This year’s Workshop is inspired by the Grit Project from the American Bar Association’s Commission on Women in the Law. Grit is courage and resolve, and is synonymous with perseverance. Growth mindset is about having the right mindset to not stymie yourself, especially when approaching challenging situations or setbacks. Studies show that there is a statistically significant relationship between grit, mindset and various measures of success for lawyers, and that these traits can be learned and developed through education and practice.

Attendees of the Workshop will gain insight about the importance of grit and growth mindset, and how APA women attorneys can grow their mindset to maximize potential, learn from failure, increase confidence and accelerate their careers. The program will include three parts.

1. **Growth Mindset 2.0** (1:30pm – 2:00pm). Gain insights about the current science behind grit and the importance of a growth mindset. Linda Chanow, the Executive Director for the Center for Women in Law at TexasLaw, will present the Center’s new research to provide attendees with an overview of grit, including growing mindsets, developing growth mindset teams, the connection between growth mindset and success, and how these traits can be developed.

2. **How Grit and Growth Mindset Lead to Success: A Panel Discussion** (2:00pm – 3:00pm) Successful APA women attorneys will discuss the role of grit and growth mindset in their careers, challenges they have faced and overcome, and how growth mindset has led to their own success. Panelists include Mahrukh Hussain, the General Counsel of McDonalds, Bonnie Lau, a partner at Dentons, Hon. Rena M Van Tine, Associate Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County, and Dhenu Savla, principal at SwatgatUSA.

3. **Grit Scenarios: A Facilitated Practice Workshop** (3:15pm – 4:15pm) – Lawyers with a growth mindset see their abilities as flexible characteristics that can be developed through dedication and effort. These traits can be learned by education and practice. The audience will break into smaller groups to work through hands-on scenarios underscoring the power of a growth mindset, including how to handle and learn from failure, how to give and receive criticism, and having the grit to overcome challenges that APA women attorneys face in the workplace.
Growth Mindset Teams

Presented by
Linda Bray Chanow, Executive Director, Center for Women in Law
What is mindset?

**Fixed Mindset**
Intelligence and talent are fixed at birth.

**Growth Mindset**
Intelligence and talent can go up or down.
Why does mindset matter?

- Growth mindset = greater accomplishments
- Type of mindset impacts how we interpret obstacles
“I was one of the young women who came to college with high hopes of a career in science, only to change her major after the first semester. I entered UT as a physics major and then all but failed the introductory ‘weed out’ physics course. (I dropped the class right before the final, having failed the first three midterms miserably.) Looking back on the experience years later, I came up with plenty of excuses for why that happened: (1) I had a hard time adjusting to the college environment, having spent my entire life doing well in school with minimal effort, (2) I didn’t seek out enough tutoring or reach out to my TAs after doing poorly on the first exam, and my all-time favorite excuse, (3) I was capable of learning the material, I just didn’t care enough about physics to put in the effort. And while all of those things might be true and might have contributed to my decision to switch majors, I’m starting to think I had just hit a mindset/gender roadblock. . . . I didn’t persevere through the initial confusion because I was convinced that my science abilities were fixed.”
“One of the most important things I learned while spending my last two summers in big law was how to receive criticism. After my 1L year, I spent 8 weeks with a big law firm in Houston. The first memo I turned in was essentially torn to shreds. It felt like a slap in the face, and I panicked that maybe I wasn’t right for this job. It is so easy to let that panic and fear overwhelm you, and convince you that you’re not good enough. However, criticism should not be seen as a sign of failure. Instead, it is merely another opportunity to grow. My tendency to think with a growth mindset helped me overcome the initial panic, and to look at criticism with a different perspective.”
Fixed Mindset

- Look good at all costs
- It should come naturally
- Avoid mistakes & feedback

Growth Mindset

- Learn at all costs
- Struggle is good
- Take risks, learn from mistakes and feedback
Why does mindset matter?

- Growth mindset = greater accomplishments
- Type of mindset impacts how we interpret obstacles
- Type of mindset impacts our response to stereotypes and biases
- Small interventions have big impact
Mindset Resources

- Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D., Mindset: The New Psychology of Success (2008)
- The Grit Project, ABA Commission on Women in the Profession
Contact Information

Linda Chanow, lchanow@law.utexas.edu, 512.232.1973
POWER PLAYS THAT MATTER:
THMES THAT EMERGED FROM THE 2017 WOMEN'S POWER SUMMIT ON LAW AND LEADERSHIP™
“This is our time to seize opportunities and kick the power quotient to the next level and make power plays that matter.”

— Sandra Phillips Rogers
In April 2017, more than 340 leaders from both the public and private sectors came together with the goal of leveraging their power to advance their careers and the careers of other women. The platform was the Center for Women in Law’s fifth biennial Women’s Power Summit on Law and Leadership™.

The atmosphere was captivating, welcoming, and honest. Conversations around the Women’s Power Summit™ theme, Power Plays That Matter, were vigorous and wide-ranging, and continued during breaks, over meals, and long past the conclusion of the event.

Sandra Phillips Rogers, General Counsel, Toyota Motor North America and 2017 Women’s Power Summit™ Co-Chair, kicked off the event with a rousing call to action: “This is a pivotal time for women. There is much to be optimistic about, and this is our time to seize opportunities and kick the power quotient to the next level and make power plays that matter.”

The words of Martin Luther King, Jr. were later invoked during the Moving From Action to Results panel. As King famously remarked, “We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now.”

Why now? Last year’s global gatherings of women resulted in one of the most visible years for women and gender equality since the early 1990s, and before that, 1970s. Moreover, the data underscores that women are “wind at the backs of our economy,” asserted Melanne Verveer, former Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women’s Issues.

Verveer explained: “In the United States, the growth of women-run businesses is such that were we a country, the GDP that represents would be close to Germany’s, and Germany’s is a significant GDP.” Women’s purchasing power is in the trillions of dollars and “between $12 trillion and $28 trillion could be pushed into the global economy by 2025 if women’s economic and social power were unleashed globally.” As Verveer proclaimed: “We are shortchanging the world by not unleashing the power of women.”

The message was clear: Now is the time to use our power to advance ourselves and other women throughout the country and around the globe.

The following are the themes and takeaways on making power plays that emerged from the provocative and dynamic interactions that took place between our speakers and attendees.
Power plays are not accomplished alone. Former ambassador Melanne Verveer encouraged attendees at the Women’s Power Summit™ “to find opportunities to continue to move forward by holding each other up and banding together.” Activist Gloria Steinem similarly urged the women in the room to see the world through the inclusive lens of circles, not hierarchies. She encouraged participants to resist the temptation to rank each other.

The All Women Created Equal: From Tokens to Inclusion in Women’s Initiatives panel emphasized the importance of true inclusion and creating a culture where all women “can belong, and not just try to fit in.” Madeleine McDonough, Chair and Partner, Shook Hardy & Bacon, explained that women’s initiatives are often composed of mostly wealthy white women and, for “disabled people, LGBT women, women of color, and women from all kinds of socioeconomic backgrounds, there is nothing more lonely than sitting in a [women’s affinity group] meeting and feeling like you don’t really belong.”

Former United States Senator Olympia Snowe shared her experience in the U.S. House of Representatives. At that time, she co-chaired the Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues. “We set aside our differences in order to focus on issues, such as family and medical leave.” They also tackled pension reform (because wives discovered that their pensions were being cancelled without notification upon their spouses’ deaths), child support enforcement, and women being systematically excluded from clinical study trials.

Coming together with women from different backgrounds and experiences will develop understanding and foster relationships that will allow you to use your power to move all women forward.
Lieutenant General Flora Darpino talked of her experience rising up the ranks in the U.S. Army to become the first woman to serve as the Judge Advocate General. She recounted times when the rosters of lawyers had few women and, at times, she was the only woman in the office. Men were also expressing skepticism about women being in a combat unit. In each instance, women’s actions changed the minds of men. The women excelled at their jobs. They knew the law and surpassed the physical requirements of the role. As a “dual professional,” they excelled at the “profession of law” and at the “profession of arms.”

Darpino not only blazed the trail—she sought to mark the trail so that the next woman could follow her path. She explained, “If I’ve done my job, I have marked that trail” to pave the path for the next woman. “And when we’ve gotten to a fork in the road, and the one I took was wrong, I’ve left directions. In places where the trail was not clearly marked, I sure hope that I took a machete, so that for the person who is following me, that trail is pretty darn well marked.” As for the next woman leader in line, she said, “I am going to the finish line, and I am going to wait there. And when [she] gets there, I am going to be standing there to salute her.”
Several Women’s Power Summit™ speakers underscored the need for empathy in negotiations and active listening. Valerie Jarrett, Senior Advisor to President Obama, Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs and Public Engagement, and Chair of the White House Council for Women and Girls (2009-2017), said that a quality of leadership that is often lacking is listening. You have to listen because “when you are in touch, people are more likely to follow your lead . . . they will believe in you, and they will trust you.” Steinem also urged attendees, “If you want people to listen to you, you have to listen to them.”

Moreover, to lead you have to “look at the world from the perspective of the people you hope to lead in order for them to have confidence that you can see what they need, that you hear them,” said Jarrett. Snowe pointed to the monthly dinners attended by women senators from both sides of the aisle as a primary reason for the senators’ success in passing legislation benefitting women. “There wasn’t an agenda. There were no formal strategy sessions. It was a free-flowing discussion, to get to know each other, and break down those barriers so that you have someone you could work with across the aisle [who] come[s] from a different perspective.”

Chris Voss, former FBI international hostage negotiator and author, Never Split the Difference: Negotiating As If Your Life Depended On It, shared nine effective principles—counterintuitive tactics and strategies—to negotiate critical changes in policies and procedures to get results for women within organizations. Among Voss’ suggestions: don’t get too fixated on the goal because you might miss something better along the way and stop trying to get to the “yes.”
According to Voss, a “yes” response in a negotiation is often insincere. If people are pressed for a yes from the get-go, they will become defensive. Instead, he urged the audience to seek a “no.” Producing a no puts the speaker in control, because most people are more comfortable with saying no than with saying yes. People are uncomfortable with yes because it feels like they are giving you something. “[No] brings down barriers,” said Voss, and keeps the conversation going.

How do you get others to say no? Present no-oriented questions. For example:

- “Have you given up on advancing women at the firm?”
- “Do you want the women at the firm to fail?”
- “Is it a bad idea for you to pay women equally?”

These questions trigger the no response, which puts the other person at ease “while encouraging them to define their position” and provide an explanation. When the other party feels they are still in control, it sets the stage for you to ask for what you want and make your power play.

“We only grow if we listen to those most closely with whom we disagree.”

— Valerie Jarrett
Jarrett said one of the most important—and one of the hardest—lessons she learned regarding leadership while serving in the Obama administration is to “take the long view.” She explained, “You have to be willing to sacrifice what might be a short-term popularity hit in your polls for what’s actually good for the country.”

University of Texas Law School Dean Ward Farnsworth reflected that as a leader, “you can’t decide whether to be criticized. All you can do is choose what you will be criticized for.” Farnsworth explained how he wanted to add portraits of a diverse group of distinguished alumni on the walls of the law school because he knew it was important for women and students of color to see examples of successful alumni that looked like them.

But he quickly discovered that he would face criticism: “If you recognize anybody in this world, you are always going to get criticism for ‘why them, and not me?’” After some thought, he decided, “I’d rather take the heat for making controversial decisions about who to put on the walls than take the heat, justifiably, for not having any pictures [of women and people of color] on the walls.”

With this example in mind, let us all be criticized for fiercely promoting women, including women of color, and doing everything in our power to make sure that we collectively move to increased positions of power.
“Some of you were law students at our school at a time when being a woman law student was such an unusual thing. It took extra courage. I salute you, and I’m grateful to you for blazing the trail that made it easier for others to follow.”

— Dean Ward Farnsworth
When taking action, Darpino said, “You’re going to make mistakes. . . . But you’ve got to pick yourself up, and you’ve got to finish.” Mistakes are part of the process, not a sign that you are wrong or that you don’t have the ability to do something. Mistakes provide you with the information you need to circle back to your goal, refocus, engage your support system, and keep going.

Jarrett’s experience with public speaking is illustrative. Jarrett was shy and blushed all the time when she spoke. Then, she accepted a job that she did not realize involved extensive public speaking. Suddenly, she was thrust into a situation where she had to deliver a speech. That first speech did not go well. She realized, “Look, I’m not good at this and I have to get better at it because it is my job.” So she kept giving more and more speeches. “I would always get, you know, the butterflies in the stomach. . . . And then slowly but surely, I looked up, and the next thing I knew it, [I was volunteering] to speak.”

Remember that every experience is an opportunity to grow. If you are not succeeding at something, be tenacious and try again. Take advantage of the opportunity to grow and build your skillset.
On a panel discussing women’s initiatives, Northwestern University Kellogg School of Management Professor Lauren Rivera said, “We know that any program that actually successfully promotes women into top roles in law firms, and beyond, holds people accountable.” She continued, “When [a person’s] success—meaning their money and their power—is tied to their diversity performance, that’s really when you will get the results.” For example, Shook Hardy & Bacon rewards and penalizes people based on their diversity efforts. Firm Chair Madeleine McDonough explained how every lawyer at the firm has to complete a diversity commitment pledge at the beginning of the year. “You have lots of choices, but you have to [complete the pledge]. And people who, for example, don’t complete the form, are literally docked money at the end of the year.”

Darpino underscored the need to hold people accountable, stressing the need to “trust, but verify.” She explained, “I learned that, really, I had to check. I couldn’t assume that people were doing what was right. Because they may have a different standard than I did, and so, I had to reach down, and I had to check.”

Arming yourself with data is critical, said former U.S. Attorney and current Gibson Dunn partner Debra Wong Yang, because it gets everyone’s mindset in the same place. Whether you are trying to increase the number of women in your organization or negotiating your salary, do your research and know the numbers. Track the data. “When you look at the data, an intellectual person has to say, ‘Oh, that’s not acceptable. That’s not right. That’s not good.’” This information acts as a benchmark and allows you to measure your progress. Knowledge is power.
REVERSE THE GOLDEN RULE

Power plays take energy. Steinem encouraged attendees to engage in “radical self-care” to ensure sustained energy to make the desired impact. “[W]omen need to reverse the Golden Rule. We need to learn to treat ourselves as well as we treat other people. But we’re so trained to look after everybody else that we don’t do that.”

This principle is even more critical for lawyers because, as discussed extensively in the Center for Women in Law’s white paper, *Power for Change*, 90 percent of lawyers score below 50 percent in terms of resilience on the Caliper Profile. Fortunately, one of the best ways to build resilience is to connect with other women lawyers. 2017 Women’s Power Summit™ Co-Chair and FDIC Director of Administration Arleas Upton Kea reminded audience members to take advantage of the connections they were making with the women in the room. “Relationships at the conference are what will help you to take action and engage in power plays that will bring about change,” she said.

What gives you energy? What are the things in your personal and professional life that fuel your strength and talent? Circle back and replenish your sources of energy. When we nurture our sources of strength, we increase our power and contribute to the power of all women.

“We need to learn to treat ourselves as well as we treat other people.”

— Gloria Steinem
Realizing that she was one of only three women partners in her firm and the only woman in the litigation department, Maureen Mulligan asked her firm if they would hire more women associates and women partners. Her requests fell on deaf ears. Next, and with the hope of influencing the number of women lawyers at the firm, she asked if she could lead the litigation department. Again, her request was denied. She decided it was time for a change:

I thought long and hard about what I wanted to do, because I didn’t just want to move to another law firm. I wanted to have a purpose in that move. After some thought, which I will tell you was about a year long, I decided that I wanted the focus of the next part of my career to be training young women to be trial lawyers. And to do it on a daily basis, not by just providing advice, but being in a place where I could provide them access and opportunity.

Mulligan left her firm to join Peabody & Arnold LLP, a firm that expressly agreed to support her goal of training women to be trial lawyers.

In the first year and a half at the new firm, Mulligan prepared to try three cases, and junior women lawyers played an integral role in each of the cases. They examined witnesses and argued pre-trial motions. She also had junior women lawyers present at prospective client pitches. “I absolutely love every minute of helping the next generation of lawyers advance,” she said. Mulligan’s story illustrates an important lesson: if your organization inhibits you from providing access and opportunities to women, take your power elsewhere.
CONCLUSION

At the Center for Women in Law, we are forging links to increase the power of women. With your support we are creating circles to capture the entirety of our strength, advance within the profession, and secure the future of all women in law.

We look forward to continuing these essential conversations on April 10, 2019 when the Center for Women in Law will convene leaders for its sixth biennial Women’s Power Summit™ and celebrate its 10-Year Anniversary.
The Center for Women in Law (CWIL) is the premier educational institution devoted to the success of the entire spectrum of women in law, from first-year law students to the most experienced and accomplished attorneys. It combines theory with practice, identifying and addressing the persistent issues facing individual women and the profession as a whole. CWIL serves as a national resource to convene leaders, generate ideas, and lead change.

CWIL was conceived of and founded by women, who provided CWIL with its foundational funding. Its strategy and vision are directed by women. Initially the idea of seven women, CWIL now proudly has over 50 Founding Members and nearly 50 Power Circle Members who support and secure the future of CWIL, and through its work, the future of all women in law. CWIL is a testament to what women can do if we work together.
CWIL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Linda Bray Chanow

CWIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT Linda Broocks, Partner, Kean Miller, LLP

SECRETARY Lisa Atlas Genecov, Head of Healthcare Transactions, Dallas, Norton Rose Fulbright

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT
Catherine Lamboley, Sr. Vice President & General Counsel, Shell Oil Company (Ret.)
Susan Blount, Executive Vice President and General Counsel, Prudential Financial (Ret.)
Hilda C. Galvan, Partner-in-Charge, Jones Day (Dallas)
Marcy Hogan Greer, Partner, Alexander Dubose Jefferson & Townsend LLP
Cisselon Nichols Hurd, Senior Counsel, Global Litigation Americas, Shell Oil Company
Janis Loegering, Partner, Locke Lord LLP
Sandra Phillips Rogers, Group Vice President, Chief Legal Officer, General Counsel & Secretary, Toyota Motor North America

2017 WOMEN’S POWER SUMMIT™ CO-CHAIRS
Sandra Phillips Rogers, Group Vice President, Chief Legal Officer, General Counsel & Secretary, Toyota Motor North America; Co-Chair, 2017 Women’s Power Summit™
Arleas Upton Kea, Director of Administration, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation; Co-Chair, 2017 Women’s Power Summit™

2017 WOMEN’S POWER SUMMIT™ SPEAKERS

Linda L. Addison, Immediate Past Managing Partner, Norton Rose Fulbright US LLP; Board Member, Catalyst
Michelle Banks, Executive Vice President, Global General Counsel; Corporate Secretary & Chief Compliance Officer, Gap Inc. (Ret.)
Sharon R. Barner, Vice President & General Counsel, Cummins Inc.
The Hon. Anna Blackburne-Rigsby, Chief Judge, D.C. Court of Appeals
Linda Broocks, Partner, Ogden, Broocks & Hall, LLP
Tina Brown, CEO & Founder, Tina Brown Live Media / Women in the World
Linda Bray Chanow, Executive Director, Center for Women in Law
Stephanie D. Clouston, Partner, Alston & Bird LLP
Nina Cortell, Partner, Haynes and Boone, LLP
Samantha Hale Crispin, Partner & Firmwide Technology Sector Chair, Baker Botts LLP
Flora Darpino, Lieutenant General, U.S. Army JAG Corps, The Office of The Judge Advocate General (Ret.)
The Hon. Fernande R.V. Duffy, Associate Justice (Ret.), Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court
Ward Farnsworth, Dean, The University of Texas School of Law
Peggy Foran, Chief Governance Officer, Senior Vice President & Corporate Secretary, Prudential Financial, Inc.; Board Member, Occidental Petroleum Corporation
Claudia Wilson Frost, Partner IP & Co-Leader Energy Disputes Group, Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP
Hilda C. Galvan, Partner-in-Charge, Jones Day (Dallas)

(continued on next page)
2017 WOMEN’S POWER SUMMIT™ SPEAKERS
(continued from previous page)

Pat Gillette, Speaker & Workplace Equality Advocate
Leslie A. Goldman, Managing Director, Major, Lindsey & Africa; Former Vice President & General Counsel, Fisher HealthCare
Marcy Hogan Greer, Partner, Alexander Dubose Jefferson & Townsend LLP
Laurie Robinson Haden, Founder & CEO, Corporate Counsel Women of Color; Senior Vice President & Assistant General Counsel, CBS Corporation
Lee Hanson, Vice Chairman, Heidrick & Struggles
Cisselon Nichols Hurd, Senior Counsel, Global Litigation Americas, Shell Oil Company
Valerie Jarrett, Senior Advisor to President Obama; Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs & Public Engagement; Chair of the White House Council for Women & Girls (2009-2017)

Kimberly Leach Johnson, Partner & Firm Chair, Quarles & Brady LLP
Gregory B. Jordan, General Counsel & Chief Administrative Officer, The PNC Financial Services Group; Global Managing Partner, Reed Smith LLP (2000-2013)
Stasia Kelly, Co-Managing Partner (Americas), DLA Piper
Sylvia J. Kerrigan, Executive Vice President, General Counsel & Secretary, Marathon Oil Corporation; Board Member, Team Inc.; Board Member, Nine Point Energy, LLC
Linda Klein, President, American Bar Association
Andrea Kramer, Partner, McDermott Will & Emery LLP
Janiece Longoria, Chairman, Port of Houston Authority; Board Member, CenterPoint Energy, Inc.; Board Member, Superior Energy Services; Regent, The University of Texas System
Kim Lubel, Chairman of the Board, President & CEO, CST Brands; Chairman of the Board, CrossAmerica Partners, LP; Board Member, WPX Energy, Inc.
Michele Coleman Mayes, Vice President, General Counsel & Secretary, The New York Public Library; Chair, ABA Commission on Women in the Profession
Madeleine McDonough, Chair & Partner, Shook Hardy & Bacon L.L.P.
Jami Wintz McKeon, Chair, Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP
Elizabeth D. Moore, Senior Vice President & General Counsel, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc.
Maureen Mulligan, Partner, Peabody & Arnold LLP
Catherine R. Nathan, Partner & Member of the Legal, Compliance & Regulatory Practice, Spencer Stuart
Julie Preng, Office Managing Partner & Managing Partner, Legal Center of Expertise, Korn Ferry
Shemin V. Proctor, Managing Partner, Andrews Kurth Kenyon LLP (DC)
Yvonne K. Puig, Head of Life Sciences and Healthcare & Immediate Past Member of Management Committee, Norton Rose Fulbright US LLP
Christopher P. Reynolds, Executive Vice President-Corporate Resources, Toyota Motor North America; Managing Officer & General Counsel, Toyota Motor Corporation
Veta T. Richardson, President & CEO, Association of Corporate Counsel
Lauren Rivera, Associate Professor, Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University; Author, Pedigree: How Elite Students Get Elite Jobs


Gina N. Shishima, Head of Intellectual Property & Member, Management Committee, Norton Rose Fulbright US LLP


The Hon. Amy J. St. Eve, District Judge, U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois

Caren Ulrich Stacy, CEO, Diversity Lab; Vice President of Policy & Partnerships, U.S. National Committee for UN Women, SFBA

Gloria Steinem, Writer, Political Activist & Feminist Organizer

Lizanne Thomas, Partner-in-Charge (Southern U.S. Region), Jones Day; Board Member, Atlantic Capital Bancshares, Inc.; Board Member, Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen, Inc.; Board Member, Krispy Kreme Doughnuts, Inc. (2004-2016)

Ann M. Veneman, Executive Director, UNICEF (2005-2010); Secretary of Agriculture (2001-2005); Board Member, Nestlé; Board Member, Alexion Pharmaceuticals


Chris Voss, Former FBI Hostage Negotiator; Author, Never Split the Difference: Negotiating as If Your Life Depended On It; Founder & CEO, The Black Swan Group

Amy E. Weaver, President, Legal & General Counsel, Salesforce

Debra Wong Yang, Partner, Gibson Dunn; Judge, Los Angeles Superior Court, CA (1997-2002); U.S. Attorney, Central District of CA (2002-2006)

Cali Williams Yost, CEO & Founder, Flex+Strategy Group & Work+Life Fit Inc.
Topics for Panel Discussion – emphasis to ask panelists to share real life examples

1. Under Duckworth’s theory, effort counts twice. As APAs, we have (at least stereotypically) been taught to “work hard”. What is the difference between these two things as it has applied to your legal career?

