Article

A Critical Exploration of Women's Gendered Experiences in Outdoor Leadership

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Abstract

Background: Although outdoor education provides many positive learning outcomes for students, it is a field in which women continue to be underrepresented in leadership roles. Centering the voices of women and other underrepresented populations is critical to creating a more inclusive outdoor education field. **Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to explore women's experiences as outdoor leaders, and how women's perspectives may broaden how outdoor leadership is defined and conceptualized. **Methodology/Approach:** The study was grounded in narrative inquiry and a critical feminist framework and included interviews and photo reflections of six participants identifying as women outdoor leaders in higher education. **Findings/Conclusions:** Participants experienced sexism, gender bias, and lack of confidence in technical skills as outdoor leaders. Participants discussed how they conceptualize outdoor leadership through a lens of facilitation and discovery, challenging masculine norms and ideologies. In addition, participants' intersections of identities influence how they experience outdoor leadership. **Implications:** Implications from this study indicate the continued need to center the voices of women and diverse populations, using critical frameworks nascent in outdoor education studies. In addition, critical examinations of policies and practices that may reify the White male privileged narrative of outdoor education are needed.

Keywords

women, gender studies, outdoor education leadership, critical theories

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Introduction and Purpose of Study

This research study comes at a critical time when women are still underrepresented in higher leadership positions in the majority of organizational arenas (Rhode, 2017). The field of outdoor education is no exception. Despite decades of critical scholarship and practice, barriers contribute to the underrepresentation of women in outdoor leadership positions (Jordan, 2018). In a recent survey conducted with a leading national outdoor education association, only 25% of participants in director and assistant director positions in outdoor programs in higher education identified as women (Rogers, Taylor, & Rose, in press). At the association's 2014 annual conference, women represented 35% of attendees (a percentage which has not increased since 1986), 25% of the conference presenters, and 18% of the organization's board members. Women represented only 32% of course leaders for the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) in 2015, and these women-led courses were predominantly less-technical courses, for example, hiking versus rock climbing or whitewater kayaking (Rochelle, NOLS, personal communication, December 6, 2015).

Through narrative inquiry and a critical feminist framework, this research explores the experiences of women in outdoor leadership in higher education. Grounded in their individual perspectives and voices, women's personal experiences provide insight into gendered ideologies and practices within outdoor education, exploring how outdoor education can be more inclusive of women and diverse populations. Participants' stories help disrupt and broaden universalized definitions of outdoor education, challenging masculinized discourses that often disadvantage women. This research addresses two primary research inquiries: How women outdoor leaders in higher education describe their lived experiences in the outdoor education field; and how women outdoor leaders' perspectives may broaden how outdoor education and leadership is defined and conceptualized.

Framework

A critical feminist framework is instrumental to understanding experiences of women in outdoor education. Feminist research places "the social construction of gender at the center of one's inquiry" (Lather, 1992, p. 91), challenging what we think we know about gender, and how power and patriarchy are normalized in society in ways that marginalize and oppress women (Pillow, 2002). Critical feminist analysis aims to disrupt hegemonic practices and ideologies and works toward a goal of social change (Gannon & Davies, 2007). Several assumptions interconnect to inform this research and influence a critical feminist framework. First, the field of outdoor education is a White, male, privileged space that is not inclusive of all populations (Rose & Paisley, 2012; Warren, 2015). Second, women are underrepresented in outdoor leadership roles, and an increase in women leaders may help transform some problematic aspects of outdoor education (Henderson, 1996; Humberstone, 2000). Third, masculine–feminine gender binaries disadvantage women leaders because of gender bias and the devaluing of feminine leadership qualities (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Fourth, outdoor

education programs can provide positive, transformative experiences and skill development, particularly in leadership, for participants (Ewert & Sibthorp, 2014). Finally, outdoor education programs have the capacity to enact social change (Bell, 1997; Warren, 2005), and are therefore worthy of critical development.

