong and considered a perfect correlation that is significant at the 0.01 level.

Presentation of Independent T-Test Data

In the independent t-test, there are five (5) low category SES counts observations and five (5) high category SES counts observations. The mean for the low category SES counts

is 52.50 and the mean for the high category SES counts is 48.30. The Levene's test is greater than 0.05 since it is 1.00; therefore, there are not significant differences between the variants and equal variance is assumed. The p-value is less than 0.05 since it is .000. Therefore, there are significant differences between the mean of the low category SES counts minority percentages averages compared to the mean of the high category SES counts minority percentages averages.

Findings

The research question stated do higher quantities of SES employees within a specific agency at DHHS increase the overall workforce diversity demographics, specifically looking to see if this increase of influence actually increases the diversity and inclusion workforce demographics percentages. The hypothesis was if there are higher quantities of SES members at the different agencies within the DHHS, it would also increase the overall workforce diversity. Therefore, the more SES members that you have at an agency, this translates to a more racially diverse agency. The null hypothesis stated that decreasing the number of SES members within a federal agency in DHHS would also decrease the overall workforce diversity. Three different research methods tests were conducted to determine if the hypothesis was correct, or if the null hypothesis was correct.

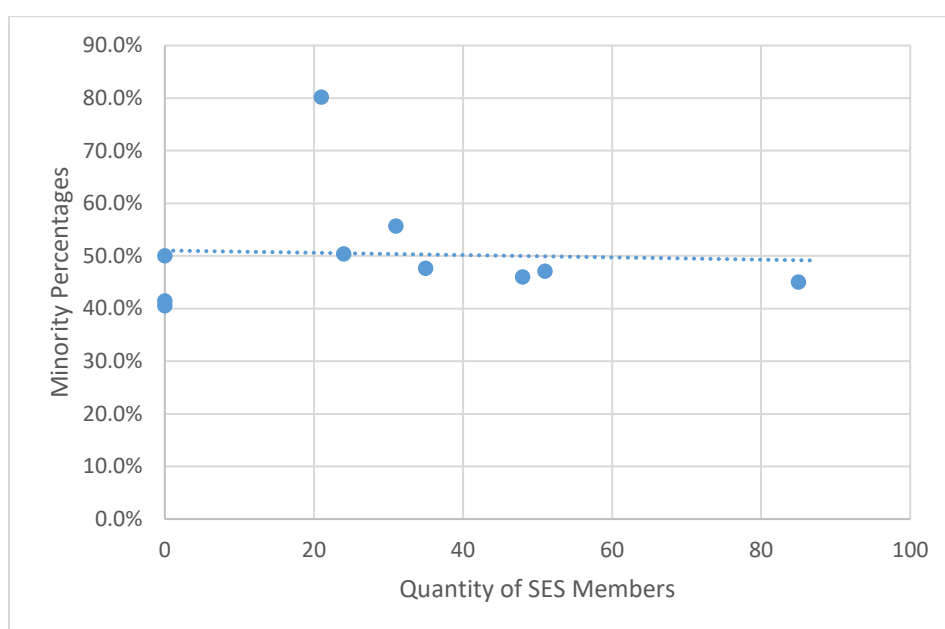
Research Methods Test #1

The first analytical approach used a bivariate correlation test to determine if there was a correlation between the quantity of SES members across the different agencies at DHHS and the racial and ethnic categories percentages. Using the y-axis, this test specifically compared the diverse racial and ethnic categories percentages combined (everything except the White employees) looking at each agency while plotting the quantity of SES members

along the x-axis. This scatter plot correlation test had 10 observation or data points to represent the minority racial and ethnic categories percentages for the 10 agencies under DHHS. Using this test, there was a very weak, if one at all, correlation between the two variables. Adding a trend line to this scatter plot also revealed that the correlation was slightly negative.

Figure 1

Bivariate Correlation Scatter Plot Results from Research Methods Test #1



This test did not support the hypothesis. However, if there was an occasion where I could have removed the Indian Health Service agency from the dataset, it would have caused a different outcome due to the increased amount of Alaska Natives/Native Americans impacting the overall minority racial and ethnic categories percentages for an agency with a lower quantity of SES members.