2. Duckworth identifies four characteristics that particularly gritty people tend to have: interest in what they do, the capacity to practice, a sense of purpose in their work, and hope for the future (page 91).

3. As APA women, we (at least stereotypically) are still responsible for a large share of parenting. How does this responsibility impact Grit and what did you do to become Grittier while motherhood into account? Is it as simple as work life balance or was there something more that involved grit? Is it here that growth mindset teams that Linda Chanow discussed that include other moms are especially beneficial?

4. Was growth mindset something you had to consciously developed? If you developed it unconsciously, what were some of the key events you can identify where you practiced this skill?

5. Have you taken the Grit scale? Were you surprised by your results? If so, why?

6. Angela Duckworth has spent some time with Pete Carroll, coach for Seattle Seahawks, who talks about having one top-level goal, a couple mid-level goals and a few low level goals. Is this something that you did and did it help you in unconsciously developing grit and/or a growth mindset?

[Prepared by the Women’s Leadership Network for NAPABA, CLE submitter]
The Grit Project: True Grit and a Growth Mindset

The Grit Project

The Grit Project educates women lawyers about the science behind grit and growth mindset - two important traits that many successful women lawyers have in common. By providing the tools to assess and learn these traits, the Grit Project enhances the effectiveness as well as the retention and promotion of women lawyers. Download the brochure (PDF)

The Grit Project Toolkit

The Toolkit is the first step in a series of projects that the Commission on Women is implementing to educate women lawyers on the power of these important traits. Perfect for hosting programs at your school, firm, bar association, or other organization, the online Toolkit includes:

- Tools for women lawyers to apply the grit approach to their law careers.
- Discussion scenarios such as how to handle speaking up in class, the job search, and a bad grade on a midterm paper.
- Resources for law schools, bar associations, law firms, and women's groups to introduce these concepts.
- Program agendas, powerpoints, handouts, and speaker recommendations.
- Future reading and learning opportunities.

View and download the toolkit

Grit Programs - Upcoming

Upcoming Programs

May 11, 2015
Women's Bar of DC
Washington, DC

May 11-15, 2015
ABA Women Rainmakers

August 20, 2015
State Bar of Arizona Committee on Minorities and Women in the Law and Young Lawyers Division / Arizona Women Lawyers Association
Phoenix, AZ

Grit Programs - Past

Past Programs

May, 2015
- Minnesota Women Lawyers Annual Conference
  Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Pennsylvania Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession Annual Conference
  Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

April, 2015
- ABA Commission on Women in the Profession Law Student Program
  Chicago, Illinois
- Center for: Women in Law at The University of Texas School of Law
- Colorado Women's Bar Association
  Denver, Colorado
- DLA Piper
  Washington, DC
- NALP Annual Education Conference 2015
  Chicago, IL
- North Carolina Bar Association
  Cary, North Carolina
- Southern Illinois University School of Law
  Carbondale, Illinois
- Tucker Ellis LLP
  Denver, Colorado
- Women's Legal Forum, Wyoming State Bar
  Cody, Wyoming

March, 2015
- Colorado Women's Bar Association
  Denver, Colorado
- University of Wisconsin School of Law
  Madison, Wisconsin
- The Vanguard Group
  Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

February 2015
- Covington Women’s Forum
  Washington, D.C.
12- Item Grit Scale

Directions for taking the Grit Scale: Here are a number of statements that may or may not apply to you. For the most accurate score, when responding, think of how you compare to most people -- not just the people you know well, but most people in the world. There are no right or wrong answers, so just answer honestly!

1. I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge.
   - Very much like me
   - Mostly like me
   - Somewhat like me
   - Not much like me
   - Not like me at all

2. New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones.*
   - Very much like me
   - Mostly like me
   - Somewhat like me
   - Not much like me
   - Not like me at all

3. My interests change from year to year.*
   - Very much like me
   - Mostly like me
   - Somewhat like me
   - Not much like me
   - Not like me at all

4. Setbacks don’t discourage me.
   - Very much like me
   - Mostly like me
   - Somewhat like me
   - Not much like me
   - Not like me at all

5. I have been obsessed with a certain idea or project for a short time but later lost interest.*
   - Very much like me
   - Mostly like me
   - Somewhat like me
   - Not much like me
   - Not like me at all

6. I am a hard worker.
   - Very much like me
   - Mostly like me
   - Somewhat like me
   - Not much like me
   - Not like me at all
7. I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one.*
   Very much like me
   Mostly like me
   Somewhat like me
   Not much like me
   Not like me at all

8. I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete.*
   Very much like me
   Mostly like me
   Somewhat like me
   Not much like me
   Not like me at all

9. I finish whatever I begin.
   Very much like me
   Mostly like me
   Somewhat like me
   Not much like me
   Not like me at all

10. I have achieved a goal that took years of work.
    Very much like me
    Mostly like me
    Somewhat like me
    Not much like me
    Not like me at all

11. I become interested in new pursuits every few months.*
    Very much like me
    Mostly like me
    Somewhat like me
    Not much like me
    Not like me at all

12. I am diligent.
    Very much like me
    Mostly like me
    Somewhat like me
    Not much like me
    Not like me at all
Scoring:

1. For questions 1, 4, 6, 9, 10 and 12 assign the following points:
   5 = Very much like me
   4 = Mostly like me
   3 = Somewhat like me
   2 = Not much like me
   1 = Not like me at all

2. For questions 2, 3, 5, 7, 8 and 11 assign the following points:
   1 = Very much like me
   2 = Mostly like me
   3 = Somewhat like me
   4 = Not much like me
   5 = Not like me at all

Add up all the points and divide by 12. The maximum score on this scale is 5 (extremely gritty), and the lowest score on this scale is 1 (not at all gritty).

Self-Control and Grit: Related but Separable Determinants of Success

Angela Duckworth\(^1\) and James J. Gross\(^2\)
\(^1\)University of Pennsylvania and \(^2\)Stanford University

Abstract
Other than talent and opportunity, what makes some people more successful than others? One important determinant of success is self-control—the capacity to regulate attention, emotion, and behavior in the presence of temptation. A second important determinant of success is grit—the tenacious pursuit of a dominant superordinate goal despite setbacks. Self-control and grit are strongly correlated, but not perfectly so. This means that some people with high levels of self-control capably handle temptations but do not consistently pursue a dominant goal. Likewise, some exceptional achievers are prodigiously gritty but succumb to temptations in domains other than their chosen life passion. Understanding how goals are hierarchically organized clarifies how self-control and grit are related but distinct: Self-control entails aligning actions with any valued goal despite momentarily more-alluring alternatives; grit, in contrast, entails having and working assiduously toward a single challenging superordinate goal through thick and thin, on a timescale of years or even decades. Although both self-control and grit entail aligning actions with intentions, they operate in different ways and over different timescales. This hierarchical goal framework suggests novel directions for basic and applied research on success.

Keywords
self-control, grit, volition, motivation, achievement

Why are some people more successful than others? One obvious answer is talent. Another is opportunity. But even people who have comparable levels of talent and opportunity often enjoy strikingly different levels of success. Applying the scientific method to this age-old question has yielded important new insights regarding the determinants of both everyday success and extraordinary achievement. What is lacking—and of central interest in this article—is an integrative framework for understanding the requirements for these two kinds of success.

The idea that the determinants of everyday success differ from the determinants of extraordinary achievement goes back to the earliest days of psychology. Galton (1869/2006) contrasted “self-denial” in the face of “hourly temptations” with what he considered, other than talent, to be the essential features of high achievers—namely, “zeal [and] the capacity for hard labour” (pp. 40–41). What Galton termed “self-denial” is now referred to as self-control, which includes both inhibiting strong but ultimately undesirable impulses and activating weak but ultimately desirable impulses (Fujita, 2011). Galton’s conception of zeal and the capacity for hard work corresponds to grit, a newer construct defined as passion for and perseverance toward especially long-term goals (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007; see also Vallerand et al., 2003).

Today, “self-control” and “grit” are sometimes used interchangeably. However, despite overlap in key underlying psychological processes, self-control and grit are not identical. To understand their similarities and differences, we employ a hierarchical goal framework that draws on contemporary goal theories. This integrative perspective generates several testable predictions and also sharpens prescriptions for improving success outcomes.

Self-Control: Resisting the Hourly Temptations
Like Galton, both Freud (1920) and James (1890) speculated that the capacity to regulate attention, emotion, and behavior was essential to everyday success. Self-control,
like the related constructs of ego strength, effortful control, and Big Five conscientiousness, is associated with positive life outcomes (de Riddler, Lensvelt-Mulders, Finkenauner, Stok, & Baumeister, 2012; Hofman, Fisher, Luhan, Vohs, & Baumeister, 2014; Roberts, Jackson, Fayard, Edmonds, & Meints, 2009). Prospective longitudinal studies have confirmed that higher levels of self-control earlier in life predict later academic achievement and attainment (Duckworth & Carlson, 2013; Mischel, 2014), prosocial behavior (Eisenberg et al., 2009), employment, earnings, savings, and physical health (Moffitt et al., 2011). In fact, self-control predicts many consequential outcomes at least as well as either general intelligence or socioeconomic status (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005; Moffitt et al., 2011).

The psychological processes that underlie self-control, once so shrouded in mystery that they were summarily referred to as “willpower,” are now coming into focus (Mischel, 2014). It is now understood that self-control is required when there is a conflict between two possible action tendencies (i.e., impulses)—one corresponding to a momentarily alluring goal and the other corresponding to a more valued goal whose benefits are deferred in time, more abstract, or otherwise more psychologically distant (Maglio, Trope, & Liberman, 2013). Regardless of the particular type of impulses requiring adjudication (e.g., gobbling up one sweet and chewy marshmallow immediately vs. waiting for two; watching television vs. going to the gym), it seems that common prefrontal brain areas are involved in successful top-down regulation (Cohen & Lieberman, 2010; Heatherton & Wagner, 2011). In addition to directly modulating bottom-up impulses, both children and adults are capable of deploying an array of cognitive and behavioral strategies seconds, minutes, or even hours in advance of confronting temptations (Duckworth, Gendler, & Gross, 2014; Magen & Gross, 2010). In general, the capacity to exercise self-control appears to improve from infancy through adulthood, in parallel with the maturation of prefrontal brain areas and metacognitive sophistication.

**Grit: Passion and Effort Sustained Over Years**

A newer literature has begun to explore the consequences of pursuing a passionate interest with determination and effort over the course of years. Grit and related constructs are associated with lifetime educational attainment (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009) and professional success (Baum & Locke, 2004; Locke & Latham, 2013; Vallerand, Houlfort, & Forest, 2014; Wrzesniewski, 2012). Prospective longitudinal studies have shown that grit predicts the completion of challenging goals despite obstacles and setbacks. For instance, grittier high school juniors in Chicago public schools are more likely to graduate on time 1 year later (Eskreis-Winkler, Duckworth, Shulman, & Beale, 2014). Grittier cadets are more likely than their less gritty peers to make it through the first arduous summer at West Point (Duckworth et al., 2007; Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). Grittier novice teachers are more likely to stay in teaching, and among the teachers who do stay, those who are grittier are more effective (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009; Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth, 2014).

Research on grit is still in its infancy, and much remains to be discovered about its underlying psychological mechanisms. One study has shown that in the National Spelling Bee, grittier competitors accumulate more hours of deliberate practice over the course of years, which in turn fully mediates the effect of grit on final ranking (Duckworth, Kirby, Tsukayama, Berstein, & Ericsson, 2011). Related research has identified harmonious passion (i.e., autonomous internalization of a passionate activity into one’s identity) as a predictor of deliberate practice and, in turn, performance (Vallerand et al., 2014). Many other studies of expert performers in diverse domains have found that thousands of hours of extremely effortful deliberate practice are prerequisite for achieving world-class levels of skill (Ericsson & Charness, 1994). If, as Woody Allen has suggested, showing up is crucial to success in any endeavor (as quoted in Safire, 1989), and if highly effortful, focused practice is a necessary means to improving in skill, then it may be that grit predicts high achievement by inclining individuals to both show up and work very hard, continuously, toward a highly valued goal for years and even decades.

**A Hierarchical Goal Framework**

It is perhaps no wonder that self-control and grit are often used interchangeably by laypeople and scientists alike. These two determinants of success are highly correlated (e.g., $r > .6$ in Duckworth et al., 2007), and both predict success outcomes over and above intelligence (Duckworth et al., 2007; Duckworth & Seligman, 2005; Moffitt et al., 2011). However, some paragons of self-control lead undistinguished lives devoid of a focused lifelong passion, and some gritty and exceptionally successful people are famously undisciplined in life domains other than their chosen passion. Mounting evidence supports this distinction: Domain-general measures of self-control are generally more predictive of everyday measures of adaptive functioning (e.g., grades, physical health) than are domain-general measures of grit (Duckworth, 2014). Grit, on the other hand, predicts retention at West Point and performance in the National Spelling Bee when controlling for self-control, but self-control does not predict these outcomes when controlling for grit (Duckworth et al., 2007).
How are self-control and grit similar, and how are they different? We propose that both their similarities and their differences can be understood within a hierarchical goal framework (see Fig. 1). Following prominent motivational accounts (Carver & Scheier, 1998; Emmons, 1986; Fujita, Trope, Liberman, & Levin-Sagi, 2006; Kruglanski et al., 2002; Vallacher & Wegner, 1987), we assume that goals are typically organized hierarchically, with lower-order goals serving higher-order goals. Lower-order goals are more numerous, context specific, short-term, and substitutable, whereas higher-order goals are typically fewer in number, more abstract, more enduring, and more important to the individual. At any level in the goal hierarchy, goals are more likely to be activated if they are appraised as feasible and desirable (Atkinson, 1964). Individuals can have not only multiple goals but also multiple goal hierarchies; this multiplicity of motives can lead to conflicts.

Within this framework, self-control refers to the successful resolution of a conflict between two action impulses—one that corresponds to a goal that is more valued in the moment, and another that corresponds to a goal that is of a greater enduring value (see Fig. 2). For example, Monday morning may find the first author torn between editing the method section of her graduate student's manuscript or, alternatively, checking *Us Weekly* for the latest Hollywood gossip. The former action is more valuable in the long run, advancing the goals of supporting her student's development and of publishing empirical studies. In contrast, the rival action is momentarily more alluring—guaranteed to be effortless and amusing—but alas, in the long run, less valuable insofar as it merely advances the goal of having fun. So, whether by modulating her action tendencies in the heat of the moment or, preferably, by deploying cognitive and behavioral self-control strategies earlier in time (Hofmann & Kotabe, 2012; Magen & Gross, 2010; Mischel, 2014), the first author hopes to exercise self-control and choose the manuscript over the tabloid, as depicted in Figure 2.

In the same framework, grit entails having a dominant superordinate goal (e.g., producing useful new insights into the psychological determinants of success) and tenaciously working toward it in the face of obstacles and setbacks, often for years or decades. This superordinate goal sits at the top of a well-organized goal hierarchy in which lower-order goals are tightly aligned with the
Duckworth, Gross

superordinate goal, and these lower-order goals in turn give rise to effective actions that advance the individual toward the superordinate goal. As shown in Figure 3a, gritty individuals either are able to actively suppress rival superordinate goals or, consistent with descriptions of eminently productive individuals (Cox, 1926; Galton, 1869/2006), lack competing superordinate goals altogether. Figure 3b illustrates how this superordinate goal impels gritty individuals, when faced with setbacks, to find a way forward by “sprouting” new lower-order goals (or actions) when a current lower-order goal (or action) is blocked. For instance, if a grant proposal or manuscript is rejected, tears may be shed, but soon enough another funder or journal outlet is identified and pursued. In other words, in a gritty individual’s domain of passionate interest, goals or actions deemed unfeasible are met with the response of an active search for—or even invention of—viable alternatives.

Viewed in this light, it is evident that self-control and grit both involve the defense of valued goals in the face of adversity. Where they principally differ is in the types of goals that are being defended, the nature of the “enemy,” and the timescale that is involved. Self-control is required to adjudicate between lower-level goals entailing necessarily conflicting actions. One cannot eat one’s cake and have it later, too. In contrast, grit entails maintaining allegiance to a highest-level goal over long stretches of time and in the face of disappointments and setbacks. The alternative to exercising self-control is indulging in an action that immediately satisfies a goal but is soon regretted. The alternative to grit is following a series of different superordinate goals in rapid succession (law school one month and medical school the next) or giving up on a superordinate goal because the means to the end of that goal have been blocked. It follows that self-control is more tightly coupled with everyday success, whereas grit

---

Fig. 3. Schematics illustrating processes underlying grit. Grit entails having a dominant superordinate goal, pursued with passion and perseverance, often over years or decades. The goal hierarchy that corresponds to an individual’s chosen passion may require the suppression of rival superordinate goals (a). When a particular lower-order goal or action is blocked, new goals or actions are generated and then pursued with vigor (b).
is more tightly coupled with exceptional achievements that often take decades—or even an entire lifetime—to accomplish.

**Directions for Future Research**

Self-control and grit have attracted increased interest in recent years, in no small part because they seem more amenable to intervention than other determinants of success such as cognitive ability and socioeconomic status (Heckman, Humphries, & Kautz, 2014). We are optimistic that a better understanding of the psychological processes underlying self-control and grit could, in fact, lead to high-impact, cost-effective interventions (Walton, 2014). However, research efforts targeting self-control, grit, and related constructs have thus far been fractionated. The hierarchical goal framework proposed here may provide a useful centripetal force, encouraging synthesis of empirical findings across diverse but conceptually relevant literatures. Our hope is that this framework will also be generative, suggesting new directions for both basic and intervention-focused research.

From a basic-research perspective, a number of crucial research questions come into sharp relief in the context of this framework. For example, what are the characteristics of individuals who have high versus low levels of self-control or grit, both in terms of the types of goals they hold (Dweck & Leggett, 1988) and in terms of the processes they engage in to defend these goals against challenges (Fishbach, Dhar, & Zhang, 2006)? Given that higher-level goals tend to be more approach oriented than lower-level goals (Elliot, 2006; Robinson & Moeller, 2014), do individuals who exemplify grit but not self-control have stronger approach-motivation systems, and do individuals who exemplify self-control but not grit have stronger avoidance systems? What are the main and interactive effects of self-control and grit with respect to specific success outcomes? It seems likely that there may be synergistic effects: High levels of both self-control and grit may lead to greater success than either alone.

With respect to interventions, the proposed framework implies that self-control is a skill or capacity, which, like other skills and capacities, might be improved with training and practice (Diamond, 2012; Mischel, 2014; Oettingen, 2012). Grit, in contrast, is as much about motivation as volition (Achtziger & Gollwitzer, 2008). Prospective longitudinal studies beginning in childhood and extending across the life course are needed to examine how individuals develop superordinate goals of such compelling personal significance that they inspire lifelong allegiance despite innumerable alternative pursuits and inevitable mistakes, failures, and other obstacles. Very generally, we assume that commitment to a superordinate goal is a function of that goal’s feasibility and desirability, and thus that the diverse psychological antecedents to such valuations (e.g., growth mindset, optimism, attribution style, locus of control, counterfactual style, core self-evaluation, intrinsic motivation, interest, approaches to happiness) are logical targets for intervention and inquiry.

**Conclusion**

Much of human behavior is goal-directed (Locke & Latham, 2013). Research on self-control has illuminated the importance—and inherent difficulty—of aligning actions with valued goals when momentarily more rewarding actions become available. Separate research on grit has suggested that individuals differ in their pursuit of superordinate goals of enduring significance. A hierarchical-goal perspective on self-control and grit advances the understanding of the related but distinct psychological mechanisms that underlie these two key determinants of success. As James (1907) intimated, research on this general topic is not only theoretically interesting but also relevant “to practical issues superior in importance to anything we know” (p. 352).

**Recommended Reading**


**Acknowledgments**

We would like to thank Nir Halevy and Lauren Eskreis-Winkler for their helpful comments on this article.

**Declaration of Conflicting Interests**

The authors declared that they had no conflicts of interest with respect to their authorship or the publication of this article.

