

MENTORSHIP IMPACT: UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

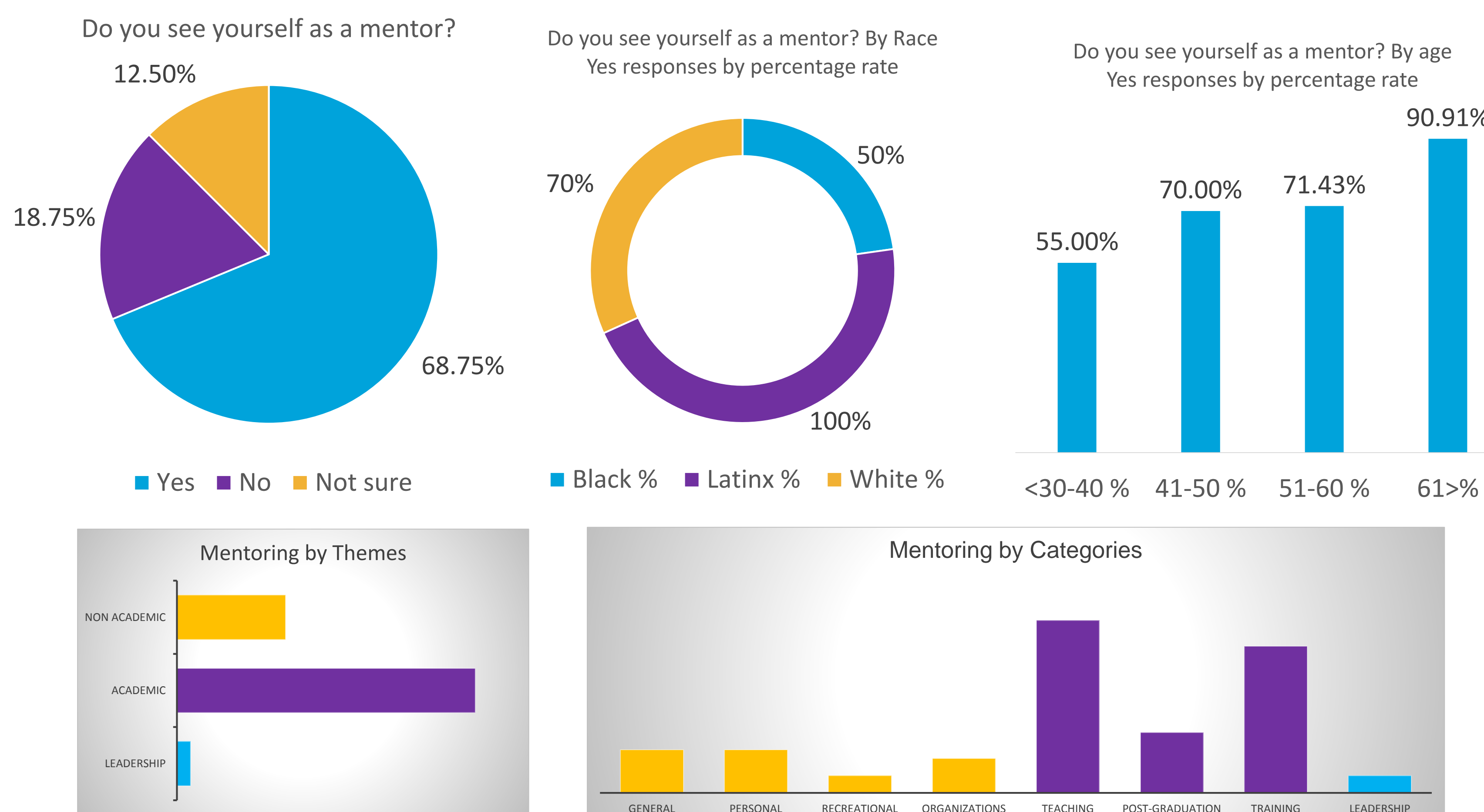
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Action Research Pilot Study Question

If I survey women in higher education leadership roles about mentorship, in what ways, if any, will the information lead to changes in my understanding about the underrepresentation of women in higher education leadership roles?

INTRODUCTION

More women in the US are earning advanced degrees, representing more than half of students enrolled in colleges and universities. Women currently hold 26.4% of leadership roles in higher education. The underrepresentation of women in higher education leadership roles has an impact on universities hiring, developing, and retaining excellent and diverse faculty members.



FINDINGS

Do you see yourself as a mentor?

Quantitative data reports that 68.75% of women identify as a mentor.

Responses by age:

- <40 years old – 55%
- >61 years old – 90.91%

Qualitative data confirms that 68.75% of women see themselves as mentors.

However, three major themes emerged:

- Non Academic - 26%,
- Academic – 71 %,
- Leadership - 3%

CONTEXT

NATIONAL

- 47% of the US workforce
- 55.3% in higher education

SITUATIONAL

University major challenges:

- Rising cost of tuition
- Declining enrollment
- Declining completion rates

PERSONAL

Understanding underrepresentation of women in HE Leadership:

- Marginalization
- Motivation
- Mentoring

METHODS

This action research pilot study was conducted during the spring 2020 semester at a small liberal arts university in the Midwest United States. Participants were selected utilizing convenience sampling, as all the women were employed at the same university as the researcher. Emails were sent to 112 women employed at the university and 48 responses were gathered for a response rate of 42.9%.

QUANTITATIVE DATA

Quantitative data was carefully reviewed and analyzed in IBM SPSS Statistics Data Editor software. Using this software, data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, calculating values representing overall characteristics, for nominal data.

QUALITATIVE DATA

Qualitative data was carefully reviewed using thematic coding and organized by codes, categories and then by themes. Codes were developed using inductive reasoning and themes were developed by recognizing patterns in responses.

LIMITATIONS

- *Sample participants*
 - Small liberal arts university
- *Survey instrument*
 - Design
 - Quality of questions
 - Quantity of questions
- *Hawthorne Effect*
 - Participants aware of study

CONTACT AND REFERENCES

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This action research pilot study employed a convergent parallel/mixed methods approach. Participants completed an online survey asking a variety of quantitative and qualitative questions to determine the impact mentorship has on the underrepresentation of women in higher education leadership roles.

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