Research Methods Test #2

The second analytical approach used a bivariate correlation test to determine if there was a correlation between the average racial and ethnic categories percentage for the

agencies with low quantity or count of SES members compared to the average racial and ethnic categories percentage for the agencies with high quantity or count of SES members. Using the y-axis, this test specifically displayed the average diverse racial and ethnic categories percentage for agencies with low quantity or count of SES members and for agencies with high quantity or count of SES members while plotting the quantity of SES members along the x-axis. This chart had two bar graphs and one displayed 52.50 percent on the y-axis and 9.00 on the x-axis for the low quantity or count of SES members and one displayed 48.3 percent on the y-axis and 50.00 on the x-axis for the high quantity or count of SES members. There were five (5) observations used in both low quantity or count SES members and high quantity or count SES members for a total of 10 observations, but it was averaged into two racial and ethnic categories percentages - one for low quantity or count of SES members and one for high quantity or count of SES members. Using this test, there was a very strong, if not perfect, negative correlation between the two variables and it was significant at the 0.01 level.

Figure 2

Bivariate Correlation Bar Graph Results from Research Methods Test #2



This test did not support the hypothesis because the correlation was negative, even though it was very strong and there was significance between the two variables. In order for the hypothesis to have been valid, agencies with higher quantities or counts of SES members should have had a higher average racial and ethnic categories percentage than the agencies with lower quantities or counts of SES members.

Research Methods Test #3

The third analytical approach is similar to the second except it used an independent t-test to determine if differences exist between the average racial and ethnic categories percentages for agencies with low quantity or count SES members and the average racial and ethnic categories percentages for agencies with high quantity or count SES members. The Levene's Test was greater than 0.05 since it was 1.00; therefore, there are not significant differences between the variants and equal variance is assumed. Since the p-value was less than 0.05 since it is .000, therefore it is significant differences between the average racial and ethnic categories percentages for agencies with low quantity or count SES members and the average racial and ethnic categories percentages for agencies with high quantity or count SES members. Based on the outcome from the independent t-test, there are significant differences between the average racial and ethnic categories percentages for agencies with low quantity or count SES members and the average racial and ethnic categories percentages for agencies with high quantity or count SES members and the hypothesis is valid.

In conclusion, the aim of this research study was to determine if the quantity of SES members have the ability to influence the federal workforce diversity and inclusion within the DHHS. Based on the three research tests, two of them didn't support the hypothesis. However, the third test did support the hypothesis. This leads me to believe that the SES

quantities or counts could potentially influence the overall racial and ethnic categories percentages at the different parts of DHHS.

Discussion

After completing this research study, there are a few recommendations to further clarify the actual influence of SES members within federal agencies in the DHHS and improve the determination whether SES members have the ability to improve racial and ethnic categories percentages in the federal workforce. These recommendations have the ability to positively provide insight on whether the hypothesis was true or false. The first recommendation would be to increase the overall sample size by adding additional departments in the federal government. Recommend not including any agency that has a primary focus to serve one or more of the racial and ethnic minority groups since those agency's workforce demographics are skewed. Now that there is knowledge about the website with all of this data, no need to limit to only DHHS. At first there was a concern that some agencies might not respond back timely to the FOIA requests and that would have impacted this research study being completed within a limited timeframe.

The second recommendation would be to examine the ratio of SES members to employees across the different agencies within DHHS to better define influence. Instead of using a simplified low and high for quantity based solely on a numerical category range, it would be better to look at how many SES members are hired across the different agencies based on ratios. Possibly have three or four categories versus just the two that was used during this research study considering on the number of vacancies at each agency. This will allow more of a comparative study when observing low, medium, or high categories in one agency to the same low, medium, or high categories to determine overall significance. For

example, the low ratio SES agencies overall racial and ethnic categories minorities percentages would be compared to other agencies with low ratio SES agencies. Similarly for medium and high which will tell if those agencies have less or more influence overall.

The third recommendation would be to conduct a trend analysis over several years following the demographics updates completed by the U.S. Census Bureau following the decennial census. Once the U.S. Census Bureau provides the updated racial and ethnic demographics for the country, a research study can follow the changes led by SES members based on the MD-715 goals and accomplishments. Each year, federal agencies should show progress related to racial and ethnic categories percentages within the federal workforce for each agency demonstrating the SES members' influence. The final recommendation would be to examine specific racial and ethnic categories individually versus the minorities collectively. Similar to the model used in this research study, however, this would focus on each of the individual racial and ethnic categories.

Limitations

There are several limitations that were observed when conducting the actual research experiment. Initially, there were concerns related to the responsiveness of the federal government to FOIA requests; however, one agency was very helpful by providing the link to the OPM FedScope tool. This tool is located at www.fedscope.opm.gov, and it has all the information that was needed for this research design and analysis. Prior knowledge about the OPM FedScope tool website during the research design phase would have eliminated the individual FOIA requests, and it also might have influenced the actual research design that was developed knowing that access to all federal government diversity data was contained in this site. Originally, there was a concern that not enough FOIA responses would be

received at all by the different agencies under the Department of Health and Human Services considering this research study needed to be conducted within a specific time period to align with the educational semesters. Also, wanted to be sure that there would be adequate representation of agencies with small and large quantities of SES members.