**Funding**

This research was supported by a K01 Mentored Research Scientist Development Award (K01-AG035182) from the National Institute on Aging.

**References**


Grit: Perseverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals

Angela L. Duckworth
University of Pennsylvania

Christopher Peterson
University of Michigan

Michael D. Matthews and Dennis R. Kelly
United States Military Academy, West Point

The importance of intellectual talent to achievement in all professional domains is well established, but less is known about other individual differences that predict success. The authors tested the importance of 1 noncognitive trait: grit. Defined as perseverance and passion for long-term goals, grit accounted for an average of 4% of the variance in success outcomes, including educational attainment among 2 samples of adults (\(N = 1,545\) and \(N = 690\)), grade point average among Ivy League undergraduates (\(N = 138\)), retention in 2 classes of United States Military Academy, West Point, cadets (\(N = 1,218\) and \(N = 1,308\)), and ranking in the National Spelling Bee (\(N = 175\)). Grit did not relate positively to IQ but was highly correlated with Big Five Conscientiousness. Grit nonetheless demonstrated incremental predictive validity of success measures over and beyond IQ and conscientiousness. Collectively, these findings suggest that the achievement of difficult goals entails not only talent but also the sustained and focused application of talent over time.

**Keywords:** achievement, success, personality, persistence, performance

Compared with what we ought to be, we are only half awake. Our fires are damped, our drafts are checked. We are making use of only a small part of our possible mental resources...men the world over possess amounts of resource, which only exceptional individuals push to their extremes of use. (William James, 1907, pp. 322–323)

In 1907, William James proposed “a program of study that might with proper care be made to cover the whole field of psychology” (p. 332). James encouraged psychologists to address two broad problems: First, what are the types of human abilities and, second, by what diverse means do individuals unleash these abilities?

In the century that has passed since James’s suggestion, psychological science has made impressive progress in answering the first of these two questions. In particular, we know a great deal about intelligence, or general mental ability, a construct for which formal study was initiated by a British contemporary of James, Sir Francis Galton. Notwithstanding vigorous debates over the dimensionality and origins of intelligence, we know more about IQ—how to measure it reliably and precisely and what outcomes it predicts—than any other stable individual difference. In contrast, we know comparatively little about why, as James put it, most individuals make use of only a small part of their resources, whereas a few exceptional individuals push themselves to their limits.

In this article, we reiterate James’s second question in the following terms: Why do some individuals accomplish more than others of equal intelligence? In addition to cognitive ability, a list of attributes of high-achieving individuals would likely include creativity, vigor, emotional intelligence, charisma, self-confidence, emotional stability, physical attractiveness, and other positive qualities. A priori, some traits seem more crucial than others for particular vocations. Extra-version may be fundamental to a career in sales, for instance, but irrelevant to a career in creative writing. However, some traits might be essential to success no matter the domain.1 We suggest that one personal quality is shared by the most prominent leaders in every field: grit.

We define grit as perseverance and passion for long-term goals. Grit entails working strenuously toward challenges, maintaining...
effort and interest over years despite failure, adversity, and plateaus in progress. The gritty individual approaches achievement as a marathon; his or her advantage is stamina. Whereas disappointment or boredom signals to others that it is time to change trajectory and cut losses, the gritty individual stays the course.

Our hypothesis that grit is essential to high achievement evolved during interviews with professionals in investment banking, painting, journalism, academia, medicine, and law. Asked what quality distinguishes star performers in their respective fields, these individuals cited grit or a close synonym as often as talent. In fact, many were awed by the achievements of peers who did not at first seem as gifted as others but whose sustained commitment to their ambitions was exceptional. Likewise, many noted with surprise that prodigiously gifted peers did not end up in the upper echelons of their field.

More than 100 years prior to our work on grit, Galton (1892) collected biographical information on eminent judges, statesmen, scientists, poets, musicians, painters, wrestlers, and others. Ability alone, he concluded, did not bring about success in any field. Rather, he believed high achievers to be triply blessed by “ability combined with zeal and with capacity for hard labour” (p. 33).

Similar conclusions were reached by Cox (1926) in an analysis of the biographies of 301 eminent creators and leaders drawn from a larger sample compiled by J. M. Cattell (1903). Estimated IQ and Cattell’s rank order of eminence were only moderately related (r = .16) when reliability of data was controlled for. Rating geniuses on 67 character traits derived from Webb (1915), Cox concluded that holding constant estimated IQ, the following traits evident in childhood predicted lifetime achievement: “persistence of motive and effort, confidence in their abilities, and great strength or force of character” (p. 218).

As context for the current research, we briefly review more recent research on individual differences that bear on success. We leave aside for the moment questions about how goals are set and maintained, how values and expectancies affect goal attainment, and so on. We also omit from our review situational factors and social and cultural variables that influence achievement. For a broader review than is possible here, we refer the reader to Simonton (1994) and Latham and Pinder (2005).

Talent and Achievement

Intelligence is the best-documented predictor of achievement (Gottfredson, 1997; Hartigan & Wigdor, 1989). Reliable and valid measures of IQ have made it possible to document a wide range of achievement outcomes affected by IQ, including college and graduate school grade point average (GPA; e.g., Bridgeman, McCamley-Jenkins, & Ervin, 2000; Kuncel, Hezlett, & Ones, 2001), induction into Phi Beta Kappa (Langlie, 1938), income (Fergusson, Horwood, & Ridder, 2005), career potential and job performance (Kuncel, Hezlett, & Ones, 2004), and choice of occupation (Chown, 1959). The predictive validities of intelligence rise with the complexity of the occupation considered. When corrected for attenuation due to reliability of measures and restriction on range, correlations between IQ and these various outcomes can be as high as r = .6, meaning that IQ may account for up to one third of the variance in some measures of success (Neisser et al., 1996).

However, in the Terman longitudinal study of mentally gifted children, the most accomplished men were only 5 points higher in IQ than the least accomplished men (Terman & Oden, 1947). To be sure, restriction on range of IQ partly accounted for the slightness of this gap, but there was sufficient variance in IQ (SD = 10.6, compared with SD = 16 in the general population) in the sample to have expected a much greater difference. More predictive than IQ of whether a mentally gifted Terman subject grew up to be an accomplished professor, lawyer, or doctor were particular noncognitive qualities: “Perseverance, Self-Confidence, and Integration toward goals” (Terman & Oden, 1947, p. 351). Terman and Oden, who were close collaborators of Cox, encouraged further inquiry into why intelligence does not always translate into achievement: “Why this is so, what circumstances affect the fruition of human talent, are questions of such transcendent importance that they should be investigated by every method that promises the slightest reduction of our present ignorance” (p. 352).

Reviewing the biographical details of Darwin, Einstein, and other geniuses, Howe (1999) disputed the assumption that high achievement derives directly from exceptional mental ability: “Perseverance is at least as crucial as intelligence.... The most crucial inherent differences may be ones of temperament rather than of intellect as such” (p. 15). Likewise, summarizing an extensive body of research on the development of expertise, Ericsson and Charness (1994) concluded that in chess, sports, music, and the visual arts, over 10 years of daily “deliberate practice” set apart expert performers from less proficient peers and that 20 years of dedicated practice was an even more reliable predictor of world-class achievement. Like Howe, Ericsson and Charness suggested that inborn ability is less important than commonly thought: “More plausible loci of individual differences are factors that predispose individuals toward engaging in deliberate practice and enable them to sustain high levels of practice for many years” (p. 744).

Personality and Achievement

The Big Five model has provided a descriptive framework for much of the contemporary empirical work on traits that predict success (Goldberg, 1990; John & Srivastava, 1999; McCrae & Costa, 1987; Tupes & Christal, 1992). In a 1991 meta-analysis, Barrick and Mount concluded that Big Five Conscientiousness related more robustly to job performance than did Big Five Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Neuroticism, or Agreeableness (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Uncorrected correlations between conscientiousness and job performance ranged from r = .09 to r = .13, depending on the occupational group. In a meta-analysis of confirmatory studies of personality measures as predictors of job performance, Tett, Jackson, and Rothstein (1991) observed a sample-weighted mean correlation between conscientiousness and job performance of r = .12.

One might conclude from these meta-analyses that at best, any given personality trait accounts for less than 2% of variance in achievement. If so, compared with IQ, personality would seem inconsequential. Alternatively, it is possible that more narrowly defined facets of Big Five factors may more robustly predict particular achievement outcomes (Paunonen & Ashton, 2001). It is also possible that there exist important personality traits not represented as Big Five facets. A serious limitation of the Big Five...
Taxonomy derives from its roots in the factor analyses of adjectives. Traits for which there are fewer synonyms (or antonyms) tend to be omitted. We agree with Paunonen and Jackson (2000) that

development of a dimension of behavior is important to the understanding of human behavior depends not on the size of the factor in the language of personality... if such dimensions are able to account for criterion variance not accounted for by the Big Five personality factors, then those dimensions need to be considered separately in any comprehensive description of the determinants of human behavior. (p. 833)

Thus, although we recognize the utility of the Big Five taxonomy as a descriptive framework in which newly characterized personality traits should be situated, we do not believe that it provides an exhaustive list of traits worth studying.

Conscientious individuals are characteristically thorough, careful, reliable, organized, industrious, and self-controlled. Whereas all of these qualities bear a plausible contribution to achievement, their relative importance likely varies depending upon the type of achievement considered. For example, Galton (1892) suggested that self-control—the ability to resist temptation and control impulses—is a surprisingly poor predictor of the very highest achievements:

People seem to have the idea that the way to eminence is one of great self-denial, from which there are hourly temptations to diverge... This is true enough of the great majority of men, but it is simply not true of the generality of those who have gained great reputations. Such men, biographies show to be haunted and driven by an incessant instinctive craving for intellectual work. (p. 36)

Consistent with Galton’s distinction, Hough (1992) distinguished between achievement and dependability aspects of conscientiousness. According to Hough, the achievement-oriented individual is one who works hard, tries to do a good job, and completes the task at hand, whereas the dependable person is self-controlled and conventional (p. 144). In a meta-analysis, Hough found scales classified as measuring achievement orientation predicted job proficiency ($r = .15$) and educational success ($r = .29$) better than did dependability ($r = .08$ and $r = .12$, respectively).

Grit overlaps with achievement aspects of conscientiousness but differs in its emphasis on long-term stamina rather than short-term intensity. The gritty individual not only finishes tasks at hand but pursues a given aim over years. Grit is also distinct from dependability aspects of conscientiousness, including self-control, in its specification of consistent goals and interests. An individual high in self-control but moderate in grit may, for example, effectively control his or her temper, stick to his or her diet, and resist the urge to surf the Internet at work—yet switch careers annually. As Galton (1892) suggested, abiding commitment to a particular vocation (or avocation) does not derive from overriding “hourly temptations.”

Grit also differs from need for achievement, described by McClelland (1961) as a drive to complete manageable goals that allow for immediate feedback on performance. Whereas individuals high in need for achievement pursue goals that are neither too easy nor too hard, individuals high in grit deliberately set for themselves extremely long-term objectives and do not swerve from them—even in the absence of positive feedback. A second important distinction is that need for achievement is by definition a nonconscious drive for implicitly rewarding activities and, therefore, impossible to measure using self-report methods (McClelland, Koestner, & Weinberger, 1992). Grit, in contrast, can entail dedication to either implicitly or explicitly rewarding goals. Further, we see no theoretical reason why individuals would lack awareness of their level of grit.

Development of the Grit Scale

The aforementioned reasoning suggests that grit may be as essential as IQ to high achievement. In particular, grit, more than self-control or conscientiousness, may set apart the exceptional individuals who James thought made maximal use of their abilities. To test these hypotheses, we sought a brief, stand-alone measure of grit that met four criteria: evidence of psychometric soundness, face validity for adolescents and adults pursuing goals in a variety of domains (e.g., not just work or school), low likelihood of ceiling effects in high-achieving populations, and most important, a precise fit with the construct of grit.

We reviewed several published self-report measures but failed to find any that met all four of our criteria. The only stand-alone measure of perseverance we found, the Perseverance Scale for Children (Luft & Cohen, 1987), is not face valid for adults. The Passion Scale (Vallerand et al., 2003) assesses commitment to a subjectively important activity but not perseverance of effort. The tenacity scale used by Baum and Locke (2004) and derived from Gartner, Gatewood, and Shaver (1991) was developed for entrepreneurs and is not face valid for adolescents. Similarly, the Career Advancement Ambition Scale (DesRochers & Dahir, 2000) refers to attitudes toward one’s “profession” and “firm.” Cassidy and Lynn (1989) developed a need for achievement questionnaire that taps work ethic and desire for excellence, which are consonant with the construct of grit, but also several irrelevant qualities such as the needs for money, domination of others, superiority over competitors, and social status. Finally, the goal commitment scale by Hollenbeck, Williams, and Klein (1989) assesses state-level, not trait-level, goal commitment.

The Present Research

In the absence of adequate existing measures, we developed and validated a self-report questionnaire called the Grit Scale. We expected grit to be associated with Big Five Conscientiousness and with self-control but, in its emphasis on focused effort and interest over time, to have incremental predictive validity for high accomplishment over and beyond these other constructs.

We also tested the hypothesis that grit would be unrelated to IQ. Whereas personality and IQ represent independently flourishing literatures, few contemporary investigations have incorporated both kinds of measures. Thus, we have learned surprisingly little about how personality traits and intelligence are related and about their relative contributions to performance. There are notable exceptions to this trend (cf. Ackerman & Heggestad, 1997; Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2005), but in general, psychology has ignored the recommendations of Wechsler (1940) and R. B. Cattell and Butcher (1948), who cautioned that the independent study of either noncognitive or cognitive individual differences, to the exclusion of the other, would be impoverished.
Study 1

Study 1 was a cross-sectional study for which the major purpose was to develop and validate a self-report measure of grit in a large sample of adults aged 25 years or older. The predictive validity of grit was assessed by its association with higher levels of lifetime schooling among individuals of identical age.

The broad age range of the adults in Study 1 allowed us to venture a second question: Does grit grow with age? Although personality traits are by definition relatively stable over time, Big Five Conscientiousness and stability of vocational interests both increase over the life span (McCrae et al., 1999; Srivastava, John, Gosling, & Potter, 2003; Swanson, 1999). Thus, we expected older adults to be slightly higher in grit than younger individuals.

Method

Participants and procedure. Beginning in April 2004, we set up a link on the www.authentichappiness.org website inviting visitors to help validate the Grit Scale. This noncommercial, public website provides free information about psychology research and access to a variety of self-report measures to over 500,000 registered users. All participants indicated how old they were (25 to 34 years, 35 to 44 years, 45 to 54 years, 55 to 64 years, and 65 years and older) and their level of education (some high school, high school graduate, some college, Associate’s degree, Bachelor’s degree, or postcollege graduate degree). By October 2005, we collected data on 1,545 participants aged 25 and older (M = 45 years; 73% women, 27% men).

Development of the Grit Scale. We began by generating a pool of 27 items tapping the construct of grit. Our overarching goal for scale development was to capture the attitudes and behaviors characteristic of the high-achieving individuals described to us in early exploratory interviews with lawyers, businesspeople, academics, and other professionals. We intentionally wrote items that would be face valid for both adolescents and adults and that did not specify a particular life domain (e.g., work, school). We included items that tapped the ability to sustain effort in the face of adversity (e.g., “I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge.” “I finish whatever I begin”). We also considered that some people sustain effort not because of subjective interest but rather because they are afraid of change, compliant with the expectations of others, or unaware of alternative options. Thus, several Grit Scale items ask about the consistency of interests over time. For example, two reverse-scored items were “My interests change from year to year” and “I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete.” Items are rated on a 5-point scale from 1 = not at all like me to 5 = very much like me.

We considered item-total correlations, internal reliability coefficients, redundancy, and simplicity of vocabulary to eliminate 10 items. On the remaining 17 items, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis on half of the observations chosen at random (n = 772). We sought a solution that satisfied tests for number of factors (e.g., R. B. Cattell’s scree test), retained 5 or more items with loadings of at least .40, yielded internally consistent factors that made psychological sense, and best approximated simple structure. A two-factor oblique solution with promax rotation satisfied these criteria. See Table 1 for the 12 retained items and corrected item-total correlations with each item’s respective factor. We considered the possibility that these two factors were an artifact of positively and negatively scored items but were convinced that the factor structure reflected two conceptually distinct dimensions. The first factor contained 6 items indicating consistency of interests, and the second factor contained 6 items indicating perseverance of effort. Because we expected that stamina in the dimensions of interest and effort would be correlated, we accepted this oblique solution in which the two factors were correlated at r = .45.

To test the integrity of the final two-factor solution, we confirmed that the specificity of each factor (i.e., the portion of reliable variance not shared by the other factor) was larger than the error variance for that factor. Further, confirmatory factor analysis with the remaining 773 observations in our sample supported this two-factor solution (comparative fit index = .83 and root-mean-square error of approximation = .11). The resulting 12-item Grit

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor and Grit Scale item</th>
<th>Promax loading</th>
<th>Item-total r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consistency of Interests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one.</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New ideas and new projects sometimes distract me from previous ones.</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I become interested in new pursuits every few months.</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My interests change from year to year.</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been obsessed with a certain idea or project for a short time but later lost interest.</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete.</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perseverance of Effort</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have achieved a goal that took years of work.</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge.</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I finish whatever I begin.</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setbacks don’t discourage me.</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a hard worker.</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am diligent.</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The last column displays the corrected item-total correlations for each item with its respective factor (i.e., either Consistency of Interests or Perseverance of Effort). Item was reverse scored.
Scale demonstrated high internal consistency ($\alpha = .85$) for the overall scale and for each factor (Consistency of Interests, $\alpha = .84$; Perseverance of Effort, $\alpha = .78$). In subsequent analyses, neither factor was consistently more predictive of outcomes than the other, and in most cases, the two together were more predictive than either alone. Therefore, we proceeded using total scores from the full 12-item scale as our measure of grit.

**Results and Discussion**

As we predicted, more educated adults were higher in grit than were less educated adults of equal age. We treated age and educational attainment as categorical variables. Two-way analysis of variance models were used to test for differences in grit by education and age. The interaction term was not significant, indicating that differences in grit for levels of education were not differential across age and that the differences in grit for levels of age were not differential across education. We therefore fit a reduced model excluding the interaction term. Main effects for each term indicated a highly significant difference in grit for the levels of each term adjusted for the other effect, $F(5, 1535) = 15.48, p < .001, \eta^2_p = 0.05$, for education; $F(4, 1535) = 11.98, p < .001, \eta^2_p = 0.03$, for age.

As illustrated in Figure 1, post hoc comparisons revealed that when age is controlled for, postcollege graduates were higher in grit than most other groups. Similarly, participants with an Associate’s degree were significantly higher in grit than those with less education and, interestingly, also higher in grit than those with a Bachelor’s degree, although this difference failed to reach significance.

Figure 2 shows that when education level is controlled for, grit increased monotonically with age; however, 25- to 34-year-olds did not differ significantly from 35- to 44-year-olds, and 45- to 54-year-olds did not differ significantly from 55- to 64-year-olds. We confirmed that this effect was not an artifact of older participants simply having more life experience and, therefore, a greater likelihood of endorsing Grit Scale items asking about past experiences (e.g., “I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge.”) Excluding the 3 items phrased in the past tense did not change the relationship between Grit Scale scores and age. Summary statistics for Study 1 and all subsequent studies can be found in Table 2.

The cross-sectional design of Study 1 limits our ability to draw strong causal inferences about the observed positive association between grit and age. Our intuition is that grit grows with age and that one learns from experience that quitting plans, shifting goals,
and starting over repeatedly are not good strategies for success. In fact, a strong desire for novelty and a low threshold for frustration may be adaptive earlier in life: Moving on from dead-end pursuits is essential to the discovery of more promising paths. However, as Ericsson and Charness (1994) demonstrated, excellence takes time, and discovery must at some point give way to development.

Alternatively, McCrae et al. (1999) speculated that maturational changes in personality, at least through middle adulthood, might be genetically programmed. From an evolutionary psychology perspective, certain traits may not be as beneficial when seeking mates as when providing for and raising a family. A third possibility is that the observed association between grit and age is a consequence of cohort effects. It may be that each successive generation of Americans, for social and cultural reasons, has grown up less gritty than the one before (cf. Twenge, Zhang, & Im, 2004).

Similarly, we interpret the observed association between grit and education as evidence that sticking with long-range goals over time makes possible completion of high levels of education. But, it is also possible that when evaluating one’s ability to stay focused on goals, overcome setbacks, and so on, personal academic accomplishments were particularly salient and, therefore, spuriously inflated grit scores. Finally, because all information in Study 1 was self-reported and because grit was not compared with other traits, we cannot rule out the possibility that observed positive associations were the consequence of social desirability bias.

Study 2

In Study 1, grit was associated with educational attainment and age. The purpose of Study 2 was to test whether these relationships

![Figure 2. Grit as a function of age (in years), controlling for educational attainment in Study 1 participants. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals of the mean.](image)

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample characteristics</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study 1: Adults aged 25 and older</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>1,545</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study 2: Adults aged 25 and older</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study 3: Ivy League undergraduates</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study 4: West Point cadets in Class of 2008</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>1,218</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study 5: West Point cadets in Class of 2010</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>1,308</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study 6: National Spelling Bee finalists</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
would hold when conscientiousness and other Big Five traits were controlled for. That is, does grit provide incremental predictive validity over and beyond Big Five traits? Also, is there evidence that grittier individuals make fewer career switches than their less gritty peers?

Method

Beginning in April 2006, we revised our online study on www.authentichappiness.org. By September 2006, 706 participants aged 25 and older completed the same measures as in Study 1. In addition, participants indicated “the number of times I have changed careers” and completed the Big Five Inventory (BFI; John & Srivastava, 1999), a widely used 44-item questionnaire that has demonstrated convergent validity with Costa and McCrae’s (1992) NEO Five-Factor Inventory and Goldberg’s (1992) Trait Descriptive Adjectives measures of Big Five traits. Participants endorse items such as “I see myself as someone who is talkative” using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = disagree strongly and 5 = agree strongly. Observed internal reliabilities of the BFI subscales measuring conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, and openness to experience were \( \alpha = .86, .89, .85, .82, \) and \( .84 \), respectively. Only 16 participants (2%) reported as their highest education level either “high school” or “some high school.” Therefore, these individuals were excluded from analysis. The resultant sample comprised 690 participants (\( M = 45 \) years, \( SD = 11; 80\% \) women, 20% men).