Literature Review

Gender is arguably the most researched aspect of social justice in outdoor recreation and education. Feminist scholars (e.g., Bell, 1997; Henderson, 1996; Humberstone, 2000; Mitten, 1985; Roberts, 1996; Warren, 2015) have critically addressed and centered the experiences of women in outdoor recreation and education. Constructions of feminine and masculine can be traced, at least in part, back to the Enlightenment and colonialism of the 17th and 18th centuries (Humberstone, 2000; Lowe, 2015), when the definition of "man" and its associated characteristics of reason and individualism was constructed, subsequently defining the Other, largely women and people of color (Lowe, 2015; Wynter, 2003). Constructions of gender binaries influence gender role socialization and stereotypes, and have contributed to sexist environments and the marginalization of women in many societies.

Scholarship on gender and outdoor leadership has illuminated challenges women face (Jordan, 2018). Gender stereotyping of leadership styles along the masculine–feminine gender binary is a significant factor affecting women leaders, specifically because of gender bias (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Women who take on feminine leadership styles are often seen as less competent, and those who make directive and assertive decisions are frequently perceived negatively (Humberstone, 2000; Wittmer, 2001). Women who challenge gender stereotypes often find themselves ostracized and evaluated poorly (Wittmer, 2001). Because of implicit gender bias, women often underestimate or devalue their own competencies and leadership abilities, and tend to demonstrate less leadership self-efficacy (Eagly & Carli, 2007). In addition, women are generally not exposed to outdoor technical skills at an early age, which can translate to women's lower self-confidence in technical skills and a lack of self-awareness of their actual competencies, which can subsequently influence their ability to lead groups effectively (Warren & Loeffler, 2006). It is most often a misperception about women's competence, rather than a lack of actual competence, that affects how participants see women in outdoor leadership roles. Rather than challenging assumptions and stereotypes about gender, mainstream outdoor education tends to reflect and reify them (Humberstone, 2000).

Definitions of outdoor education affect women in outdoor leadership. Many people, particularly in Western culture, equate venturing outdoors with a desire for adventure, and in outdoor education programs, adventure is usually associated with taking progressively more challenging risk in activities (Ewert & Sibthorp, 2014). Some women may have different interpretations of what adventure means compared with stereotypically masculine definitions of risk-taking and competition (Little, 2002; Mitten & Woodruff, 2010). As opposed to a focus on risk-taking, women expressed that adventure can mean discovering something new and different, a departure from

daily routines, and a sense of exploration of new spaces and about oneself. Many women tend to not seek out unnecessary risk, particularly in leadership roles, but rather develop the skills necessary to minimize it (Little, 2002).

Literature on women in the outdoors primarily addresses the experiences of White privileged women (Rogers et al., in press; Warren, 2015), and gender cannot be addressed without considering complex intersections of identity that are continually created and recreated within each individual (Crenshaw, 1991). Literature on intersectionality is nascent in outdoor education, with limited research on the experiences of women of color (Finney, 2014; Roberts, 1996) and people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) (Barnfield & Humberstone, 2008; McClintock, 1996; Mitten, 1997). An exploration of women's gendered experiences in the outdoors can provide further insight into why women are underrepresented in outdoor leadership.

Method: Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry enables scholars to see the world through an individual's unique perspective, interconnecting their perspectives with larger social structures. "The study of narrative . . . is the study of the ways humans experience the world" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 40). The historical and social contexts of how women have been marginalized in male-dominated environments played a role in how participants' stories were told and interpreted, and how their stories might help create social change within outdoor education. Challenging dominant, masculine narratives and bringing women's voices to the forefront were primary outcomes of this study.

Data for this study were collected through interviews and photo reflections. Each participant was interviewed once for 1 to 2 hr via Skype. To allow for more depth in participants' stories, they also engaged in a photo reflection (Kim, 2015). Participants chose photographs (primarily of themselves, although one participant chose metaphorical photos) and described through writing why the photographs were significant and meaningful to their experiences as women in outdoor leadership. Participants expressed interest and provided their contact information in a previous research study conducted by the lead author, and were selected for this study based on their identities as women outdoor leaders in higher education. Six women participated in this research study. Five of them identified as White, and one identified as a multiracial woman of color. Two participants identified as lesbian, two as heterosexual, one as queer, and one as bisexual. Four participants were approximately 30 years old and two participants were approximately 40 years old. All participants held leadership positions in outdoor programs at higher education institutions of varying size and location, and their experience as outdoor educators ranged from 6 to 20 years.