The Indian Health Service (IHS) mission is to increase all aspects of health of American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) by building communities, partnerships, and healthcare systems that are culturally responsive and intentional at supporting AI/AN. This agency falls under DHHS, and they hire AI/AN as much as possible for the different employment opportunities that become available. Including this agency within the research experiment, caused the agencies with a small quantity of SES members overall racial and diversity percentages to appear higher compared to all the other agencies. This recruitment and retention practice aligns with the mission; however, it is not a true reflection of the norm within DHHS. This increase of racial and diversity percentages made the overall averages to be higher compared to the rest of the agencies with a small quantity of SES members.

Agencies showing zero (0) Senior Executive Service members onboard led me to question, if they really don't have any SES positions or does it mean that all of their SES positions are vacant. Since a few agencies had zero SES members, the assumption was made that they would fall under the agencies with a small quantity of SES members. However, something could have occurred to cause the agency to not properly fill SES vacancies over some definitive period of time since hiring and appointments of SES members fall under the Office of Personnel Management. Most of those agencies that had zero SES members onboard are from smaller agencies under DHHS; however, the size does

not equate to the quantity of SES members authorized at each agency. Ideally, it would have been better to have a specific number for SES members onboard to ensure classification into small or large quantity of SES members would have been confirmed.

As an employee of Department of Homeland Security (DHS), there are limitations when it comes to conducting research and publishing information without any formal clearance process. This was the reason for selecting DHHS; however, there is a lot of diversity seen under DHS. Any future research design would have agencies across different departments, including DHS.

Chapter 5: Diversity, Future Research, and Conclusion

This research study focused on the influence of the Senior Executive Service (SES) members, specifically examining the ability to have an impact on the diversity of the federal workforce. The SES members are directly responsible for all managerial aspects of the federal government public servants that make up the entire federal workforce. Although the results were not all-inclusive due to the impact of the Indian Health Service diversity representation hiring requirements, but there are proven results that show SES members build, implement, and provide oversight of all federal programs and policies, including new ones when the presidential administration changes occur, and they have different goals. In conclusion, there are different diversity perspectives that will be examined and the recommended future diversity topics that will contribute to further diversity research in the federal government.

Diversity Related Policy Recommendations

Types of Diversity

After conducting this research study, it is apparent that there are several types of diversity that could potentially be found in the different federal agencies across DHHS. Ethnicity or race, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, and cultural are the different types of diversity that can be visible in the federal government. Since the federal government provides programs and services to all constituents, all types of diversity should be present in order to build effective programs that are inclusive. This research study focused on the ethnicity or race component of diversity, which is very important when considering and ensuring all constituents have equal access to policies and programs across this country that affect ethnicities or races differently. Each federal agency has a different

mission; however, some agencies focus on programs that benefit specific ethnic or racial groups. This was noticeable with some of the different agencies under DHHS, and it also impacts the hiring recruitment and retention practices to maintain certain quantities of those racial and ethnic categories. For example, at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in DHHS, biomedical research needs to be inclusive all of ethnicities in order prevent disease and improve health. Therefore, it is imperative that NIH has physicians and scientists that come from all backgrounds. This research study could have examined any of the different types of diversity. More research should be done to ensure that all types of diversity are present in DHHS.

Benefits of Diversity

The federal government is one of the nation's employers and it continues to strive for diversity, equity, and inclusion within the federal agencies. The majority of the 21st century presidents have issued some executive order that reinforces their commitment to demonstrate diversity, and there are benefits from strengthening diversity in the federal workforce. Minimizing cost is one benefit from building a federal workforce that is diverse. Having a diverse hiring federal recruitment team that will know how to successfully recruit new talent from other places than only advertising at top-tiered schools that will come with a higher overhead cost. New talent would make some decisions about joining the team based on the perception. This will increase cost, if it is perceived by new talent that the workforce is not diverse when imagining themselves working within the agency, especially if the website and other literature show only one ethnic group working at the organization. Reputation also has the ability to increase cost, if the federal employees have mostly negative feedback that they share with potential candidates. Public websites also have comments provided by employees

about employers that could influence potential candidates' decisions about considering future employment at that specific federal agency. Unconscious bias could also lead to potentially more cost because a federal agency could not hire the right candidate, even though the individual is very qualified. Setting compensation has the potential to raise or lower the cost depending on the candidate; however, it is essential to evaluate salary and benefits based on education and experience of each potential candidate, so that it does not cost more to fill vacancies. There are benefits with diversity when it comes to resource acquisition because the employees are the greatest assets in an organization. The more diverse an organization is represented, it will attract more diverse candidates who may possess a higher level of knowledge, skills, and abilities. More diverse organizations have a better chance of better quality when evaluating the resource acquisition from an enlarged pool of assets that includes minorities and women.