Results and Discussion

As we expected, grit related to Conscientiousness (\( r = .77, p < .001 \)) more than to Neuroticism (\( r = -.38, p < .001 \)), Agreeableness (\( r = .24, p < .001 \)), Extraversion (\( r = .22, p < .001 \)), and Openness to Experience (\( r = .14, p < .001 \)).

The incremental predictive validity of grit for education and age over and beyond conscientiousness and other Big Five traits was supported. In a two-way analysis of variance predicting grit from education and age, both education, \( F(3, 682) = 11.54, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .05 \), and age, \( F(4, 682) = 15.32, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .08 \), were significant predictors. When conscientiousness was added as a covariate to the above model, both education, \( F(3, 657) = 10.63, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .05 \), and age, \( F(4, 657) = 8.45, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .05 \), remained significant predictors. Further, when neuroticism, agreeableness, extraversion, and openness to experience were added to this analysis of covariance model as additional covariates, both education, \( F(3, 653) = 11.48, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .05 \), and age, \( F(4, 653) = 6.94, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .04 \), remained significant predictors. As illustrated in Figure 3, post hoc comparisons revealed that individuals who had completed only “some college” were lower in grit than any other group, and individuals who had earned an Associate’s degree or a graduate degree were higher in grit than individuals with a Bachelor’s degree. Figure 4 shows that grit was lowest among 25- to 34-year-olds and highest among those 65 years and older.

Similarly, grit had incremental predictive validity for number of lifetime career changes over and beyond age, conscientiousness, and other Big Five traits. Because the distribution of lifetime career changes was skewed right (\( M = 2.25, SD = 2.04 \)), we performed a median split to compare individuals with high versus low career changes. We also standardized all continuous predictor variables prior to analysis to allow for a more intuitive understanding of odds ratios (ORs). In a binary logistic regression predicting high versus low career change from grit, age, and all Big Five traits, grit was the only significant predictor (OR = 0.65, \( \beta = -0.44, p = .001 \)). Individuals who were a standard deviation higher in grit than average were 35% less likely to be frequent career changers.

Study 3

Studies 1 and 2 established an association between grit and educational attainment in two diverse samples of adults. Because we were interested in predicting performance among high achievers, Study 3 tested whether grit was associated with cumulative GPA among undergraduates at an elite university. Further, using SAT scores as a measure of general mental ability, we tested whether grit would be orthogonal to intelligence and, therefore, explain variance in GPA over and beyond that explained by intelligence.

Method

Participants. Participants were 139 undergraduate students (69% women, 31% men) majoring in psychology at the University of Pennsylvania. The average SAT score of this participant pool was 1,415, a score achieved by fewer than 4% of students who take the SAT.

Procedure and measures. Participants were recruited through an e-mail invitation sent to approximately 350 psychology majors in fall 2002. The invitation emphasized the voluntary and confidential nature of the study and provided a website address where participants could complete the Grit Scale and report additional information, including current GPA, expected year of graduation, gender, and SAT scores. Following Frey and Detterman’s (2004) study, we used SAT scores as a measure of general mental ability.

Results and Discussion

Gritty students outperformed their less gritty peers: Grit scores were associated with higher GPAs (\( r = .25, p < .01 \)), a relationship that was even stronger when SAT scores were held constant (\( r = .34, p < .001 \)). As we expected, SAT scores were also related to GPA (\( r = .30, p < .001 \)). It is interesting to note that grit was associated with lower SAT scores (\( r = -.20, p < .03 \)), suggesting that among elite undergraduates, smarter students may be slightly less gritty than their peers. This finding was somewhat surprising given that Ackerman and Heggestad (1997) found conscientiousness and IQ to be orthogonal. However, our result is consistent with that of Moutafi, Furnham, and Paltiel (2005), who found in a large sample of job applicants that conscientiousness and general intelligence were inversely correlated at \( r = -.24 \). It is possible, as Moutafi et al. have suggested, that among relatively intelligent individuals, those who are less bright than their peers compensate by working harder and with more determination.

Study 4

The question of what predicts success in the most challenging environments is particularly important to military decision makers.
The United States Military Academy, West Point, graduates more than 900 new officers annually, about 25% of the new lieutenants required by the Army each year. Admission to West Point is extremely competitive. Candidates must receive a nomination from a member of Congress or from the Department of the Army. They are then evaluated on their academic, physical, and leadership potential. Specifically, admission to West Point depends heavily on a Whole Candidate Score, a weighted average of SAT scores, class rank, demonstrated leadership ability, and physical aptitude. Even with such a rigorous admissions process, about 1 in 20 cadets drops out during the first summer of training.

In Study 4, we expected grit to predict retention over the first summer and, among those cadets who remained, military and academic GPA 1 year later. Given the especially rugged experience of the summer regimen, we anticipated that grit would predict retention better than would self-control. We expected grit to be unrelated to IQ (as measured by SAT scores) or to physical aptitude.

**Method**

**Participants.** Participants were 1,218 of 1,223 freshman cadets who entered the United States Military Academy, West Point, in July 2004. This group was typical of recent West Point classes in terms of gender (16% women, 84% men), ethnicity (77% Caucasian, 8% Asian, 6% Hispanic, 6% Black, 1% American Indian, and 2% other ethnicity), and age ($M = 19.05$ years, $SD = 1.1$).

**Procedure.** Participants completed questionnaires during a routine institutional group testing activity on the 2nd and 3rd days after arrival to West Point in June 2004. The test administrator informed cadets that participation in this study was voluntary and that the information provided would be kept confidential. Separately, official records were obtained for other data.

**Measures**

**Grit.** In the current sample, the Grit Scale had an internal reliability coefficient of $\alpha = .79$.

**Self-control.** The Brief Self-Control Scale (BSCS; Tangney, Baumeister, & Boone, 2004) contains 13 items endorsed on a 5-point scale, where 1 = *not like me at all* and 5 = *very much like me* (e.g., “I have a hard time breaking bad habits” and “I do certain things that are bad for me, if they are fun”). In the current sample, the BSCS had an internal reliability coefficient of $\alpha = .81$.

**Whole Candidate Score.** The Whole Candidate Score is used in conjunction with other information to admit applicants to West Point.
Point. The Whole Candidate Score is a weighted composite of high school rank; SAT score; Leadership Potential Score, which reflects participation in extracurricular activities; and Physical Aptitude Exam, a standardized physical exercise evaluation.

Summer retention. Summer retention was coded as a dichotomous variable where 1 = retained and 0 = separated as of the first day of the fall semester. In the current sample, 94.2% of cadets completed the summer training (n = 1,152), and 5.8% dropped out (n = 71). To examine the individual effects of grit, self-control, and other predictors on retention, we conducted separate binary logistic regressions with retention as the dependent variable. For each predictor, we report beta, which represents the change in the log odds of retention due to a unit change in the predictor, and the OR, which in the case of continuous predictor variables represents the change in the odds of retention associated with a one-unit change in the predictor.

Academic GPA. Academic GPA was calculated in spring 2005 as the cumulative average of grades in academic subjects.

Military Performance Score (MPS). MPS was calculated in spring 2005 from performance ratings from military program activities during the summer and academic year as well as grades for military science courses. Activities completed at higher levels of responsibility were weighted more heavily.

Results and Discussion

Grit was not related to Whole Candidate Score (r = .02, ns) nor any of its components: SAT score (r = −.05, ns), high school class rank (r = −.04, ns), Leadership Potential Score (r = .05, ns), and Physical Aptitude Exam (r = .01, ns). As predicted, grit was related to self-control (r = .63, p < .001).

Grit predicted completion of the rigorous summer training program better than any other predictor. We conducted separate binary logistic regression analyses predicting summer retention from grit, self-control, and Whole Candidate Score. Predictor variables were standardized before regression analysis to allow for a more intuitive understanding of ORs. Cadets who were a standard deviation higher than average in grit were more than 60% more likely to complete summer training (β = .48, OR = 1.62, p < .001), whereas cadets who scored a standard deviation above average in self-control were only 50% more likely to complete the summer course (β = .41, OR = 1.50, p < .01). Whole Candidate
Score, the composite score used by West Point to admit candidates, did not predict summer retention ($\beta = .09$, OR = 1.09, ns). Further, when all three predictors were entered simultaneously into a binary logistic regression model, grit ($\beta = .44$, OR = 1.55, $p < .01$) but neither self-control ($\beta = .12$, OR = 1.13, ns) nor Whole Candidate Score ($\beta = .11$, OR = 1.11, ns) predicted retention robustly.

However, grit was not the best predictor of cumulative first-year academic GPA and MPS among cadets who remained at West Point. Grit predicted MPS ($r = .19$, $p < .001$) about as well as did self-control ($r = .21$, $p < .001$). However, self-control was a better predictor of GPA ($r = .13$, $p < .001$) than was grit ($r = .06$, $p < .05$); $p < .001$ for the difference in correlation coefficients. Even more striking was the superior prediction by Whole Candidate Score of both MPS ($r = .42$, $p < .001$) and GPA ($r = .64$, $p < .001$). When Whole Candidate Score and self-control were held constant, grit continued to predict MPS (partial $r = .09$, $p < .01$) but not GPA (partial $r = -.01$, ns).

These findings support Galton’s (1892) contention that there is a qualitative difference between minor and major accomplishments. Earning good grades during the academic year at West Point requires regulating effort from moment to moment, primarily by resisting “hourly temptations” to procrastinate, daydream, or indulge in unproductive diversions. Self-control may be constantly taxed, but the workload is manageable and there is little temptation to give up altogether. Staying at West Point through the first year requires regulating effort from moment to moment, primarily by resisting “hourly temptations” to procrastinate, daydream, or indulge in unproductive diversions. Self-control may be constantly taxed, but the workload is manageable and there is little temptation to give up altogether. Staying at West Point through the first summer training (sometimes referred to as Beast Barracks), in contrast, calls upon a different sort of fortitude. Beast Barracks is deliberately engineered to test the very limits of cadets’ physical, emotional, and mental capacities. A reasonable response to the unrelenting dawn-to-midnight trials of Beast Barracks would be to exchange the goal of graduating from West Point for a more manageable goal such as graduating from a liberal arts college.

Study 5

Study 4 showed that grittier cadets were more likely to complete their first summer of training at West Point. Study 5 was a replication and extension of Study 4 in which we tested whether grit had incremental predictive validity for summer attrition over and beyond Big Five Conscientiousness.

Method

On the day after their arrival at West Point in June 2006, 1,308 of 1,310 cadets in the Class of 2010 completed questionnaires. Participants completed the Grit Scale (observed $\alpha = .79$) and the 9-item Conscientiousness subscale of the Big Five Inventory (John & Srivastava, 1999; observed $\alpha = .82$). Official records including Whole Candidate Scores and retention data were obtained in September 2006. Summer retention for the Class of 2010 (95.3%) was higher than for the Class of 2008 (94.2%).

Results and Discussion

Whole Candidate Score was related to conscientiousness ($r = .12$, $p < .001$) but not to grit ($r = .03$, ns). As in Study 2, grit and conscientiousness were highly related ($r = .64$, $p < .001$). Nevertheless, summer retention was predicted better by grit ($\beta = .31$, OR = 1.36, $p < .02$) than by either conscientiousness ($\beta = .09$, OR = 1.09, ns) or Whole Candidate Score ($\beta = .02$, OR = 1.02, ns). When all three predictors were entered simultaneously into a binary logistic regression model, grit predicted summer retention ($\beta = .39$, OR = 1.47, $p < .03$), but Conscientiousness ($\beta = -.17$, OR = 0.85, ns) and Whole Candidate Score ($\beta = .04$, OR = 1.04, ns) did not.

Study 6

Study 6 was a prospective, longitudinal investigation involving finalists in the 2005 Scripps National Spelling Bee. This annual competition involves thousands of children in the United States, Europe, Canada, New Zealand, Guam, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, The Bahamas, and American Samoa. In 2005, 273 newspapers sponsored spelling bee programs in their communities; the champion of each sponsor’s spelling bee advanced to the national competition in Washington, DC. The two outcomes of interest were final round reached in the national competition and number of prior competitions in which children participated.

We were interested in this competition for two reasons. First, we were curious about the importance of grit to exceptional extracurricular accomplishment—to avocational rather than vocational pursuits. Second, Study 6 enabled us to test a hypothesis about the mechanism of grit. We expected the effect of grit on final round to be mediated by time on task, in this context operationally defined as the number of hours spent studying for the current spelling bee final competition and, in addition, the number of prior final competitions entered.

Method

Participants. Of 273 finalists in the 2005 Scripps National Spelling Bee, 175 (64%) elected to participate by returning signed child and parent consent forms and self-report questionnaires in April and May 2005, prior to the June final competition. Participants ranged in age from 7 to 15 years old ($M = 13.20, SD = 1.23$); 48% were girls, and 52% were boys. Of these 175 participants, 79 volunteered to take a verbal IQ measure over the telephone. We were able to administer the verbal IQ test to 66 participants before the competition; the remaining 13 verbal IQ tests were administered during the 2 weeks following the competition. Participants did not differ from nonparticipants on age, gender, final round reached, or number of prior competitions. Similarly, there were no systematic differences on these variables between participants who completed the verbal IQ measure and those who did not, nor between participants who completed the verbal IQ measure before the final competition and those who completed it afterward.

Measures

Grit. The Grit Scale had an internal reliability coefficient of $\alpha = .80$ in this study.

Self-control. The BSCS had an internal reliability of $\alpha = .88$ in the current sample.

Verbal IQ. The Similarities subtest of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children–III (Wechsler, 1991) was delivered over the telephone to a subgroup of participants who indicated a will-
ingness to be called for this purpose. The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children–III is a widely used measure of general intelligence for children aged 6 to 16 years. The subtest comprises 19 word pairs that participants are asked to compare and bring under a single concept (e.g., “Red and blue. How are they similar? How are they the same?”) We chose the Similarities subtest in part because it correlates highly with verbal IQ \( (r = .85) \) and full scale IQ \( (r = .78) \). In addition, we considered that most participants would be memorizing words in preparation for the spelling bee competition and that this verbal subtest would be least confounded with vocabulary learned explicitly for the competition. Wechsler (1958) pointed out that while a certain degree of verbal comprehension is necessary for even minimal performance, sheer word knowledge need only be a minor factor. More important is the individual’s ability to perceive the common elements of the terms he is asked to compare and, at higher levels, his ability to bring them under a single concept. (p. 73)

The Similarities subtest has a published average split-half reliability coefficient of .81 and an average test–retest stability coefficient of .81. The current sample scored more than a standard deviation above average (mean scaled score = 13.83, \( SD = 2.38 \)).

**Study time.** Participants reported how many hours per day they studied for the spelling bee finals on weekdays and, separately, how many hours per day they studied on weekends. Participants studied for the spelling bee an average of 2.25 hr per day \( (SD = 2.04) \) on weekends and 1.34 hr per day \( (SD = 1.50) \) on weekdays. We interpret the higher mean and standard deviation for weekend studying as indicating that on Saturdays and Sundays finalists had fewer school-related and extracurricular obligations and, therefore, more discretionary time for studying. Because weekend and weekday studying hours were highly correlated \( (r = .62, p < .001) \), and because of the greater variance in weekend studying hours, in subsequent analyses we used weekend studying hours only.

**Final round.** The final competition of the Scripps National Spelling Bee is an oral competition conducted in rounds until only one speller remains. Rounds end after all spellers among those remaining in competition have spelled for the judges one new word. Beginning in Round 3, if a speller misspells a word, he or she is eliminated. During the 2005 competition, the winner correctly spelled words during all 19 rounds, two children tied for second place by correctly spelling words during the first 18 rounds, and so on. For all participants in our study, we recorded the number of rounds completed by a finalist prior to elimination.

**Prior competitions.** We recorded from records provided by the Scripps National Spelling Bee the total number of times a child has participated in the final competition. Of the 175 participants in our study, 133 (76%) were first-time finalists, 34 (19%) had competed once before, 4 had competed twice before (2%), and 4 had competed in three prior competitions (2%).

**Results and Discussion**

The two dependent variables of interest in Study 6—final round and prior competitions—were ordinal. We therefore used ordinal regression models (Scott, Goldberg, & Mayo, 1997) to test the effect of each predictor. We report the statistical significance and OR for each covariate, where the OR represents the likelihood of being in the next category per unit increase in the covariate. To facilitate interpretation of ORs, we standardized grit, self-control, and verbal IQ scores before fitting ordinal regression models. Not surprisingly, older children were more likely to have participated in prior competitions \( (p < .02) \), and there was a trend toward older children advancing farther in competition \( (p < .08) \). We therefore include age as a covariate in all subsequent analyses.

As shown in Figure 5, grit predicted advancement to higher rounds in competition. In an ordinal regression model with final round as the dependent variable, grit \( (\beta = .34, OR = 1.41, p < .04) \) and age \( (\beta = .28, OR = 1.32, p < .05) \) were significant predictors, indicating that finalists with grit scores a standard deviation above the mean for same-aged finalists were 41% more likely to advance to further rounds.

Despite the sizable correlation between grit and self-control \( (r = .66, p < .001) \), self-control \( (\beta = .04, OR = 1.04, ns) \) failed to predict performance when age was controlled for \( (\beta = .27, OR = 1.31, p < .06) \). When grit, self-control, and age were entered as predictors of final round, grit \( (\beta = .62, OR = 1.86, p < .01) \) and age \( (\beta = .29, OR = 1.33, p < .05) \) were the only significant positive predictors.

Verbal IQ also predicted final round. In an ordinal regression model with final round as the dependent variable, verbal IQ \( (\beta = .80, OR = 2.22, p < .003) \) but not age \( (\beta = .20, OR = 1.22, ns) \) was a significant predictor. Grit and verbal IQ were not strongly related \( (r = .02, ns) \). Thus, we were surprised that in an ordinal regression model predicting final round from grit, verbal IQ, and age, grit was not a statistically significant predictor of final round. Specifically, the regression coefficient for grit in this model was \( \beta = .19 \) and its OR was 1.21, suggesting that finalists who were a standard deviation above the mean for finalists of the same age and verbal IQ might be 21% more likely to advance to further rounds. Because listwise deletion of participants who did not complete the verbal IQ measure reduced the model’s degrees of freedom by more than half, we speculate that grit would have been a significant predictor had we obtained verbal IQ data on more children and thus preserved statistical power. However, we cannot rule out other explanations.

Gritty finalists outperformed their less gritty peers at least in part because they studied longer. Specifically, weekend hours of practice mediated the relationship between grit and final round.

---

**Figure 5.** Final round reached as a function of ranked quartiles of grit, self-control, and IQ among National Spelling Bee finalists in Study 6. All predictors are controlled for age.
Several criteria must be met for a variable to be considered a mediator: The independent variable must predict the mediator, the mediator must predict the dependent variable when controlling for the independent variable, and the independent variable must predict the dependent variable. In addition, mediation implies that association of the independent variable and the dependent variable is reduced in the presence of the mediator (see Figure 6).

We showed in the above ordinal regression model that grit indeed predicted final round when holding age constant. Second, in a simultaneous multiple regression model with study time as the dependent variable and age as a covariate, we found grit was a significant predictor ($\beta = .28, p < .001$). Finally, in a simultaneous ordinal regression model predicting final round, study time ($\beta = .30, OR = 1.35, p < .001$) and age ($\beta = .32, OR = 1.38, p < .03$) were both significant predictors, but grit ($\beta = .16, OR = 1.17, ns$) was not. Thus, although we do not know of an accepted test for the significance of the decrement in the grit regression coefficient, this set of regression analyses is consistent with weekend hours of practice at least partially mediating the relationship between trait-level grit and performance.

We followed a similar procedure to show that experience in prior final competitions was also a partial mediator between grit and final round. In contrast to self-control and verbal IQ, grit robustly predicted participation in prior national spelling bee final competitions. In an ordinal regression model with prior competitions as the dependent variable, grit ($\beta = .48, OR = 1.62, p < .02$) was a significant predictor when age was controlled for ($\beta = .30, OR = 1.35, p < .07$). The OR for grit was 1.62, indicating that finalists who were a standard deviation above same-aged peers in grit score were 62% more likely to have competed in an incremental prior competition. In contrast, self-control only approached significance as a postdiction variable ($p = .11$), and verbal IQ seemed entirely unrelated ($p = .82$). In a simultaneous ordinal regression predicting 2005 final round, number of prior competitions ($\beta = 1.21, OR = 3.36, p < .001$) remained a significant covariate when age was controlled for ($\beta = .20, OR = 1.22, ns$), but grit ($\beta = .20, OR = 1.22, ns$) did not.

Study 6 suggests that gritty children work harder and longer than their less gritty peers and, as a consequence, perform better. The prospective, longitudinal design of this study gives us some confidence that, indeed, an enduring personality characteristic we call grit is driving the observed correlations with success outcomes rather than the other way around. However, in all of the current studies, it remains possible that a third variable drove both success outcomes and responses to the Grit Scale. We discuss this limitation in detail in the General Discussion.

**Figure 6.** Model of study time and prior spelling bee experience as mediators between Grit and final round in Study 6.

**General Discussion**

Across six studies, individual differences in grit accounted for significant incremental variance in success outcomes over and beyond that explained by IQ, to which it was not positively related. As summarized in Table 3, grit accounted for more variance in outcomes than commonly observed for Big Five Conscientiousness. In Studies 1 and 2, we found that grittier individuals had attained higher levels of education than less gritty individuals of the same age. Older individuals tended to be higher in grit than younger individuals, suggesting that the quality of grit, although a stable individual difference, may nevertheless increase over the life span. As we expected, grittier individuals made fewer career changes than less gritty peers of the same age. In Study 3, undergraduates at an elite university who scored higher in grit also earned higher GPAs than their peers, despite having lower SAT scores. In Studies 4 and 5, grit was a better predictor of first summer retention at West Point than was either self-control or a summary measure of cadet quality used by the West Point admissions committee. However, among the cadets who persisted to the fall semester, self-control was a better predictor of academic performance. In our final study, grittier competitors in the Scripps National Spelling Bee outranked less gritty competitors of the same age, at least in part because of more accumulated practice.