Data analysis consisted of using inductive and thematic data analysis techniques, starting with line-by-line coding of the interview transcripts and photo reflections, and then identifying themes (Merriam, 2009). From a critical feminist perspective, data were coded keeping in mind how power, privilege, and gender may be reflected in participants' responses. Constant comparative analysis helped find similarities and differences within participant responses once the coding of individual interviews was

complete (Merriam, 2009). The lead author conducted data analysis, and the coauthor assisted in the editing and structuring of the article. Trustworthiness was established through the use of multiple forms of data (interviews, photos, and written reflections) and through member checking, as all participants read and approved their narratives. It should be noted that the study has a small sample size with predominantly White women, and the study findings are limited to the context of these participants' experiences. This study followed all appropriate research protocols through approval by the Internal Review Board of the University of Utah. The following presentation of "Marla," a composite character constructed to illustrate the dominant themes in participants' narratives (e.g., Johnson, 2005), weaves together relevant aspects of the women's experiences with outdoor leadership.

Marla's Story

Marla was first inspired in the outdoors by her mom. While she remembers that her mother was not interested in technical sports, vacations consisted of loading up the car and heading to national and state parks. She also became interested in outdoor activities like hiking and rafting through youth group programs. As a first-year college student, Marla became involved with the outdoor program as a facilitator for the high ropes course. She continued to work in outdoor education throughout college, leading outdoor trips for summer camps, and leading other college students on outdoor adventures during the school year. After graduating from college, Marla began working for Outward Bound (OB) where she met a mentor who was a skilled rock climber and author in an outdoor education textbook. What Marla appreciated most was her humility, and how she inspired community at the OB base she directed.

Other OB bases Marla worked at "felt kind of like a fraternity, with hazing rituals and hierarchies." For instance, on her first training trip as an OB instructor, Marla reflected on the masculine and competitive culture within the group and the expectation to be "tough." At the beginning of the trip, Marla crushed her thumb while cutting down a tree blocking the trail. The trip leader, who also was the OB base director, did not take the injury seriously, and Marla was worried how she would be perceived if she asked to be evacuated. She reflected, "I definitely [didn't] want to be [perceived as] wimpy . . . It felt very much like I needed to prove myself as somebody who could hang with that type of situation."

On one course, Marla was teamed with a male co-instructor, and noticed that she was continually getting feedback that she was nurturing and comforting to the students, while her male co-instructor was getting equally gendered feedback. She commented, "Literally, if you just took qualities and assigned a gender to them, I was being assigned everything female and he was being assigned everything male." They decided to try an experiment with the students. They went through the course curriculum and assigned every skill or activity a stereotypical gender. They then swapped roles and the male instructor took on curriculum like cooking and first aid, while Marla taught all the technical skills. "I wore wraparound sunglasses. I didn't smile for four days, and I didn't make a single kind gesture." In the final evaluation, their gendered feedback did

not change, leading her to realize the way students perceive a man or a woman in leadership might be culturally ingrained.

Marla recounted a story reflecting the double bind for women in outdoor leadership when she led a semester-long course. Because of a schedule conflict, another female instructor led in her place for the first week and asked to stay on the course for a few days after Marla arrived. Marla noted this instructor was "very, very nurturing and friendly . . . When she left, I think the students kind of assumed that I would fill that role, but I didn't." During student check-ins on this course, the female students said that they were "worried" about Marla and felt she was not "part of the group." . . . "I was like, 'I'm not part of the group.' . . . I just wasn't fulfilling their expectations . . . I think that's why they just massacred me on my evals." Marla noted that there was no expectation from the students on this course for her male co-instructor to be nurturing. However, Marla observed that when men take on feminine leadership styles or emphasize interpersonal skills, they are highly regarded. She noted that "men can kind of transgress those gender expectations of leadership and get rewarded for it."

These experiences have significantly influenced Marla in how she defines outdoor education and leadership, and in how she teaches her student leaders now that she is an assistant director of a university outdoor program. When she was in college, Marla's supervisor interpreted outdoor leadership much differently from her. She commented that he adhered to a stereotypically masculine notion of the outdoors where "if you didn't feel like you were dying on the trip, then it wasn't a worthwhile trip." Her perspective is about personal growth and inspiring people. Marla defined an outdoor leader as "a facilitator of someone else's self-discovery . . . I perceive it in the genre of people who are creating, providing an experience through which someone has self-discovery and basically increased confidence."