Hiring individuals from diverse backgrounds help foster an environment where employees share more knowledge, which most likely aligns with the constituents' perspectives that represent the people in this country. This insight will help the federal government with marketing programs and services that will capture the interest of the public versus wasting money on ineffective public websites and ads. This same diverse work environment will be responsible for creativity and problem solving. Both of these items are more effective in a diverse organization because they generate different viewpoints and more ideas that lead to innovation when addressing a problem. Diverse teams are responsible for producing more options that are viable solutions to the different issues that arise from the diverse constituents. System flexibility in federal agencies increase with more diverse organizations because the employees interact with individuals from different backgrounds

and lived experiences, which ultimately determine an individual's values, beliefs, and attitudes. However, when individuals who are diverse and work together on different programs, they have the ability to enlighten one another about different perspectives and what may work better. This type of group interaction builds tolerance to how employees feel about their own differences, which can benefit the entire country when those individuals are managing public programs.

In this research study, it is essential that diversity continues to be demonstrated in the federal government. These benefits would be applicable across the federal government or any other organization. Considering all of the federal government agencies have different missions and bureaucratic representation exists, diverse organizations will be most effective and efficient due to different racial and ethnic groups represented in the country.

Diversity Accountability

In order to improve overall diversity at federal agencies, here are some recommendations that can be incorporated across DHHS to build diversity accountability. Senior Executive Service (SES) members at each respective agency should establish diversity, equity, and inclusion goals together and how they will be measured for that year using the annual performance plan as the tool to document what will be considered success. This goal should be separate, and not be included with the general administration or management goal. The annual goal will be evaluated, measured, and be included in the overall annual performance ratings for that fiscal year. Once the goals have been established, the SES members would build synergy amongst the management team by developing a programmatic approach to accomplish the desired goals. This is a form of external commitment demonstrated by the SES member, and it will be more effective. The next

recommendation would be to develop a data-driven model that will track overall impact and success for the organization. Federal agencies can establish a benchmark using current diversity data at the local agency by comparing their agency to others within the same department.

Future Diversity Research Considerations

Future diversity research will benefit the federal government, the constituents, and the public servants who work every day in the different federal agencies. Following this research study, there are a few recommendations that should be explored in the future to provide additional clarifications to this study, and also build more depth related to diversity research with the federal government and the impact of SES influence. Specifically examining DHHS, it would be better to establish a department-wide benchmark or average, then compare each agency to the department-wide benchmark considering each diversity ethnicity or racial categories overall percentages and whether that agency has a low or high quantity of SES members. Another recommendation to examine SES influence would be to conduct a similar research experiment where all 15 federal departments are compared to each other, instead of just the agencies that fall under DHHS. In addition, it would be beneficial to submit a FOIA request to obtain the actual number of vacant SES positions within each department because that number could definitely affect SES influence if they are juggling too many other priorities. This study will require more time, and also require clearance from the agency/department, while serving as a public servant under Department of Homeland Security. The last future research recommendation involves examining the different ethnicities or racial categories of the SES members across the different federal departments. Assuming the more diverse the SES members in the department, then it would be expected

that the more diverse the federal workforce in their respective different departments. The actual SES influence would shift from merely examining the low and high quantities to exploring whether or not the executives consider diversity a priority as a direct reflection of themselves.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there are several examples demonstrating why a federal diverse workforce is a necessity to fulfill the requirements of a representative bureaucracy. Every decade, the United States population is growing more diverse, which will require federal policies and programs to be developed so that they benefit most, if not all, constituents. According to Buttner and Tullar, there are no universal representative diversity models used to evaluate federal workforce bureaucratic representation (2018). However, since bureaucratic representation is key pillar in public sector diversity programs plus regular executive orders promoting diversity, who does this challenge reside with? The most senior career members of the federal government belong to the Senior Executive Service. These individuals have the ability to influence all aspects of the federal government. The research question stated that do higher quantities of SES employees increase overall workforce diversity within the different agencies in the Department of Health and Human Services to see if it translates to a more diversified workforce. The hypothesis communicated that the more SES members that you have at an agency, the more racially diverse the agency should be since the SES members can divide up the work requirements and accomplish more. The null hypothesis is if the number of SES members are decreased at the different agencies within the DHHS, the overall workforce diversity will be decreased. The two bivariate correlation tests did not support the hypothesis; however, the independent t-test did support

the hypothesis. This study has shown that potentially there are aspects of SES members influence that does exist; however, in order to make more definitive conclusions, it will require further research.

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