In our view, achievement is the product of talent and effort, the latter a function of the intensity, direction, and duration of one’s exertions toward a goal. We speculate that individual differences in the intensity dimension of effort are salient and, therefore, described by many adjectives in the English language (e.g., energetic, conscientious, dutiful, responsible, lazy). Whereas the amount of energy one invests in a particular task at a given moment in time is readily apparent both to oneself and to others, the consistency of one’s long-term goals and the stamina with which one pursues those goals over years may be less obvious. Similarly, whereas the importance of working harder is easily apprehended, the importance of working longer without switching objectives may be less perceptible. Hence, it is possible that fewer adjectives describe individual differences in the dimensions of direction and duration of effort, both molar rather than molecular concepts. This disparity in lexical representation may have resulted in the omission of the grit construct from measures of Big Five Conscientiousness.

As an example, consider two children learning to play the piano. Assume that both children are equally talented in music and, therefore, improve in skill at the same rate per unit effort. Assume further that these children are matched in the intensity of effort they expend toward musical training. Intensity in this case is described by the extent to which attention is fully engaged during practice time. Duration and direction of effort, on the other hand, are described by the number of accumulated hours devoted to musical study and, crucially, the decision to deepen expertise in piano rather than to explore alternative instruments. Our findings suggest that children matched on talent and capacity for hard work may nevertheless differ in grit. Thus, a prodigy who practices intensively yet moves from piano to the saxophone to voice will likely be surpassed by an equally gifted but grittier child.

Twenty years prior to our research, the Personal Qualities Project examined the effect on success in college of over 100 preadmissions variables, including expert ratings of community...
activities, athletic achievement, creative talent, personal statement quality, talent in music, and leadership experience (Willingham, 1985). One quality, follow-through, captured the essence of grit: “The follow-through rating involved evidence of purposeful, continuous commitment to certain types of activities versus sporadic efforts in diverse areas” (p. 213). High school students who received a 5-point rating for follow-through were involved for several years in at least two different activities and, in each of these domains, demonstrated significant advancement and achievement (e.g., editor of the yearbook and captain of the varsity softball team). Students who received a 1-point rating had no evidence of a multiple-year involvement in any activity.

Among more than 3,500 participants attending nine different colleges, follow-through was a better predictor than all other variables, including SAT scores and high school rank, of whether a student would achieve a leadership position in college. Follow-through was also the single best predictor of significant accomplishment in science, art, sports, communications, organization, or some other endeavor (Willingham, 1985, p. 213). Follow-through was the third best predictor, after SAT scores and high school rank, of who would graduate with academic honors. It is important to note that ratings of follow-through were better than ratings of overall high school extracurricular involvement in predicting success outcomes. Consistent with our finding that grit was not positively associated with IQ, follow-through was orthogonal to SAT scores (r = .01). Given that college grades are only modestly correlated with adult success (Hoyt, 1966), we wonder whether follow-through or, as we prefer to call it, grit, may in fact matter more than IQ to eventual success in life.

**Limitations**

We see four major limitations to the current research. First, we relied exclusively on a self-report questionnaire to measure grit. The limitations of self-report instruments are well-known (e.g., Lucas & Baird, 2006; Paulhus, 1991). The Grit Scale is relatively transparent and, therefore, particularly vulnerable to social desirability bias. Although confidentiality was assured in all six studies, some participants may have been more motivated than others by the desire to look good. Studies 1 and 2 involved self-reported educational attainment and GPA, respectively, and it could be argued that in these studies, social desirability bias drove observed positive correlations between outcomes and the Grit Scale. Against this is the fact that grit was associated with educational attainment when controlling for conscientiousness and other Big Five factors, the scores of which would also reflect social desirability bias. Further, how do we account for the sizable correlations between grit and objective measures of success in Studies 4, 5, and 6? In fact, if significant, social desirability bias suggests that the true correlations between grit and achievement are higher than we observed, strengthening our conclusions rather than weakening them. Still, we believe that a multimethod, multisource approach to measurement is preferable, and we plan to develop informant report, content analysis, and biodata measures of grit in future studies.

The second major limitation of the current work is that the Grit Scale asks respondents to reflect on their characteristic approach to goals, setbacks, and challenges (e.g., “Setbacks don’t discourage me”). Such items, even when worded in the present tense, necessitate retrospective reflection. A case could be made that the sum total of our research is to show that past behavior predicts future behavior. The strong version of this complaint would suggest there is no stable individual difference called grit. Rather, there is consistency of behavior across time, possibly reflecting consistency of situation (Mischel, 1968). Of course, this claim questions whether such a thing as personality exists at all. A discussion of this debate is beyond the scope of this article, but we point out that in Studies 3, 4, 5, and 6, we examined how individuals in a similar situation respond differently.

An additional concern is that Studies 3, 4, 5, and 6 involved select populations in which there was restriction of range on IQ, resulting in attenuation of correlations between IQ and both grit and achievement. Our findings suggest that among high achievers, there is likely some degree of restriction of range on grit as well. Thus, we may have underestimated the correlations among grit, IQ, and achievement. Further, by focusing our attention on individual differences among relatively high-IQ individuals, we have necessarily limited the external validity of our investigation. We are hesitant to extrapolate from the conclusions made here to less talented populations, but our suspicion is that grit, like IQ, is of ubiquitous importance in all endeavors in which success requires months or even years of sustained effort and interest. To the extent that the temptation to give up is greater for individuals of modest ability, grit may matter more, not less. We found no significant interactions between IQ and grit in Studies 3, 4, 5, and 6, but recognize that more heterogeneous samples are needed to test...
whether IQ moderates the relationship between grit and achievement.

Finally, the current findings do not shed light on how grit relates to other variables known to predict achievement, such as self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), optimistic explanatory style (Seligman & Schulman, 1986), and locus of control (Rotter, 1966). Future research is necessary to test whether these other variables are distal factors that have an effect on achievement via grit. One possibility is that the propensity to pursue long-term goals with perseverance and passion may be determined in part by beliefs about one’s capabilities, attributions of positive and negative events, and beliefs about the relative influence of external causes. However, it is also possible that the effects of these other variables on performance are mediated by some other mechanism and that grit is a mere epiphenomenon. More generally, further research is needed to elucidate the specific processes or behaviors set in motion by grit and other variables associated with achievement.

Implications

In a qualitative study of the development of world-class pianists, neurologists, swimmers, chess players, mathematicians, and sculptors, Bloom (1985) noted that “only a few of [the 120 talented individuals in the sample] were regarded as prodigies by teachers, parents, or experts” (p. 533). Rather, accomplished individuals worked day after day, for at least 10 or 15 years, to reach the top of their fields. Bloom observed that in every studied field, the general qualities possessed by high achievers included a strong interest in the particular field, a desire to reach “a high level of attainment” in that field, and a “willingness to put in great amounts of time and effort” (p. 544). Similarly, in her study of prodigies who later made significant contributions to their field, Winner (1996) concluded, “Creators must be able to persist in the face of difficulty and overcome the many obstacles in the way of creative discovery. . . . Drive and energy in childhood are more predictive of success, if not creativity, than is IQ or some other more domain-specific ability” (p. 293).

The qualitative insights of Winner (1996), Bloom (1985), and Galton (1892), coupled with evidence gathered by the current investigation and its forerunners, suggest that, in every field, grit may be as essential as talent to high accomplishment. If substantiated, this conclusion has several practical implications: First, children who demonstrate exceptional commitment to a particular goal should be supported with as many resources as those identified as “gifted and talented.” Second, as educators and parents, we should encourage children to work not only with intensity but also with stamina. In particular, we should prepare youth to anticipate failures and misfortunes and point out that excellence in any discipline requires years and years of time on task. Finally, liberal arts universities that encourage undergraduates to sample broadly should recognize the ineluctable trade-off between breadth and depth. To paraphrase Benjamin Franklin, the goal of an education is not just to learn a little about a lot but also a lot about a little.

References


Received October 31, 2005
Revision received December 27, 2006
Accepted January 10, 2007
ABA Resilience Training Video link:

http://s3.amazonaws.com/AKIAJLYL5SVQXLE4XG3Q-0-ABA/16-12-19-65192-CE1612F5S%20Fierce%20Gritty%20Resilience%20Training%20for%20Lawyers.mp4
RESILIENCE SKILL SET

The full Penn Resilience Program includes a set of 18 empirically supported skills that build cognitive and emotional fitness, strength of character, and strong relationships. The skills included in each program vary based on the needs of the client and length of the program. Each skill targets one or more of the following resilience competencies.

Program Teaching Methods:

This highly experiential program includes a variety of practical learning methodologies. Participants have extensive opportunities to “learn by doing,” where they practice the resilience skills and receive feedback from instructors.

- Programs include large group presentations followed by breakout sessions. In the large group presentations, the instructor introduces each resilience skill via lectures, group discussions, demonstrations of the skill, videos, and Q&A.
• Large group presentations are followed by breakout sessions of about 30 participants per group. Participants have opportunities to practice using the skills through practical exercises (and practice teaching the skills in the train-the-trainer programs), and receive personalized feedback from instructors.

• Individual and partner exercises facilitate skill mastery by enabling participants to practice the resilience skills and identify strategies for immediate application in their personal and professional lives.

• Penn has a proven train-the-trainer model, in which we train people how to teach the resilience skills to others. We have effectively trained more than 50,000 trainers who have diverse educational and subject matter backgrounds. School teachers that we have trained have gone on to teach the resilience skills to more than 150,000 school students. Army soldiers we have trained have taught resilience skills to hundreds of thousands of military personnel.

• This train-the-trainer model is scalable and sustainable - each trainer we train can teach the resilience skills to hundreds if not thousands of people over time.

© 2018 The Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania
Latinas are members of the largest and fastest growing minority group in the United States. Despite this, they appear to be the most disproportionately underrepresented attorney group within the legal profession, especially at the profession’s highest levels. Recognizing the significance of this endemic problem, this chapter advances a framework that demonstrates how the intersection of certain factors related to Latina attorneys’ status as ethnically and racially diverse women may negatively impact their educational attainment, career choice, and ultimate career success in the legal profession. As such, these factors serve, both individually and collectively, to perpetuate Latinas continued underrepresentation across the various legal sectors. The empirical results from the two recent research studies conducted by the Hispanic National Bar Association Commission on the Status of Latinas in the Legal Profession, as well as other related and supporting research and theory on this population, provide the basis for this theoretical examination of the challenges and catalysts to their educational and career development processes, as well as recommendations aimed at helping Latinas achieve successful and satisfying attorney careers.

Introduction

Up until the early 1970s, the legal profession in the United States reflected pervasive gender, ethnic, racial, and even religious barriers that all but limited participation to male, Caucasian, and Protestant lawyers (Garth and Sterling, 2009; Heinz, Nelson, and Laumann, 2001). As the United States workforce as a whole has become more diverse, the demographic makeup of the practicing bar has changed as well, witnessing increased percentages of
women and racial and ethnic minorities entering its ranks. However, these growth rates have materially lagged those of most other professional sectors. Indeed, even today, many of the same barriers still exist for women, as well as racial and ethnically diverse lawyers, which, in turn, continue to negatively impact their entry, retention, and advancement in the legal profession (American Bar Association Presidential Initiative Commission on Diversity, 2010; Bierman and Hitt, 2007; Nelson, Dinovitzer, Plickert, Sandefur, and Sterling, 2009; Wilder, 2008).

To reflect the increased and growing diversity of this nation, the legal industry must work to improve the educational pipeline and career pathway for women and racial minorities to facilitate their entrance into the profession and accession to its upper echelons. As noted in a report by the American Bar Association Presidential Initiative Commission on Diversity (2010), a compelling argument for increased diversity in the legal profession is that a more diverse bar and judiciary foster greater trust in government and the rule of law, because lawyers and judges have the unique responsibility for maintaining a political system with broad citizen participation. Another rationale advanced by this report centers on its business necessity. Specifically, in today’s global economy, legal matters often take on multinational and cross-cultural dimensions. As such, lawyers who demonstrate broader cultural awareness and greater linguistic proficiency can achieve a more optimal competitive and representational posture. Thus, the business case for greater gender and racial diversity within the legal profession, especially at the more senior levels, is that it is also competitively advantageous.

Notwithstanding the shortfall and calls for a more diverse attorney base, significant ethnic, racial, and gender barriers continue to impede the full representation and professional success of women attorneys of color1 (American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession, 2006a; American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession, 2006b; Bagati, 2009). However, as compared to all other major racial and ethnic groups, there is recent evidence suggesting that Latina attorneys2 are the most disproportionately underrepresented attorney group within the legal profession, especially at the highest levels (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz, Molina, and Rivera, 2010).

Recognizing the acute nature of this problem, this chapter focuses on relevant research and theory related to Latinas’ status as racially and ethnically diverse women and how this plays out in the elite context of the legal profession. This includes a theoretical examination of how barriers related to Latina attorneys’ educational attainment, career choice, and subsequent career retention and advancement in the legal profession may contribute to their underrepresentation in the legal profession, as well as insight into some of the factors that enabled many Latina attorneys to overcome these obstacles. Finally recommendations are offered to provide educational, business, and legal institutions and its decision-makers with evidence-based strategies for helping Latinas succeed in achieving success in their educational- and career-related goals.

---

1 The term “of color” is an umbrella term used for non-White women and men including those who are Latina/o, African-American (Black), Asian-American, Native American, or multiracial (i.e., American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession, 2006b).

2 Although the term “Hispanic American” and “Latina/o” are often used interchangeably, the terms “Latina,” “Latino,” and “Latina/o(s),” are used herein to refer specifically to individuals who self-identify as being of Latin American, rather than Spanish, descent. Latin America includes, but is not limited to Central America, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and South America.
Given the relative scarcity of research and theory focusing on Latina/o professionals in the United States (Blancero, DelCampo, and Marron, 2007), this chapter contributes to the career-development literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of the career-related barriers and supports to Latina attorneys’ career success and also responds to the need for more focused attention on how both gender and cultural variables are related to the career development of racial and ethnic minorities (Flores, Berkel et al., 2006). Through this framework, it is hoped that more effective strategies can be developed to increase the pipeline of Latinas entering the legal profession and to enhance their achievement of successful and satisfying legal careers.

**THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF LATINA ATTORNEYS**

Latinas are members of the largest and fastest growing minority group in the United States, constituting 7.45% of the total population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, June 2010). Notwithstanding this notable presence and growth, there has not been a corresponding increase in the proportion of Latina/os within professional occupational ranks in general (Blancero et al., 2007; Kochhar, 2005; Mundra, Moellmer, and Lopez-Aqueres, 2003), or within the legal profession in particular (American Bar Association, 2009; Davila, 1987; Malpica and Espana, 2003; Mendez and Martinez, 2002; U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2003). This is especially evident with respect to Latina attorneys, who by recent estimate comprise only 1.04% of the nation’s lawyers (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009).

Latinas are woefully underrepresented in each of the principal legal sectors (i.e., private law firms, corporate law departments, the judiciary, legal academia, and the public interest sector). Within the largest of these sectors – private practice law firms, where the majority of all attorneys are employed (American Bar Association, 2009) - Latinas constitute a mere 0.44% of partners, and 1.95% of associates (National Association of Legal Placement, 2011), which is considerably less than any other majority or minority group, as compared to their actual presence in the United States population. Similarly, according to the Minority Corporate Counsel Association’s (2010) survey of women general counsel, Latina attorneys comprise only 0.6% of the general counsel of Fortune 500 companies and only 0.2% in the Fortune 501—1000 companies. The American Association of Law Schools recently reported that Latinas account for only 3.4% of full-time law school faculty (Abdullina, 2009). Furthermore, there is some evidence to support that this same situation exists for Latina attorneys employed in the judiciary (Cruz and Molina, 2010) and the public interest sector of the legal profession (Cruz et al., 2010), which includes both government and non-government employers.

The pronounced lack of Latina attorneys across the legal profession, especially in leadership roles, is particularly troublesome and demands deeper attention. Specifically, there is a need to more closely examine the Latina attorneys’ career development process to learn how these women’s unique sociocultural, contextual, and individual factors may serve as either challenges or catalysts to their educational achievement, and career choice and subsequent retention and advancement within the legal profession.
LATINA ATTORNEYS’ CAREER DEVELOPMENT

To better understand why so few Latinas are employed in the legal profession, particularly at the most senior levels, it is important to identify the key obstacles and supports to their educational and career development process. The appropriateness of applying most existing models of career development to the experience of Latina attorneys is disputable, because most research in this field has been conducted on samples of White men and fails to consider the unique factors and values encountered by women and racioethnic minorities in this process (Arbona, 1995; Flores, Berkel et al., 2006; Fouad, 1995; Luzzo and McWhirter, 2001; Osipow and Fitzgerald, 1996). Moreover, most theories of career choice and development are rooted in logical positivism, which assumes occupational decisions take place in a neutral environment and ignores any underlying cultural context (Brown, 2002a). Furthermore, Brown (2002c) posits that cultural and work values are the key variables that influence career choice, as well as satisfaction and success. However, other life roles, including those related to family, may also influence many aspects of one’s career development.

Several authors have advanced the need to consider alternative conceptions of the career development process for Latina/os and other ethnic minorities. Marin and Marin (1991) identify demographic characteristics, including gender, socioeconomic status, and level of education, as well as cultural factors such as migration history and acculturation level, as especially relevant to the career development of Latina/os. Furthermore, Arbona (1995) advances a framework that demonstrates how socioeconomic status and generational level, in particular, influence educational and vocational choice and achievement for Latina/o populations.

For Latinas in particular, there is considerable support for the differential impact of gender and cultural identity variables on their educational and career development (Armijo, 2009; Cardoso and Marques, 2008; Flores, Navarro, and Ojeda, 2006; Gomez et al., 2001; Gushue and Whitson, 2006; Hite, 2007; Rivera, Chen, Flores, Blumberg, and Ponterotto, 2007). For example, in their qualitative study of high achievement Latinas in a variety of industries, Gomez, et al. (2001) found that Latinas’ career paths are different from women of other cultures because of the unique environments from which their careers emerge. In acknowledgment of this difference, the study’s authors propose a “career life-path” model of Latinas’ career development that is shaped by the interaction among individual, cultural-familial, contextual, and sociopolitical variables that contribute to or detract from their career progression. More recently, Hite (2007) offers a “career possibilities” framework to illustrate how cultural and family-instilled values, structural barriers, and generational status influence the career options for Latinas in managerial and professional positions.

While this and other research provide a starting point to understand the unique career development process for Latinas in professional positions, they do not specifically examine the obstacles and supports to the educational attainment, career choice, and ultimate retention and advancement of Latina attorneys employed in one of the most elite professions in the United States – the legal profession.
There is a significant amount of literature on the career-related experiences and challenges encountered by women attorneys (Buonocore Porter, 2006; Dau-Schmidt, Galanter, Mukhopadhyay, and Hull, 2009; Epstein, 1993; Gorman, 2005; Harrington and Hsi, 2007; Kay and Gorman, 2008; Laband and Lentz, 1993; Laband and Lentz, 1998; Rhode, 2001; Rikleen, 2006; Scharf and Flom, 2010; Stanford, 2009; Wilder, 2007; Williams, 2007), women attorneys of color (American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession, 2006b; American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession, 2008; Bagati, 2009), and even African American women attorneys (Blair-Loy and Dehart, 2003; Burleigh, 1988; Reeves, 2001). However, until recently, there has been very limited empirical research conducted on Latina attorneys’ experiences and perceptions in terms of their educational and career development.

Several qualitative studies (Ebben and Gaier, 1998; Garcia-Lopez, 2008; Garcia-Lopez and Segura, 2008) have attempted to fill this void by exploring the perceptions and experiences of a small number of Chicana attorneys in the legal profession. While these studies are a clear step in the right direction, they are of limited scope and scale, focusing only on a very discreet segment of the Latina population and not necessarily reflective of the professional experiences and perceptions of the broader and more heterogeneous Latina attorney population across the United States.

The HNBA Commission Studies

In an attempt to further bridge this research gap, the Hispanic National Bar Association’s Commission on the Status of Latinas in the Legal Profession (HNBA Commission) commissioned a national study on Latina attorneys working within the legal profession in the United States to document their demographic and professional status and to explore how their formative and career-related experiences contribute to the continued underrepresentation of Latina attorneys in the legal profession. This landmark study, entitled Few and Far Between: The Reality of Latina Lawyers by Jill Lynch Cruz and Melinda Molina (2010), was the first of its kind to shed light on the factors impeding Latinas’ entry, retention, and advancement within the legal profession, as well as provide some insight into the practices and strategies the Latina attorneys who participated in the study believe are critical for Latinas to succeed in their educational and career-related pursuits. This mixed-method study gathered qualitative and quantitative data on over 600 Latina attorneys from across the United States employed primarily in law firms, corporate law offices, the judiciary, government, and legal academia.

On the heels of this broad-based study, the HNBA Commission published a follow-up report entitled La Voz de la Abogada Latina: Challenges and Rewards in Serving the Public Interest. This report summarized the more granular analysis conducted on the status and experiences of over 200 Latina attorneys employed in the public interest sector of the legal profession, a segment of the Latina attorney population not well represented in the earlier HNBA Commission study.

3 The term Chicana is a regional term used primarily in Texas and California to refer to women of Mexican descent. Chicanas are a subset of the Latina population.
Authored by Jill Lynch Cruz, Melinda Molina, and Jenny Rivera (2010), this study explored and analyzed the perceptions and experiences of those Latina attorneys employed in legal service offices, public defenders’ offices, prosecutors’ offices, civil rights offices and other nonprofit organizations that provide legal representation and assistance to marginalized individuals and communities throughout the country. While the professional challenges of this sector of the United States legal profession were largely undocumented up to this point, this study provides additional empirical research on this relatively understudied segment of the attorney population and gives a voice to those women who have ‘shaped United States legal jurisprudence in a variety of areas, including civil rights, immigrants’ rights, the rights of the accused, and consumer rights and have successfully protected and sought to expand constitutional rights and guarantees” (Cruz et al., 2010, p. 7).