Marla has served on an outdoor education association's board of directors and in many other professional leadership positions. Although several instances of sexism in the association have discouraged her over the years, one instance stands out. At an annual conference, Marla attended an "expert panel discussion" on what it takes to move into higher outdoor leadership positions. The panel consisted of only White men, and afterward she discussed her frustration with a colleague. At some point during their conversation, another man joined in stating,

> Well, there's not any women on the panel because there aren't any women who are accomplished in outdoor ed . . . in 15 years maybe there will be some women who are experienced enough that they can sit on this panel.

In addition, Marla commented, a tagline used at this conference was "Ditch the plaid and wear a tie," a message clearly directed toward men. These experiences illustrate, to Marla, the challenges women continue to face in outdoor leadership: "I felt really badly for every young female who was there."

Marla recalled tolerating many inappropriate comments and situations as an outdoor leader to fit into the "boys club." In an attempt to change this culture in the outdoors, Marla now tries to facilitate positive experiences for her university students.

She believes her students are "so much smarter, or aware, and educated, and empowered." Despite seeing growth in the next generation of outdoor leaders in her college outdoor program, Marla noted the gendered experiences her students face as they graduate. Male students receive questions about outdoor technical skills, whereas female students experience situations like, "My boss does these behaviors, and I get treated this way. How should I handle this?" More explicitly, these women leaders say that they are constantly getting "mansplained" to, and their skills and abilities are underestimated or questioned. Marla was discouraged that one of her recent female graduates expressed in an email self-doubt in her skills:

> I'm looking at all of the positions for entry level outdoor educators, and I just don't feel like I'm qualified for anything other than customer service and desk job stuff. I just don't feel like my technical skills are good enough.

Marla responded, "Part of it was just me telling her, 'I think you'd be fine actually.'"

Because of her experiences navigating male-dominated spaces, Marla has made it a priority in her own program to be a strong female role model who mentors students of all gender identities to be "positive change agents." In one of her photos, she is pictured with her large student staff, which she now brings to annual conferences. She is proud of the mentorship she provides her students, and hopes that her mentorship will increase the representation of women in outdoor education. She has instilled a strong diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) emphasis in her outdoor program.

Marla expressed that in addition to her identity as a woman, she thinks about her White privilege:

> I definitely have been struggling with trying to be an ally for people of other races. I'm very aware of my White privilege, but I'm also fearful of offending people . . . I've been conscious of how whitewashed outdoor programs are and want to know why.

Marla tries to better understand DEI issues through conversations with other outdoor leaders, reading, and becoming self-educated about issues of diversity. "Many of the conversations with outdoor leaders end up revolving around statements like, 'Oh well, it's always been that way,' or 'Oh well, [people of color] are just not interested in the outdoors.'" In her opinion, the field of outdoor education has significant work to do in "reshaping what the programming is" to be more inclusive, and envisioning how DEI integrates into outdoor education and leadership is critical to the field. She stated, "Now, it's like, I can't un-see the problem. Now it's just ingrained." Marla's story sets the stage for the following analyses of study participants' experiences in outdoor leadership.

Analyses

Three main themes were developed using inductive and thematic analysis: How the participants perceive and define outdoor education and leadership, sexism and gender bias in the field, and participants' intersections of identity.

(Re)Conceptualizing Outdoor Education and Leadership

Outdoor education, written about predominantly by men, has long held a universalized ideology based in masculine norms (Millikan, 2006). Research participants contested the barriers and challenges this ideology has created for women, reflecting the experiences and scholarship of many women who have practiced outdoor education apart from masculine norms (Mitten, 1997; Mitten & Woodruff, 2010). Despite an impression of "outdoor leaders as this kind of iconic, technical, strong person who literally keeps you alive," as one study participant, Christine, commented, the women in this study believed outdoor education is about "self-discovery," and the joy in helping others discover themselves through the outdoors. Seeing themselves as facilitators of student growth shaped how these women conceptualize and practice outdoor leadership. Terms that arose frequently in defining outdoor leadership were *facilitate, discovery*, and *community*.