To develop a framework for understanding how the Latina educational and career development process contributes to the underrepresentation of Latinas in the legal profession, the empirical results from the two HNBA Commission Studies, as well as other related and supporting research conducted on this population, provide the basis for identifying the key obstacles and critical success factors to a Latina attorneys’ educational achievement and career choice, as well as those that contribute to or detract from the Latina attorneys’ retention and advancement in the legal profession. By examining the formative and professional experiences and perceptions of those who have achieved their educational and career-related goals, we can better understand the primary reasons why Latinas may be thwarted in pursuing and achieving attorney roles, as well as gain insight into how others have successfully navigated these obstacles to achieve successful careers as attorneys.

As noted by Wilder (2003), the pathway to the legal profession is cumulative in that each step is dependent upon successful attainment of the previous one. Therefore, because education achievement is a fundamental milestone in this path to the legal profession, it is imperative to first examine the potential barriers Latinas face in their educational journey up to and including law school.

**CHALLENGES TO EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT**

The dearth of Latinas in the legal profession is rooted in large part to barriers that exists along their educational pipeline. A significant amount of research on the career development of Latinas has pointed to a lack of educational attainment as one of the most significant impediments to their access to professional positions including those in the legal profession (Davila, 1987; Fry, 2004; Fry, 2010; Gandara, 1982; Gloria, Castellanos, and Orozco, 2005; Herrera, 2002; Mendez and Martinez, 2002; Mundra et al., 2003).

Latinas do least well at each point of the educational trajectory and have the least successful educational transition rates across all groups. This is evidenced in the finding that Latina/os tend to have lower high school graduation rates and are less likely to attend college than their non-Latina/o peers (Malpica and Espana, 2003). In fact, as racioethnic group, Latina/os, especially those who are foreign-born, have significantly higher high school drop-out rates and are less likely to have a General Educational Development (GED) credential than Blacks or Whites (Fry, 2010). Moreover, while Latinas are the fastest growing group of school-aged female youth, they are nearly twice as unlikely as their White female
Latinas in the Legal Profession

counterparts to graduate from high school on time and with the same standard diploma (National Women's Law Center and Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, 2009). Consequently, Latina/os are underrepresented at all levels of postsecondary education (Chacón, 2008; Davila, 1987; Fouad, 1995; Fry, 2004; Herrera, 2002; Malpica and Espana, 2003; Solorzano, Villalpando, and Oseguera, 2005).

Latinas may be disadvantaged educationally, in part, because of their relatively lower socioeconomic status (Flores, Navarro et al., 2006; Fry and Gonzales, 2008; Herrera, 2002; Phinney, Dennis, and Gutierrez, 2005; Sedillo Lopez, 2005). Latina/o youth are more likely to live in poverty (Fry and Gonzales, 2008), and encounter limited economic resources to fund educational pursuits (McWhirter, Torres, Salgado, and Valdez, 2007). A recent study by the National Women's Law Center and Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (2009) explains that Latinas who live in poverty are at risk educationally because they have limited educational opportunities and resources, as well as limited access to early childhood education programs. They also are likely to attend more crowded schools with less experienced teachers and have less access to rigorous academic and enrichment programs. Furthermore, they are more likely to change or drop out of school, and have inadequate and fewer resources that contribute to academic success. Johnson and Mortimer (2002) also find that adolescents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are also more likely to invest in paid work and vocational training during high school, which ultimately hinders their academic performance and ultimate educational attainment.

For those Latinas who do attend college, they tend to pursue different educational paths. According to Fry (2004), Latina/os are more likely to attend postsecondary institutions that are less selective and have lower undergraduate completion rates than similarly prepared non-Latina/o Whites. Furthermore, Latina/os are more likely to attend two-year community colleges and enroll in college part-time at a greater rate than any comparable group. Therefore, even though they may be entering college in higher absolute numbers than years past, Latina/o graduation rates from an accredited four-year institution remain very low. This finding is also reflected in a report by the Law School Admission Council (Wilder, 2003), which found that Hispanics had considerably lower college completion rates than their White or African American cohorts.

There are also differences in the attainment of postsecondary degrees among women from the various Latina ethnic groups. Historically, Latinas of Cuban descent have had the highest postsecondary graduation rates, while women of Mexican descent have generally had the lowest (Flores, Navarro et al., 2006). Similarly, Arbona (1995) found that Cubans and Central and South Americans have had the highest proportion of college degrees, whereas Mexican and Puerto Rican youth have historically had the highest drop-out rates. However, he also argues that socioeconomic status and generational level are more influential than ethnicity per se in that more recent generations and those of higher socioeconomic status generally have higher levels of academic and occupational achievement.

The constriction of the pipeline of Latinas to the legal profession continues for the relatively few who do graduate from college and aspire to attend law school. This is reflected in the fact that Latina/os, in particular, often face disproportionately lower application, enrollment, and matriculation rates at American Bar Association-accredited law schools (American Bar Association, 2005; Wilder, 2003). One important reason for this disparity is that very few Latina/os are even eligible to apply to law school in the first place. Latinas who are economically disadvantaged or who have not had adequate educational opportunities may
not develop the appropriate skills or adequate preparation that is foundational to their legal training. This sentiment is supported by Herrera (2002), who argues that a significant barrier to law school for Latina/os is that they are often denied equal access to education and not as well-prepared in terms of their exposure to the cultural knowledge or critical thinking skills that are necessary in higher education.

In addition to low college enrollment and attainment rates, Malpica and Espana (2003) argue that admissions criteria and policies adhered to by most law schools screen out a disproportionate number of Latina/os. These policies favor majority and wealthier applicants and overemphasize Law School Admission Tests (LSAT) scores, which along with other forms of standardized testing, contain inherent cultural biases. While the validity of using LSAT scores and other academic measures including undergraduate grade-point averages (UGPAs) as predictors of law school performance have been the subject of much analysis and debate, including that these measures are not necessarily predictive of ultimate career success as an attorney (Wightman, 2000), it is well established that students of color, and in particular Latina/os, tend to have significantly lower scores on these measures than those of non-Latina/o White students (Wightman, 1998; Wilder, 2003).

The decrease in Latinas in law school over the past two decades may also be due in part to relatively recent repeals of affirmative action programs in institutions of higher learning (Mendez and Martinez, 2002). As an outgrowth of the Civil Rights Movement, affirmative action programs were put into place during the late 1960s to increase the proportion of women and minorities in higher education, including public law schools. Kidder (2003) argues that ending race-sensitive admissions at public law schools in two of the largest Latina/o populated states (i.e., California and Texas) has had significant negative consequences for Latina/os because they have historically served as the primary feeder schools for the majority of Latina/os entering the legal profession.

While considerable research demonstrates how the lack of Latinas in law school is rooted in their socioeconomic and academic difficulties, Latina law students also face non-academic and psychosocial obstacles including feelings of self-doubt, lack of confidence in their intellectual capabilities, bicultural stress, discrimination, gender-role attitudes and stereotyping, and feelings of loneliness and isolation (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Ebben and Gaier, 1998; Herrera, 2002; Sedillo Lopez, 2005). Furthermore, Martinez et al. (2004) provides evidence that Latina/o students experience more discrimination and institutional barriers related to their school experiences as compared to non-Latina/os.

Several studies demonstrate some of these challenges experienced by Latina attorneys in law school. For example, in their qualitative study of the experiences of successful Chicana attorneys in Texas, Ebben and Gaier (1998) found that the women in their study encountered significant difficulties including examples of overt racism by their law school professors. In a study of Hispanic law students, Foley and Kidder (2002) found evidence that female law students anticipated more discrimination in the legal profession than male students, which ultimately influenced perceptions of future promotion fairness, satisfaction levels with their career choice, and ultimate career prospects. More recently, Cruz and Molina (2010) describe how Latina attorneys in their study were often subjected to institutionalized discouragement in college and in law school in that they were encouraged by teachers and school counselors to pursue less competitive paths because they did not believe they could achieve their educational goals.
Herrera (2002) underscores how negative messages and assumptions about Latina law students’ capabilities can manifest into psychological barriers, including lack of self-confidence and fear of failure. In this sense, these psychological barriers Latina law students face in their educational pursuits may negatively contribute to their occupational and academic self-efficacy expectations, which are predictive of career choice and academic achievement for Latina/os (Arbona, 1995). These negative self-beliefs may prevent some Latinas from pursuing riskier educational or career paths that may be perceived as more challenging (Flores, Navarro et al., 2006).

These findings echo other research that suggests that Latinas are often disadvantaged in their quest because they often face more stressful educational experiences due to “lack of finances, lower familial support, few mentors, cultural stereotypes, inhospitable campus climates, and a sense of cultural misfit [that] influence their college navigation” (Gloria, Castellanos, and Orozco, 2005, p. 162). Phinney et al. (2005) also observe how Latina/o youth are more frequently first generation college students and therefore deal with more complex educational decisions and numerous challenges that limit their chance of attending or completing college. Flores, Navarro et al. (2006) add that Latinas’ negative perceptions of campus climate can lead to academic nonpersistence decisions as well.

Cruz and Molina’s (2010) study also provides an example of how Latinas’ experiences in college and law school contributed to the challenges they faced. The Latina attorneys in their study were often members of the first generation in their families to attend law school, or even college, and often experienced feelings of bicultural stress. Furthermore, as one of the few, if any, Latinas on their school campuses, the women often struggled with feelings of isolation and loneliness and felt alienated and disadvantaged, both socially and academically, from their non-Latina peers.

The previous evidence clearly demonstrates how the dearth of Latina attorneys in the legal profession is due in large part to a limited pipeline of candidates for these roles. Latinas are found to have high academic aspirations (Gloria, Castellanos, and Orozco, 2005; National Women's Law Center and Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, 2009); however, this evidence illustrates how their relatively lower educational attainment levels may severely limit the pool of Latinas who are eligible to gain admission to law school – a key prerequisite to entry into the legal profession as an attorney. Furthermore, other factors, including bicultural stress, cultural stereotypes, lack of self-confidence, and feelings of isolation may further impede Latinas’ academic persistence as well. However, Latinas are not only limited in pursuing careers in the legal profession due to obstacles along their educational pathway, but also due to factors that restrict their career choice as well.

**CHALLENGES TO CAREER CHOICE**

While many Latinas face significant educational-related burdens, they may be hampered in their consideration and pursuit of careers in the legal profession due lack of information and exposure, as well as certain cultural and gender inhibitors that circumscribe career choice. The HNBA Commission Studies (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010) report that many may be hindered from even considering careers as lawyers because they have limited or no exposure to attorneys or the legal profession during their formative years. In particular, Cruz
and Molina (2010) found that many of the Latinas did not consider the legal profession as a viable career option before or even during college and, therefore, their route to the legal profession was indirect – a serendipitous result of timing and chance rather than as an intentional pursuit of a legal career. This is consistent with Gomez et al.’s (2001) career life-path model that illustrates how Latinas’ career paths tend to be unplanned and nonlinear.

In addition to the lack of exposure to the legal profession and visible attorney role models throughout their formative years, aspects of their cultural identity may also play a role in Latinas’ consideration of attorney careers. In particular, Flores, Navarro et al. (2006) suggest that the career behavior of Latinas can be understood by their degree of adherence to certain Latina/o cultural values, which, as noted by Brown (2002b), is an important factor in occupational choice.

In contrast to the values of individuality and independence stressed in the dominant Anglo culture, Latina/os, as members of collectivist cultures (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, and Dasen, 2002; Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005), often place a high value on familismo (Arbona, 1995), which prioritizes the needs of family before personal needs and is central to shaping their career decisions and behaviors (Arbona, 1995; Flores, Navarro et al., 2006; Sy and Romero, 2008). Latinas also encounter strong cultural and gender norms that their primary role is to support their families and are also expected to provide care for extended family members, such as parents and elders (DelCampo, Rogers, and Hinrichs, 2010).

Individuals with collective social values may defer to or be heavily influenced by the expectations from family members in their career decision-making process (Brown, 2002b). This may result in career decisions based on the expectations or needs of family members, especially parents (Flores, Berkel et al., 2006). Moreover, Sy and Romero (2008) also describe how Latinas’ strong orientation to family, while a source of encouragement, can also result in lower college success rates because of their multiple role responsibilities and expectations.

In addition to the importance of family on Latinas’ career choice, research on Latinas’ career development suggests that they may also view the world of work differently because of their gender-role socialization within their Latino communities and families (Flores, Navarro et al., 2006). Within the patriarchal Latino culture, women are expected to assume more traditionally feminine roles and careers, which are also viewed as secondary to those of men (Flores, Navarro et al., 2006; Fouad, 1995).

These prevailing norms may result in occupational segregation by gender, or serve to limit Latinas’ educational and career goals because of the priority assigned to familial needs and expectations. Furthermore, for those who hold collective social values, vocational choices are more likely to be restricted to stereotypically male or female roles (Brown, 2002b). In this way, Latina attorneys may be inhibited in pursuing non-traditional careers because they do not conform to gendered and culturally determined ideals. This is reflected in the finding by Cruz and Molina (2010) that throughout the Latina attorneys’ formative years and even in college, many reported feeling pressure from their families and supporting communities to assume more traditional feminine roles and responsibilities. These cultural expectations may lead to circumscription of career choice for some Latinas because they are discouraged from pursuing non-traditional or male-dominated careers, such as those in the legal profession.

While certain gender and cultural influences may limit Latinas’ educational- and career-related considerations, it appears that other aspects of their cultural identity may serve to moderate these values. Level of acculturation is one key component of one’s ethnic identity
Latinas in the Legal Profession

(Gong, Takeuchi, Agbayani-Siewert, and Tacata, 2003), especially for Hispanic Americans (Arbona, 1995), and is defined as the process by which immigrants adapt to the sociocultural and psychological aspects of the host society (Berry et al., 2002). The acculturation process occurs when Hispanic individuals migrate into the new culture of the United States and integrate the values, beliefs, and practices of the new society, while also maintaining the values, beliefs, and practices of their original Hispanic culture (Siatkowski, 2007).

While the concept of acculturation is a complex and iterative process involving the interaction between two cultures, Latinas’ degree of identification with the traditional Latino culture may moderate the degree to which their cultural values impact aspects of their educational achievement and career choice. Marin and Gamba (2003) found that acculturation does alter certain values and beliefs of certain ethnic group members, especially as it pertains to sex-role attitudes and some components of familialism. Anglo-oriented acculturation has also been found to be positively related to educational goal aspirations, expectations, and achievement (Flores, Berkel et al., 2006; Flores, Navarro, and DeWitz, 2008; Martinez et al., 2004). Furthermore, there is support for the positive association between degree of acculturation to the dominant Anglo culture and Latinas’ aspiration to enter male-dominated careers (Reyes, Kobus, and Gillock, 1999), more egalitarian sex role attitudes (Phinney and Flores, 2002), and fewer perceived barriers and greater sense of belonging (Valencia and Johnson, 2006).

This evidence suggests that aspects of Latinas’ gender and cultural identity, including contextual and individual factors, cultural-familial values and expectations, self-efficacy beliefs, culturally gendered norms, as well as their degree of acculturation to the dominant Anglo culture, may uniquely influence their career choice, especially as it relates to the consideration and pursuit of legal careers. While some of these factors may restrict career choice for some Latinas, a small number have successfully navigated these challenges in their consideration and achievement of attorney careers. However, once within the legal profession, many continue to counter significant barriers that challenge their retention and advancement in their respective attorney roles, which may ultimately detract from their career success.

**CHALLENGES TO CAREER SUCCESS**

In addition to obstacles that impede Latinas’ educational goals and career choice, the results of the HNBA Commission Studies (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz and Molina, 2010) provide evidence that Latina attorneys have relatively lower levels of objective career success in that they are poorly represented in leadership positions across all major legal sectors, and there is some indication that they are at disproportionately lower compensation levels as compared to their non-Latina counterparts. Furthermore, in both studies, the majority of the participants indicated that they do not believe that others have a positive perception of them as attorneys and they are not afforded the same opportunities to advance in their careers as compared to their non-Latina peers. The findings from the HNBA Commission and related research on Latina attorneys’ professional experiences serve as insight into some of the key barriers and supports to their legal careers.
Multi-Layered Glass Ceiling

The two HNBA Commission Studies (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010) demonstrate how Latina attorneys’ careers are negatively impacted by a “multi-layered glass ceiling” based on the intersectionality of their gender, ethnicity, and race that act as a “triple threat” to their retention and advancement within the legal profession. While some research does consider how Latina attorneys encounter “double oppression” based on their gender and ethnicity (Ebben and Gaier, 1998), Cruz and Molina (2010) offer a significant implication for considering Latina attorneys’ gender, ethnicity, and race as three separate, but intersecting constructs that work together to contribute to the barriers these women encounter.

Browne and Misra’s (2003) note how an intersectional perspective demonstrates how the experiences of Latinas in the workforce reflect social constructions of gender that are racialized, as well as social constructions of race that are gendered as well. As such, Latinas’ experiences of discrimination and stereotyping by race and gender are different than those experienced by Latinos, as well as their non-LatinaWhite female counterparts. Citing the Multiple Jeopardy-Multiple Advantage hypothesis, Browne and Misra consider the volume of research that demonstrates this point in that Latina and Black women have the least authority in the workplace and remain at the bottom of the labor market reward structure. This, they theorize, is due to fact that “individuals who occupy the lowest position on two or more social categories – such as female and Latina – will experience the most disadvantage of any group and possess the least amount of economic resources and rewards” (p. 493).

For those employed in the legal profession, research supports how women attorneys of color have different experiences due to the intersectionality of their race and gender that work together to negatively impact their workplace experiences and opportunities for career advancement (American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession, 2006b; Bagati, 2009; Blair-Loy and Dehart, 2003; Burleigh, 1988; Reeves, 2001). However, because most intersectional theories focus on White and Black men and women (Browne and Misra, 2003), it appears that less is known about the role of ethnicity in this relationship, as well as how its intersection impacts the workforce experiences of particular ethnic groups, including Latinas.

Gender-Related Barriers

While aspects of these three demographic characteristics are necessarily intertwined, the HNBA Commission Studies (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010) found that Latina attorneys encounter significant obstacles related to gender discrimination and bias that negatively impact their career retention and advancement. Throughout their legal careers, Latina attorneys across the legal profession encounter overt and subtle forms of sexism that foster inhospitable workplaces and gendered expectations and assumptions about their professional qualifications and roles that cast doubts on their capabilities and appropriateness for leadership positions.

4 Intersectionality examines how the combination of race, sex, class, national origin, and sexual orientation play out in certain settings and is a fundamental aspect of Critical Race Theory in general (see Delgado & Stefancic, 2001) and Critical Race Feminism (see Wing, 2003) in particular, which emphasizes the role of gender in these relationships.
Gender is often viewed as one of the most basic social divides in organizations and prescribed gendered roles limit women’s participation in highly rewarded roles (Epstein, 2007). Eagly and Carli (2007) observe how resistance to women’s leadership is strongest in highly masculine domains where leadership positions are rarely occupied by women. Specifically, in the male-dominated context of legal profession, ingrained gender bias and stereotyping contributes to reservations about women’s suitability for high level positions (Rikleen, 2006).

Cruz and Molina (2010) also described how Latina attorneys experience demeaning and condescending treatment by male attorneys, including Latinos. These women found it to be particularly disheartening to face discrimination and negative treatment by not only their male colleagues in general, but also at the hands of men within their own Latino communities. The Latinas in their study referred to this form of gender discrimination and bias as “cultural sexism” because it is rooted in Latino culturally gendered values and beliefs that women in their culture should be home supporting their families rather than working or assuming leadership roles. There is some support for the existence of gender differences in attitudes toward work and family for Latinos. In particular, Gowan and Trevino’s (1998) research concluded that Mexican-American males were significantly more likely than females to hold traditional attitudes toward gender and parental roles.

The Maternal Wall

Cruz and Molina (2010) identified the untenable goal of pursuing both a legal career and motherhood as one of the biggest barriers to Latinas succeeding in the legal profession; however, in their subsequent study of Latinas in the public interest, Cruz et al. (2010) found that Latina attorneys did perceive this sector to be more accommodating of this dual role. Nevertheless, regardless of whether or not the women had children at home, the majority of Latina attorneys in both studies believed that having significant family responsibilities will adversely affect their opportunities for career advancement (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010).

There is an abundance of research to support the negative impact of family responsibilities on women attorneys’ legal careers (American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession, 2006b; Blair-Loy and Dehart, 2003; Boyer, Calvert, and Williams, 2009; Buonocore Porter, 2006; Dau-Schmidt et al., 2009; Harrington and Hsi, 2007; Kay and Gorman, 2008; Rhode, 2003; Rikleen, 2006; Stanford, 2009; Wallace, 2008; Wilder, 2007; Williams, 2007). Recognizing its potential negative impact, many women attorneys believe they must make a choice between being a mother and being an attorney because the high demands in each domain are viewed as mutually exclusive (Korzec, 2000; Krakauer and Chen, 2003).

It is argued that the career consequences of having family responsibilities are not necessarily due to lower productivity or from restrictions of choice, but rather, from negative assumptions and biases of others (Mayrhofer, Meyer, Schifflinger, and Schmidt, 2008). Women are typically viewed from a nonwork, care-giving vantage point, so their nonwork demands are even more salient to workplace colleagues (Hoobler, Hu, and Wilson, 2010). In this way, gender roles and family responsibilities lead to a form of gender discrimination and stereotyping for women attorneys because, after becoming mothers, they are often viewed as
being less committed and ambitious, which negatively impacts evaluations, work assignments, and access to career development opportunities that lead to advancement in the legal profession (Rhode, 2003; Rikleen, 2006; Williams, Bornstein, Reddy, and Williams, 2007).

While many women in the legal profession face similar gender-related challenges, for some Latina attorneys, the barriers posed by their gender may be aggravated by aspects of their cultural identity due to the salience of traditional gender and familial roles within collectivist and patriarchal cultures. Because Latinas are often ascribed responsibility as family care-takers in Latino cultures, they may be more likely to experience conflict between work and family roles (Grzywacz et al. 2007). There also appears to be a disparate impact of work-family conflict by gender for Latina/os. Rodriguez (2009) found evidence that Latinas experienced significantly more work-family conflict than Latinos; whereas, Roehling, Jarvis, and Swope (2005) found evidence of greater gender disparity in negative work-to-family spillover for Latina/os as compared to Blacks and Whites, especially when children were present in the home. Furthermore, because the overall Latina population in the United States has higher fertility rates than their non-Latina peers (Gonzales, 2008; Pew Hispanic Center, 2010), and are stereotypically viewed as family-oriented (DelCampo and Hinrichs, 2006), they may be more likely to be perceived as having significant family responsibilities, which may also contribute to increased gender- and cultural-related stereotypes and bias.

As noted by Ashforth, Kreiner, and Fugate (2000), an individual’s experiences in work and family domains are influenced by norms and values related to the cultural meaning and enactment of work and family. While certain aspects of the Latinas’ cultural identity may further contribute to this negative relationship between family responsibilities and work-family conflict, it may also contribute to the positive interdependencies between work and family including work-family facilitation, especially as it relates to career satisfaction. Whereas individualist cultures such as the United States may view the work and family domains as conflicting (Spector et al., 2007), this may not necessarily be the case for members of collectivist cultures who view the roles of work and family as reinforcing (Yang, Chen, Choi, and Zou, 2000). Furthermore, cultural beliefs, especially those based in collectivism and gender ideology, may attenuate experiences and outcomes of work-family conflict. In particular, DelCampo, Rogers and Hinrichs (2010) found that those Hispanic business professionals who more closely identify with the traditional Hispanic culture may experience a positive relationship between work-to-family conflict and job satisfaction because managing the multiple responsibilities associated with family responsibilities may simultaneously bring a sense of pride and satisfaction in both the family and work domains.

Latinas’ adherence to traditional sex-role attitudes, as well as their experiences and perceptions of their work and family roles may also be influenced by their level of acculturation to the United States (DelCampo and Hinrichs, 2006; Marin and Gamba, 2003). Those who are native born or who are more English language dominant are thought to be more highly acculturated to the dominant Anglo culture (Arbona, 1995; Brown, 2002c; Marin and Marin, 1991). Because the majority of Latina attorneys from the two HNBA Commission Studies (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010) were born and educated in the United States and consider English to be their primary language, there is some evidence that on the whole, they are likely to be more acculturated than the general Latina population in the United States. Therefore, they may be less likely to adhere to cultural gendered norms associated with the Latino culture, which emphasize the primacy of motherhood over career
roles. This is reflected in the finding that while the majority of Latina attorneys in both of the HNBA Commission Studies (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010) were married and in their prime child-bearing years, they were less likely to have children, and of those who did, they typically had only one or two. Furthermore, an overwhelming majority worked full-time and more than half of the women in the study by Cruz and Molina (2010) were the primary income-earner for their families.

Devaluation of Qualifications and Legitimacy

The Latina participants in the HNBA Commission Studies (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010) also believed that their legitimacy, qualifications, and abilities as attorneys are often questioned or devalued by their employers, co-workers, clients, and the general population. Despite having graduated from elite law schools with high academic achievement, many of the Latina attorneys struggled to overcome perceptions that they were not as smart or qualified as others in the legal profession. They also combated lingering assumptions that their admittance into law school and entry and advancement into the legal profession were more likely a function of affirmative action and diversity objectives than their actual merit or ability. Even within the public interest sector, with its espoused commitment to increased diversity and inclusion, the Latina attorneys encountered presumptions of inferiority by colleagues that they did not graduate from reputable schools and were not as intelligent as their non-Latina White colleagues (Cruz et al. (2010).

The Latina attorneys attributed these negative perceptions to preconceived gender and ethnic stereotypes about Latina attorneys’ professional capacity and legitimacy as attorneys. According to Cruz et al. (2010), this was especially poignant for Latina attorneys employed in the public interest sector because of prevailing stereotypes held by others and society at large that the professional demands of public interest work are less challenging than, and not as prestigious as, other sectors within the legal profession, especially as compared to those working in private practice. As a result of these perceptions, the HNBA Commission Studies (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010) found that Latina attorneys often believe they must constantly perform at a higher level than their non-Latina counterparts to achieve parity in the workplace. This burden to continually demonstrate their qualifications and legitimize themselves as attorneys has also been reported in related literature describing the challenges experienced by some Latina attorneys (Ebben and Gaier, 1998; Garcia-Lopez and Segura, 2008; Sedillo Lopez, 2005).

Ng et al. (2005) explains that this need to do more to prove credentials may be rooted in different gender role expectations for women. Because women do not benefit from being stable contributors in their organizations, they often believe they must work harder and longer to be recognized and rewarded for their demonstration of commitment to the company. Within the context of the legal profession, this results in “raising the bar” for women lawyers such that they must display greater career commitment than men and adhere to a unique and exceptional set of standards in order to receive the same or smaller rewards (Kay and Hagan, 1998). This is also consistent with Smith’s (2005) finding that, relative to White men, Latinas often have more job-specific and overall work experience prior to receiving a promotion, all else being equal. Interestingly, Cruz and Molina (2010) found that while these perceptions of being less capable and qualified presented a challenge to their credibility as attorneys, some
of the Latina attorneys used this faulty assumption to their advantage as a “secret weapon” strategy to disarm opponents who did not expect them to be as capable or prepared as they actually were.

**Outsiders and Tokens**

As one of the few Latinas within their predominately White and male-dominated legal profession, Latina attorneys report that they are often viewed and treated as “outsiders” or “foreigners” in the courtroom or in their workplaces (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Garcia-Lopez, 2008). Cruz and Molina (2010) noted how some even face strong, but misplaced, anti-immigrant sentiments, where their legal presence in the United States is scrutinized. These experiences of “othering” contribute to their sense of invisibility, isolation, and alienation within the legal profession, which, in turn, disadvantage them socially and professionally, and serve to further limit their access to mentors and influential networks that are critical to their career success.

Cruz and Molina (2010) also found that given the dearth of Latina attorneys in their legal workplaces, many became tokenized and served as “window dressing to potential clients without fulfilling a more substantive role” (p. 42). This tokenism further contributes to the sense of isolation they feel and places an enormous burden on them to be the representative for other Latinas, or even, for all women of color within their workplaces. Kanter (1993) explains that the burdens of tokenism exact their toll in organizational, social and personal ambivalence. She adds that those few who serve as symbols of their category encounter psycho-social difficulties, including stress, frustration, poor self-image, unsatisfactory social relationships and feelings of insecurity, which have significant organizational implications.

Related to their burdens as tokens, the HNBA Commission Studies (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010) report that while their predominant language is English, a majority of Latina attorneys in the United States speak Spanish as well. While their cultural and linguistic abilities provide a considerable benefit to their legal workplaces and are source of personal and professional satisfaction for the Latinas themselves, especially in the public interest sector that services a significant portion of Latino clientele, many Latina attorneys believe these skills are not sufficiently recognized or rewarded by their employers. Furthermore, their bilingual skills often create added non-attorney responsibilities (i.e., translation needs) that many of their non-Latina counterparts do not share. These responsibilities may also serve to marginalize their more substantive legal talents, which may, in turn, inhibit their access to other career development opportunities that lead to career advancement in the legal profession.

**Misidentification**

The HNBA Commission Studies (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010) overwhelmingly demonstrate how Latina attorneys are frequently misidentified as being someone other than attorneys (e.g., interpreters, secretaries, or court reporters) in legal venues or within their legal workplaces, which also reinforces their sense of “otherness” in the legal profession and serves to question and further undermine their professional legitimacy. Other
authors have also noted how this misidentification of Latina attorneys reflects the hierarchical organizational structure of the legal profession along racial, ethnic, gender, and even heterosexual and class lines (Garcia-Lopez, 2008) and is a function of Latinas’ gender, race-ethnicity, accent and even phenotype (Garcia-Lopez and Segura, 2008).

Latina attorneys develop behaviors and practices to minimize misidentification and othering and to establish professional legitimacy. Within their attorney roles, Cruz and Molina (2010) found that Latina attorneys attempt to assimilate themselves to their legal workplaces by adapting their workplace appearance and behaviors to conform more closely to those of majority attorneys. They often mask or disavow certain aspects of their cultural identity, such as wearing more conservative hairstyles, clothing, jewelry, etc., to downplay their ethnicity and conform to what they believe to be the image of the prototypical attorney. This is similar to Ebben and Gaier’s (1998) description of Chicana attorneys’ tendency to adopt more conservative behavior and gender displays enacted by White women lawyers. Related to this desire to achieve mainstream professional ideals, Cruz and Molina (2010) demonstrate how some Latina attorneys take great measures to avoid being pigeon-holed into practice areas or attorney roles that are stereotypically gender- or ethnic-oriented such as immigration or family law.

**Navigating the Cultural Divide**

Latina attorneys must also navigate the significant divide between their cultural and workplace norms, which values are often in opposition. They struggle to find balance in their attempt to obtain legitimacy within a profession defined by masculine and agentic ideals, while still being accountable to the strong cultural and gendered expectations of their Latino communities to demonstrate communal behaviors, as well as the cultural value of *respeto*, by showing deference, reverence, and passivity to Latinos and elders (Flores, Navarro et al., 2006). Specifically, Cruz and Molina (2010) found that Latina attorneys attempt to find an appropriate identity to balance their own cultural value of demonstrating humility and communicating in a nonaggressive style with the dichotomous need to promote and assert themselves in their competitive legal workplaces. As such, the Latinas voiced their concern of how they are either viewed as less competent and lacking self-confidence on the one hand, or being viewed as too aggressive or as a “fiery Latina” on the other. Negotiating a compromise between these two extreme perceptions appeared to be a constant struggle for many.

Garcia-Lopez and Segura (2008) found that the intersection of these two distinct values propels these women to develop a number of strategies, including the presentation of self as dual femininities as a way to navigate this tension between the “shoulds” of Chicana femininities with the “musts” of the legal profession. Analogous to Anzaldúa’s (1987) depiction of a “borderlands” identity adopted by those who live within and encounter contradictory cultures between Mexico and the United States, Latina attorneys appear to develop a hybrid identity to conform to the dominant culture of their workplaces, while still maintaining their own ethnic or cultural identity. While this is a critical survival skill to cope and survive in their legal workplaces, Vera and de Los Santos (2005) argue that the need to

---

5 Phenotype refers to the observable physical and behavioral characteristics of an individual.
constantly vacillate between these two distinct worlds can be difficult, exhausting, and isolating.

**Racial Discrimination**

Latinas are an ethnic group and can be of any race, including White, Black, Asian, and Indigenous or some combination of these (Flores, Navarro et al., 2006; Fouad, 1995). While race and ethnicity are sometimes conflated and treated as the same in studies of women of color in the legal profession (American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession, 2006b; Bagati, 2009; Ebben and Gaier, 1998), Cruz and Molina (2010) advance the need to consider these constructs separate, yet intersecting, aspects of Latina attorneys’ identity that work in combination to contribute to the barriers they encounter. While the majority of Latina attorneys encounter similar gender- and ethnic-related barriers, the HNBA Commission Studies (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010) found that the Latinas’ experiences in the legal profession also vary according to others’ perceptions of their racial-group affiliation as well.

A large proportion of the Latinas in the HNBA Commission Studies (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010) self-identified their race as the indigenous “Mestiza” category, especially those employed in the public interest sector. However, those who believe they can “pass as White,” or whose racial identity conforms more to the Caucasian phenotype, indicate they are treated better and afforded more advancement opportunities in the legal profession than those who display the more stereotypical Latina physical characteristics of having darker skin, hair and eyes. Garcia-Lopez and Segura (2008) also found that light-skinned Chicana attorneys who more closely resemble non-Latina White attorneys report fewer instances of racial discrimination and misidentification than their darker-skinned Chicana counterparts with more indigenous features. This is consistent with other research that demonstrates how prejudice associated with skin-color preference negatively impacts the well-being and life chances for Latinas (Montalvo, 2004).

Cruz and Molina (2010) also found that those who do not display the racial characteristics of a stereotypical Latina phenotype were often questioned or challenged about their Latina ethnicity. Furthermore, these authors noted that those Latina attorneys in their study who self-identified their race as “Caucasian” indicated that they do not necessarily identify racially with their non-Latina White counterparts. In this way, it appears that Latina attorneys’ socially constructed racial identity is closely intertwined with their ethnicity as well.

**Lack of Developmental Relationships and Sponsorship**

The two HNBA Commission Studies (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010) further demonstrate how as ethnically and racially diverse women, Latina attorneys are inhibited in their career development because they often lack access to mentoring relationships, client development opportunities, and occasions to network with influential individuals in their workplaces who can contribute toward their career success and advancement. Even within the public interest sector, which tends to have a greater proportion of women than men overall,
Latina attorneys reported having limited access to professional mentors and sponsors to support and guide them along their career paths (Cruz et al., 2010).

Research has consistently found that developmental relationships, including having a mentor, as well as access to professional networks, are critical to the career success of women attorneys of color (American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession, 2006b; American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession, 2008; Bagati, 2009). Career success is also dependent on receiving sponsorship; however, women and minorities are hindered because certain socio-demographic characteristics (i.e., gender and race) are often used as the basis to allocate this sponsorship (Ng et al., 2005). Furthermore, women and racioethnic minority groups may not be selected for career development due to prevailing gender and racial stereotypes (Kanter, 1993).

Research conducted within the legal profession well illustrates this concept. Women attorneys of color are especially disadvantaged in this way because White men, who are often in the positions of influence and power in their organizations, are not as comfortable around them and therefore do not pursue them as protégés (American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession, 2006b; Bagati, 2009). Consistent with similarity-attraction theory (Fields, Goodman, and Blum, 2005), developmental relationships such as these are rooted in familiarity, identification and comfort and tend to occur more naturally between individuals who are similar (Blancero et al., 2007; Eagly and Carli, 2007). For example, Cruz and Molina (2010) noted that as women and racioethnic minorities working within a White- and male-dominated profession, Latina attorneys often lack commonality with potential mentors. This, therefore, required many to initiate these relationships themselves, which they viewed as a daunting task.

Considering the many challenges Latina attorneys encounter in their pursuit of and throughout their legal careers, it is no wonder they are so disparately underrepresented across the legal profession. However, despite these obstacles, a few have defied the odds and achieved successful careers as lawyers. To that end, several critical success factors have been identified to expand the legal pipeline to Latina candidates and to help them achieve more successful and satisfying legal careers.

**CATALYSTS TO EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER SUCCESS**

This section highlights the critical success factors identified by Latina attorneys across the United States, as well as best practices advanced by legal scholars and other related research to support Latinas in their educational achievement, career choice, and ultimate career success in the legal profession.

**Instilled Value of Education**

Several critical success factors contributing toward the Latina attorneys’ entrée into the legal profession are related to their formative experiences. In both HNBA Commission Studies (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010), it appears that, regardless of their parents’ educational level, financial resources, or professional background, a primary impetus for the
Latina attorneys’ high academic achievement and eventual career choice was rooted in their families’ emphasis on the value of education as a means to a better life and not necessarily in a desire to pursue a legal career per se.

This finding suggests that Latina families, schools, and communities must continue to reinforce the value of education in their children and support them in their academic aspirations and goals. This association between family aspirations and Latina educational and occupational pursuits is also well-supported in the career development literature (Flores, Navarro et al., 2006; Gomez et al., 2001; Ojeda and Flores, 2008; Rivera et al., 2007).

**Pursuit of Social Justice**

In addition to the instilled value of being well-educated, research shows that many Latinas pursue law school and careers in the legal profession as a way to improve society, promote economic and social justice goals, and serve marginalized individuals and communities (Garcia-Lopez, 2008; Garcia-Lopez and Segura, 2008; Wilder, 2008). Reynoso (2005) found Latina/o lawyers cite the values of idealism and social consciousness as an important factor in choosing a career in the legal profession as well. Similarly, in both of the HNBA Commission Studies (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010), the Latina attorneys identified how their early role as cultural and linguistic brokers for their parents, as well as witnesses to the social injustices around them, informed their desire to pursue the legal profession as a way to advocate for marginalized members of their Latino communities and serve as a change agent for improved social justice.

As noted by Cruz et al. (2010), this was particularly poignant for those Latina attorneys working in the public interest sector who closely identified with the experiences of their Latina/o clients, and for some, their stories resonated with their own experiences and those of their family members. While their desire to do good work and help others was cited as the driving force for pursuing this career field, they acknowledged how the financial burdens associated with their significant law school debt and historically low public interest salaries serve as significant obstacles to Latinas’ entry to and retention in this legal sector. Therefore, to support Latinas and others in their pursuit of and retention in these critical roles, the authors advance the need for legislative and law school initiatives designed to reduce the burden of education debt on attorneys working in the public interest sector, as well as the need to support better pay, commensurate with the skills and demands of these critical societal roles.

**Latina Outreach**

As reflected in both of the HNBA Commission studies (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010), a critical first step in expanding the pipeline of Latina lawyers should begin with outreach programs directed toward Latina youth as early as elementary school to encourage and prepare them academically and psychologically for professional careers, including those in the legal profession. A recent report by the National Women’s Law Center and Mexican American Legal Defense Fund (2009) also emphasizes the importance of including outreach efforts aimed at Latino families to involve them in the education and preparation of their
children, and the need for improved mentoring, dropout prevention, and college access programs. Johnson and Mortimer (2002) emphasize how guidance and career counselors in particular can assist disadvantaged individuals better navigate their educational and career paths and overcome common barriers to achieving their educational and career goals. They can also encourage these youth to explore career options as early as possible and to assist them in developing a coherent plan to achieve these goals.

Visible Role Models

The HNBA Commission Studies (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010) also emphasize the need for increased visibility of Latina and attorney role models to inspire Latina youth and encourage them to consider professional and non-traditional careers, including those in the legal profession. These studies consistently found that many of the women who achieved successful careers in the legal profession had strong Latina role models, both in their early lives and at critical points along their educational paths who inspired and encouraged them to pursue their academic and career goals. While mothers were often the primary source of this inspiration, many acknowledged how a chance interaction with a Latina attorney during high school or college motivated their career choice and served as an example of what they could achieve. This also reinforces the need for Latina attorneys to serve as visible role models for others as well.

Having exposure to visible Latina role models also appears to be a key factor in Latinas’ ability to overcome significant structural, cultural and psychological barriers related to their educational goals and career choice and can help support their career progression (Flores, Navarro et al., 2006; Gandara, 1982; Gomez et al., 2001; Rivera et al., 2007; Shinnar, 2007). Latinas may not consider careers in the legal profession because of self-doubt rather than lack of interest or ability. As such, the vicarious learning from role models and mothers, as well as encouragement from parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and mentors, can help strengthen Latinas’ career self-efficacy beliefs (Gomez et al., 2001). This plays an important role in career decision-making for women (Lent and Brown, 1996) and fosters confidence in Latinas’ ability to achieve and be successful in male-dominated professions, such as the legal profession (Rivera et al., 2007).

Social Support Systems in College and Law School

Similar to the need for visible role models, various studies have emphasized the importance of fostering social support systems for Latinas throughout their educational journey (Bordes, 2008; Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010; Flores, Navarro et al., 2006; Gloria, Castellanos, Lopez, and Rosales, 2005; Rivera et al., 2007). This is consistent with other research, which finds that having strong support systems and mentorship facilitates the transition and acclimation to college for Latinas (Gloria, Castellanos, Lopez et al., 2005). Because many Latinas often feel isolated academically and socially in college and in law school, Cruz and Molina (2010) recommend that these institutions of higher learning foster opportunities for Latinas to develop relationships with peers and faculty to help them navigate their college and law school experiences more effectively. It is also critical that Latina
students have opportunities to develop relationships with other Latinas, both within and outside their school environments, to provide them with additional sources of comfort and emotional support.

**Eliminate Institutional Discrimination and Discouragement**

Access to role models and social support systems throughout their formative years and educational journey may help to counteract some of the cultural and gender inhibitors, as well as the institutionalized discouragement, which may deter Latinas from pursuing careers in the legal profession. However, Cruz and Molina (2010) call for more focused efforts by educational leaders to fully eliminate the gender and ethnic stereotyping and negative messages that undermine Latina students’ ambitions and self-confidence. To support Latina youth in this way, the National Women’s Law Center and Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (2009) emphasize the need for school officials to create and be accountable for maintaining more gender and culturally inclusive school environments that are free of racial, ethnic, and gender discrimination.

**Mentoring and Developmental Relationships**

The findings from the HNBA Commission Studies (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010) underscore the need to assist Latina attorneys in developing successful relationships with mentors and other key individuals throughout their career development. According to mentoring literature scholars Belle Rose Ragins and Kathy Kram (2007), mentors are generally viewed as providing two different types of functions for protégés: career-related functions and psychosocial functions. Career functions are those activities that prepare them for hierarchical advancement within the organization, including coaching activities, increasing their visibility and exposure, sponsoring their career advancement and providing challenging assignments. On the other hand, psychosocial functions include behaviors that enhance the protégé’s professional and personal growth, identity, self-worth, and self-efficacy.

While mentoring affords benefits for all attorneys, it is seen as especially critical to the career success of women attorneys of color (American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession, 2006b; American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession, 2008; Bagati, 2009); Hispanic business professionals (Blancero et al., 2007; Mundra et al., 2003), Latinas in general (Catalyst, 2003), and Latina attorneys in particular (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010).

Mentoring and other developmental relationships with a variety of individuals both inside and outside the organization can provide Latina attorneys with the necessary career development and psychosocial support critical to their effectively navigating career experiences and helping them overcome the isolation and loneliness that jeopardize their retention and advancement. These relationships can also ensure that these attorneys have access to the challenging work assignments and professional development opportunities that lead to career advancement. Furthermore, mentoring relationships may also increase Latina attorneys’ overall satisfaction with their careers. In fact, Blancero et al. (2007) found that
those Hispanic business professionals who were in mentoring relationships had higher levels of satisfaction with their jobs, salary, and career progression.

Formal mentoring systems are important and sometimes necessary in organizations; however, many find they are not as effective as those that develop more informally because they lack the crucial subtleties (Rikleen, 2006). Rather, the HNBA Commission Studies (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010) report that the majority of Latinas in both studies believe that informal, rather than formal, mentors have played a more critical role in supporting their professional development and career advancement. Informal mentors were instrumental in helping the women navigate their workplaces’ unwritten rules and provide insight on how to advance their careers.

To help Latinas and other women of color develop these key relationships, the legal profession must support and sponsor programs that allow Latina attorneys to establish and maintain effective mentoring relationships on both a formal and informal basis. This requires a critical evaluation of current opportunities and program offerings, in terms of their actual use and value, as well as access to multiple channels and opportunities for Latina attorneys to meet and work with a diverse pool of individuals both inside and outside of their legal workplaces (American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession, 2008; Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010). In this way, formal programs can also serve as an opportunity and forum for more informal relationships to evolve.

Cruz and Molina (2010) also noted that, while most Latina attorneys in their study expressed an interest in being mentored by other Latinas, they recognized how this could present a real challenge given the lack of Latina attorneys currently in their workplaces. What appears to be the most critical component of an effective mentoring relationship for these women is a pairing with mentors who are deeply invested in Latinas’ career development and who can provide candid feedback about their professional development needs.

Blancero et al. (2007) also note that while same-race mentoring relationships with other Hispanic mentors are essential because they often provide critical psychosocial support, in reality, these mentors often do not share the same level of influence in their organizations as their non-Hispanic White counterparts. Therefore, pairings with more powerful and influential majority mentors may actually be more beneficial to Latina attorneys in terms of their career development benefits. In fact, these authors found that Hispanic professionals who were mentored by non-Hispanic Whites earned 17% more than those mentored by other Hispanics.

**Latina-Based Networking Opportunities**

Networking is cited as a key factor in career success (Kuijpers, Schyns, and Scheerens, 2006) and is related to the accumulation of social capital, which provides increased access to information, resources and career sponsorship (Seibert, Kraimer, and Liden, 2001). As recommended by the American Bar Association Commission of Women in the Profession (2006b), given the scarcity of women attorneys of color in the legal profession in general, internal and external support systems, including involvement in women-and minority-bar associations, can provide these women with the an excellent source of mentoring, camaraderie, and support that often eludes them within their legal workplaces.
For Latina attorneys in particular, Cruz and Molina (2010) encourage the creation of more Latina-based networking opportunities and affinity groups as a way for these women to network and socialize with one another. This may also ease the sense of isolation and loneliness they often feel as one of the few Latina attorneys in their organizations. The authors described how their study’s focus group sessions served as a cathartic outlet and source of emotional support for many of the study participants to express their concerns and share their experiences. Like mentors, while Latina-based networks and affinity groups provide a source of comfort and guidance, it is also important for Latinas to network with a diverse pool of individuals as well, including non-Latinas and individuals outside of their workplaces (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010).

One important consideration noted by Blancero and DelCampo (2005) is that some Latina/os may perceive networking to be exploitive, which may conflict with their personal or cultural values. Therefore, these authors emphasize the importance of understanding the basis of reciprocity in mentoring and networking relationships with this population, and the need to integrate qualities and values associated with the Latina/o identity, including the centrality of family, closeness, respect, and loyalty to solidify these relationships.

Gender-Neutral and Family Supportive Workplaces

Regardless of the legal sector, the dual role of a legal career and motherhood is perceived as one of the biggest challenges to Latina retention and advancement in the legal profession (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010) and has been cited as a leading barrier for women attorneys in general (American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession, 2006b; Blair-Loy and Dehart, 2003; Boyer et al., 2009; Buonocore Porter, 2006; Dau-Schmidt et al., 2009; Harrington and Hsi, 2007; Kay and Gorman, 2008; Rhode, 2003; Rikleen, 2006; Stanford, 2009; Wallace, 2008; Wilder, 2007; Williams, 2007). As previously noted, this may be especially pertinent for some Latina attorneys whose cultural identity places a premium on motherhood and family obligations.

To counter this barrier, legal employers need to develop and reinforce institutional cultures, structures, policies, and practices that are gender-neutral and family-supportive. More flexible work arrangements are required by both male and female attorneys of all races and ethnicities. By allowing all attorneys to enjoy flexible work arrangements, rather than just women with family responsibilities, this universal accessibility will remove the gender-based stigma encountered by women, and Latina attorneys in particular.

In addition to providing more work-family balance to those who require it, the existence of flexible work policies and programs such as these can also communicate organizational values that are desired by attorneys with family responsibilities. A study by Scandura and Lankau (1997) found that although flexible work-hour policies were not always utilized due to perceptions by others that those who did lacked career commitment, just having these types of programs seemed to communicate that the organizational culture was more supportive of work-life balance needs. The authors argue that having family-friendly policies can create a psychological contract, which leads to increased commitment to the organization.

The role of work-family policies on perceptions of psychological contract may have important relevance for Latina attorneys’ workplace experiences as well. In a study of Hispanic business professionals, Taylor, DelCampo, and Blancero (2009) found that work-
family supports increased the perception that their psychological contracts were fair. Within the organizational theory and behavior literature, Rousseau defines the psychological contracts as one’s belief regarding mutual obligations between themselves and their employer (as cited in DelCampo and Blancero, 2008). Perceptions of psychological contract fairness are also found to be positively associated with job satisfaction (Blancero, DelCampo, Gao, and Lewis, 2009) and negatively related to perceptions of discrimination (DelCampo and Blancero, 2008) for white collar Hispanic professionals.

Foster Organizational Cultures That Value Diversity

Organizations in the legal profession can reduce Latina attorneys’ perceptions of gender and ethnic discrimination and potential turnover intentions by valuing and fostering a more diverse organizational culture and workforce composition (Flores, Navarro et al., 2006; Muñiz, 2009). As noted by Delcampo and Blancero (2008), organizations can increase productivity and satisfaction of Hispanic employees by empowering them and making them feel truly valued in the organization. Furthermore, Garcia-Lopez (2008) finds that Chicana attorneys are more likely to be successful in workplaces that welcome diversity and where women and people of color are the norm. This can be accomplished through critical evaluation and modification of institutionalized structures, policies, and practices that obscure diversity goals, as well as implementing culture awareness and sensitivity programs that bring attention to the unique values and needs of a more diverse attorney population.

According to the Women’s Bar Association of the District of Columbia (2006), unexamined biases can influence attorney interactions that lead to unfair assumptions and judgments about women’s performance and capacity. Subsequently, this can have a cumulative negative effect over time on female attorneys’ advancement potential. To counteract this, organizational leaders and decision-makers must be made aware of how implicit biases and stereotypes of Latina attorneys negatively impact their careers, and examine each element of the organization’s culture to identify patterns that inhibit Latina attorneys’ full participation and ability to succeed. Other firm members must also be given an opportunity to explore their own personal stereotypes and biases toward Latina attorneys as well as other minority groups through dialogues with both individuals and focus groups to gain a better understanding of this issue. Cruz et al. (2010) also stress the importance of supporting diversity programming that specifically focuses on anti-racism and anti-sexism curricula.

To ensure alignment with the required cultural and structural changes, firm leaders must understand and embrace the business case for pursuing these changes. While fostering a culture that values diversity is viewed by many as the “right thing to do,” legal profession leaders will more likely respond positively to reasons premised on its business necessity rather than just its humanistic appeal.

Lastly, for sustainable change, leaders must understand and model the behaviors and attitudes required of the cultural change effort. According to Miller and Katz (2002), many organizational change efforts fail because leaders do not demonstrate the desired behaviors valued by the cultural change process. Carr-Ruffino (2007) concurs that training should start at the top of an organization because senior management must thoroughly understand the concepts and apply it consistently in their actions and attitudes. This means that firm leaders
who are interested in reinforcing a culture that values organizational diversity should exemplify this goal consistently in their own words, actions, and values.

**Broaden Definitions of Career Success**

Career success is defined by Judge, Cable, Boudrea, and Bretz (1995) as the “positive psychological or work-related outcomes or achievements one has accumulated as a result of one’s work experience” (p. 486). While career success is a socially constructed reality, traditional views typically focus on objective measures, which equate status and salary to achievement (Poole and Langan-Fox, 1993). For example, within private practice law firms, promotion to partnership and its associated high earnings often symbolize achievement of traditional career success (Galanter and Palay, 1991; Kay and Hagan, 1998; Kay and Gorman, 2008).

While career success is often conceptualized in this way, Latina attorneys’ culturally gendered values may influence their definition of success differently from others in the legal profession. Specifically, Latina attorneys may associate career success more subjectively and prioritize values associated with their sense of pride and satisfaction with their careers rather than economic rewards and upward mobility that are traditionally valued by this profession.

Research on Latinas in the legal profession lends support to this notion as well. There is evidence that Chicana attorneys broaden traditional definitions of success beyond prototypical monetary ambitions and goals to include more subjective considerations including their desire to make a difference in their communities, as well as those associated with their family responsibilities (Garcia-Lopez, 2008; Garcia-Lopez and Segura, 2008). Furthermore, the HNBA Commission Studies (Cruz and Molina, 2010; Cruz et al., 2010) demonstrate how despite their relatively lower levels of objective career success, Latina lawyers are generally very satisfied with their careers. For many, especially those working in the public interest sectors, this contentment stems from their sense of accomplishment and fulfillment gained through pride in their work and also the satisfaction from helping others (Cruz et al., 2010).

This realization suggests that, for Latina attorneys to perceive themselves as truly successful and therefore committed to their careers, they must be able to integrate aspects of their Latina identity and cultural values into their professional lives as well. Reynoso (2005) argues that to be more welcoming to Latina/os in particular, legal workplaces must allow for a more balanced life in which Latina/o attorneys can continue to be active in their communities. This concept challenges traditional career models and ideology that compels many Latina attorneys to conform to the traditional ideals of the legal profession, a gendered institution where “White heterosexual masculinities define success” (Garcia-Lopez and Segura, 2008, p. 232).

Supporting Latina attorneys in achieving true career success also requires a unique perspective that incorporates alternative forms of career success that are more subjective in nature and focus attention on family as well as work factors. Brousseau (1996) contends that, while most U.S. organizations value upward mobility and therefore subscribe to the linear concept of career progression, with its pre-ordained series of career stages and positions with increasing authority and responsibility, this framework does not squarely fit the needs and values of the changing and more diverse American workforce. This is especially true for women, who tend to have more cyclical and unstable career patterns than men in response to
the needs of their children and families (Brown, 2002a; Valcour and Ladge, 2008). Rather, the concept of the protean career, in which the main success criteria are subjective in nature and that incorporates aspects of the individual’s identity and values (Hall, 2004) may be a more appropriate framework for operationalizing career success of Latina attorneys.

CONCLUSION

This chapter provides a framework that identifies and assesses the significant and pervasive obstacles many Latina attorneys encounter as they attempt to navigate their entry into and progression in the legal profession, as well as the key factors that operate as catalysts to the pursuit and achievement of their educational-and career-related goals. Consistent with research conducted on the career development of Latinas in other high achievement and professional roles (Gandara, 1982; Gomez et al., 2001; Hite, 2007), Latina attorneys’ educational and career development is uniquely influenced by the interaction among individual, sociocultural, cultural-familial, contextual, attitudinal, and structural factors, as well as racioethnic-and gender-related variables that work together to detract from or contribute to their educational achievement, vocational choice and ultimate career success in the legal profession.

Latinas who are economically disadvantaged or who have limited access to educational opportunities and resources at critical points during their educational progression often lack adequate preparation and do not develop the necessary skills to succeed at college, which, in turn, makes entry into law school unlikely. Those Latinas who successfully enter college or law school still encounter bicultural stress and psychosocial difficulties on their school campuses or find themselves socially and academically disadvantaged as compared to their non-Latina peers.

In terms of career choice, because most Latinas lack exposure to practicing attorneys or the legal profession in general during their formative years, they often do not consider this a viable career opportunity for themselves. Latinas may also encounter significant gender and cultural barriers, including institutional discouragement and sex-role expectations rooted in Latino cultural norms that can obscure or erode their ambition and career self-efficacy beliefs about pursuing nontraditional roles, such as those in the legal profession.

Within the legal profession, Latinas encounter attitudinal and structural barriers related to the intersectionality of their gender, ethnicity and sometimes even race, which act as a three-way threat to their career success. Latina attorneys are routinely subjected to gender and ethnic discrimination and stereotyping and their experiences in the legal profession also may vary according to others’ perceptions of their racial identity as well. Frequently viewed as outsiders or foreigners, they are often either misidentified as someone other than an attorney or tokenized and burdened with non-attorney responsibilities because of their cultural identity and bilingual skills.

Latinas who are economically disadvantaged or who have limited access to educational opportunities and resources at critical points during their educational progression often lack adequate preparation and do not develop the necessary skills to succeed at college, which, in turn, makes entry into law school unlikely. Those Latinas who successfully enter college or law school still encounter bicultural stress and psychosocial difficulties on their school campuses or find themselves socially and academically disadvantaged as compared to their non-Latina peers.

In terms of career choice, because most Latinas lack exposure to practicing attorneys or the legal profession in general during their formative years, they often do not consider this a viable career opportunity for themselves. Latinas may also encounter significant gender and cultural barriers, including institutional discouragement and sex-role expectations rooted in Latino cultural norms that can obscure or erode their ambition and career self-efficacy beliefs about pursuing nontraditional roles, such as those in the legal profession.

Within the legal profession, Latinas encounter attitudinal and structural barriers related to the intersectionality of their gender, ethnicity and sometimes even race, which act as a three-way threat to their career success. Latina attorneys are routinely subjected to gender and ethnic discrimination and stereotyping and their experiences in the legal profession also may vary according to others’ perceptions of their racial identity as well. Frequently viewed as outsiders or foreigners, they are often either misidentified as someone other than an attorney or tokenized and burdened with non-attorney responsibilities because of their cultural identity and bilingual skills.

Latinas who are economically disadvantaged or who have limited access to educational opportunities and resources at critical points during their educational progression often lack adequate preparation and do not develop the necessary skills to succeed at college, which, in turn, makes entry into law school unlikely. Those Latinas who successfully enter college or law school still encounter bicultural stress and psychosocial difficulties on their school campuses or find themselves socially and academically disadvantaged as compared to their non-Latina peers.

In terms of career choice, because most Latinas lack exposure to practicing attorneys or the legal profession in general during their formative years, they often do not consider this a viable career opportunity for themselves. Latinas may also encounter significant gender and cultural barriers, including institutional discouragement and sex-role expectations rooted in Latino cultural norms that can obscure or erode their ambition and career self-efficacy beliefs about pursuing nontraditional roles, such as those in the legal profession.

Within the legal profession, Latinas encounter attitudinal and structural barriers related to the intersectionality of their gender, ethnicity and sometimes even race, which act as a three-way threat to their career success. Latina attorneys are routinely subjected to gender and ethnic discrimination and stereotyping and their experiences in the legal profession also may vary according to others’ perceptions of their racial identity as well. Frequently viewed as outsiders or foreigners, they are often either misidentified as someone other than an attorney or tokenized and burdened with non-attorney responsibilities because of their cultural identity and bilingual skills.
attorneys mask or downplay their Latina identities to better assimilate within the dominant culture of their workplaces. Others develop a hybrid identity to attain legitimacy within their male-dominated workplace, while also being accountable to the cultural and gendered expectations of their Latino communities. This need to constantly navigate between their two worlds can be difficult, exhausting, and isolating.

Notwithstanding these and other challenges, a few Latinas have defied the odds and achieved successful and satisfying attorney careers. As the Latina population continues to grow in this country, identification of the critical success factors that contribute to Latina attorneys’ educational and career achievement, including the important role that families, educational institutions, and the legal profession play in this process, is critical to the development and implementation of strategies aimed at minimizing these barriers, so that each current and prospective Latina attorney has greater opportunity to reach her full potential and achieve success and satisfaction in the legal profession.

REFERENCES


Wilder, G. Z. (2007). *Women in the legal profession: Results after the first wave of the After the JD Study*. The NALP Foundation for Law Career Research and Education and the National Association for Law Placement, Inc.


Megan is a first year associate at a large firm. Since Megan’s arrival at the firm she has been working hard, regularly billing in excess of 200 hours per month. If she keeps up this pace, she is on track to bill 2,400 hours for the year, which is well above the firm’s billable hour requirement. Megan does most of her work for the same client, VIP, and she is actively engaged in a variety of different tasks that will take at least a few months to complete. While the work for VIP is challenging and she is learning a great deal (almost everything is new at this stage), the nature of the work is less interesting to Megan than other areas of work at the firm. Megan doesn't want to get pigeonholed too early in her career. That said, after almost nine months on the job, she is starting to feel like she has some idea what she’s doing, and that makes her feel pretty good. She also likes the rest of the team; everyone gets along well and the senior associates have been helpful and welcoming.

Megan is working her third late night this week, when a partner, John, who is not someone she works regularly with, stops by her office. John tells Megan that he's heard good things about Megan and has been looking for an opportunity to work with her. John describes an assignment that he needs help with. It's an assignment for a new client in an area that Megan is really interested in. The catch is that the assignment needs to be started immediately. John tells Megan, “If you're up for it, we'd love to have you on the team, but this assignment is going to be fast-paced, and if you're in, you need to be ALL in. I need to be able to count on you 100%.”

While Megan knows that the assignment will conflict with the work that she already has on her plate, she really wants to work with John and gain some exposure to the type of work that he does. However, Megan also doesn't want to let her team down and in spite of the long hours, she feels like she has a pretty good thing going.

**Discussion Questions**

1. How should Megan handle this situation?

2. How would a person with a fixed mindset approach the situation versus a person with a growth mindset?

3. How might grit be helpful in this situation?

4. How might John approach the situation to encourage a growth mindset culture?

[Adapted by Linda Chanow from *The Grit Project, The ABA Commission on Women in the Profession*]
Lost Motion

Rebecca is a senior-level associate and has been given the opportunity to take the lead on responding to a summary judgment motion for an important client, High Maintenance Tires, in their ongoing litigation dispute with Overpriced Cars. Rebecca feels great about the fact that there have been many discovery disputes throughout the case and the Judge has consistently ruled in her favor. There is no reason to think she will not win on summary judgment. Rebecca has spent weeks of hard work putting together her response.

Rebecca files the response and feels extremely proud of the work she did and knows that she could not have worked harder. Several weeks later, as Rebeca is getting ready to leave for the evening, the head partner on the case, Bill, storms into Rebecca’s office and asks if she has read the ruling. Rebecca’s stomach drops because she knows that despite all her hard work things must not have gone as she hoped. As she skims the ruling with Bill in her office, Rebecca finds that she lost the motion on all counts but one. Of note, the judge finds that she over-reached on the main case cited in support of the motion and that the case’s holding does not support the argument. Also, Rebecca failed to cite a critical case that the other side found. Bill is furious and says that the client will be as well.

Discussion Questions

1. How should Rebecca handle this situation? What should she say to Bill?

2. How would a person with a fixed mindset approach this situation versus a person with a growth mindset?

3. How might grit be helpful in this situation?

4. How might Bill approach the situation to encourage a growth mindset culture?

[Adapted by Linda Chanow from The Grit Project, The ABA Commission on Women in the Profession]
Partner Pulls Rank

Laura is a new partner at the firm and serves as outside counsel to a large financial institution. She has been handling the preliminary investigation for a $100 million privacy breach lawsuit. She knows all of the issues related to the investigation and has developed a rapport with the company’s employees, including the bank’s general counsel, Sandra. When it is time to present this litigation to the company’s CEO and Executive Leadership Team, John, a senior partner at the law firm, says that he is the senior partner on the matter and that he will be taking the lead for the meeting with the company’s leadership team and, if the company decides to take the matter to trial, he will be the lead trial attorney.

Discussion Questions

1. How should Laura handle this situation?

2. How would a person with a fixed mindset approach the situation versus a person with a growth mindset?

3. How might grit be helpful in this situation?

4. How might John modify his approach to the situation to encourage a growth mindset culture?
Serene is an environmental litigator who was recently promoted to income partner. She has always been anxious about public speaking and has avoided it as much as possible. However, she knows that it is essential that she increase her business development efforts. Her mentor has advised her that public speaking will be necessary in order to successfully build business. Even if she avoids speaking to large audiences, she’ll still have to be involved in pitches to clients.

As a result, Serene has made a commitment to push herself beyond her comfort zone and take some risks. She asked to participate in a forthcoming pitch to a client and was surprised that the team of senior male partners agreed. She wondered if she was included as the “diversity representative” but decided to make the best of the opportunity. In advance of the pitch, Serene did extensive research on the client, including legal department leadership, the company’s environmental issues, and its business strategy.

Serene had studied enough about business development to know that a pitch needed to focus on the client. However, when she attended the pitch, she was surprised to find the senior partners on the team focused on their marketing materials and the firm’s strengths.

The General Counsel, a woman, brought Serene into the conversation with a question. Serene tried to follow her partners’ lead and, despite her intuition to the contrary, did not direct her answer to the client’s specific challenge at hand. As the team left the client’s offices, her partners expressed disappointment with her weak response.

When Serene hears that indeed they lost the pitch she is very concerned. The parting words of her partners make her think she is likely to be blamed for the loss. She fears never getting another invitation to a pitch from these partners and gaining a reputation that will make other partners wary of including her in their business development efforts. She also had hoped to develop a relationship with the General Counsel of this client and fears the relationship is also beyond repair. Furthermore, this client relationship was originated years ago by one of the senior men on the team. She has no idea how to negotiate the political issues if she were to try to grow her relationship with this GC.

**Discussion Questions**

1. How should Serene handle this situation?

2. How would a person with a fixed mindset approach the situation versus a person with a growth mindset?

3. How might grit be helpful in this situation?

4. How might the partners approach the situation to encourage a growth mindset culture?

*[Adapted by Linda Chanow from The Grit Project, The ABA Commission on Women in the Profession]*
Goal Setting

Kathryn is a senior associate at a law firm who focuses on commercial litigation. She has been fortunate in her career to handle numerous high-profile matters, but has always been a second chair. She has been out of law school for five years and is beginning to question whether she wants to continue to pursue partnership. She feels that she has put her personal life on hold.

Discussion Questions

1. How should Kathryn determine which goals are important to her?

2. How would a person with a fixed mindset approach the situation versus a person with a growth mindset?

3. How might grit be helpful in this situation?

4. What can Kathryn do to help support her efforts to develop a growth mindset and remain gritty?

Background: Cech, Rubineau, Silbey, and Seron (2011) found that male college students had more confidence in their professional abilities and they demonstrated more behavioral persistence, an aspect of grit’s perseverance dimension, than their female counterparts in the same field of study. The males were also more likely to stay in their field of work.

A study of female CEOs found that they expressed the importance and positive impact that having an ally (e.g., a sponsor) had on the development of confidence (Chisholm-Burns, Spivey, Hagemann, & Josephson, 2017). This ties into Linda Chanow’s discussion regarding developing growth mindset teams.

[Written by the Women’s Leadership Network]