In addition to describing how they perceive outdoor education, participants discussed how masculine conceptions of outdoor leadership still seem to pervade the field. Laura noted that if you have an attitude of "Let's hit this trail, let's do it as fast as we can, that's great for you," but that perspective does not work when leading students. These masculine norms have created challenges for women in developing the confidence and competence they need to be leaders, particularly with technical skills. Sam wrote in one photo reflection, "What am I doing here: learning from outgoing, charismatic male leaders, it took a while to see other styles and find my own in my quieter but no-less-passionate style." Sam's definition of outdoor leadership mirrored other participants' definitions around the importance of meeting students where they are and prioritizing their goals, rather than focusing on the leader's goals or a preconceived expectation of how any given trip should unfold.

Sexism and Gender Bias

Participants' narratives demonstrated that pervasive sexism and gender bias continue in outdoor education, with a highly masculinized conception and expectation of outdoor leadership in mainstream outdoor education programs. Some participants reported striving to meet this expectation, and others reconceptualized outdoor leadership, enacting their own ways of being outdoor leaders. In the first scenario, women overcompensated in technical skills and masculine leadership styles, and may have been perceived negatively. In the latter, women were not taken seriously and considered "too emotional" or lacking competence. Conversely, men in outdoor leadership roles were perceived to be applauded for displaying interpersonal skills.

Marla's narrative about swapping stereotypical gender roles with her male co-instructor illuminates how deeply rooted gender stereotypes are, and the challenges this creates. Christine commented, "I think women try to overcompensate a little bit for the ways that we are perceived." As an outdoor program director, Christine was discouraged that many of the women leaders she has encountered have "led kind of just like the men" and "maintained some of the same stereotypes and exclusivities than

the men did before them." Cate commented, "The women who I worked with were, on the surface, more cold because they were trying to make sure people knew that they had a right to be there," and were hyper-focused on technical skills. In this sense, both Christine and Cate observed that women have had to "overcompensate" or prove themselves as "worthy" to be in outdoor leadership. Other examples of the "boys will be boys" mentality or "the hardcore club" were prevalent. In one instance, a female student was told by a male supervisor to "go make him a sandwich" during a staff training. Participants identified that these sexist environments and gender stereotypes often cause them to feel fatigue and discouragement in outdoor leadership.

Intersectionality and DEI

The participants' identities as women influenced their experiences as outdoor leaders, but other identities, particularly race and sexual orientation, were also influential. Sam, Christine, and Megan discussed how their White racial identity played a significant role in their profession, partly due to White privilege in outdoor education, and partly due to their dedication to DEI in the field. They believed that DEI is a critical issue and are working to improve representation of women, people of color, and other marginalized populations.

At an outdoor industry conference, Laura, a woman of color, recognized that "90% of the people are White . . . and everybody is in their flannel shirt and Patagonia jackets." She reflected, "Maybe I just ignore it." Laura's reflection may reveal the fatigue that people of color often experience when living in predominantly White spaces and are asked to speak about their experiences (Finney, 2014). While she acknowledged that seeing people of color in the outdoor education field may be important to increasing diversity, she personally did not feel she has been hindered by her identity as a woman of color. Laura acknowledged that her experience might be different from other experiences of women of color in outdoor education.

Christine and Sam discussed how sexual orientation has had a positive impact on their experiences as outdoor leaders. Christine identifies as a lesbian and Sam identifies as queer. They have met many other queer (Sam's term) or gay (Christine's term) women in the outdoor industry, and this has created space for stronger connections and the ability to honor their identities. Christine commented that her college outdoor program was led by women, most of whom identified as queer, and that the program had an LGBTQ subculture. She felt her identity as a lesbian has been an advantage throughout her outdoor education career, which she observed, is "actually kind of a remarkable thing to be able to say about an industry." Sam noticed that queer women she met in outdoor leadership seemed to be authentic in themselves, and so she also felt "free to be who I was and bring that to my leadership."

Discussion

This study is rooted in critical feminist analysis, critiquing and exposing how masculine norms and ideologies in outdoor education disadvantage and exclude women in

outdoor leadership. In addition, the study explores how these participants' stories might help broaden perspectives and practices of outdoor education and leadership.

Challenging the Narrative

Participants perceived an expectation to enact prescribed masculine, competitive behaviors to be an effective outdoor leader. This finding reflects literature in outdoor education that criticizes the field's "grand narrative" and "universalism" (Humberstone, 2000; Millikan, 2006). For example, participants discussed how women attempting to meet the expectations of "the iconic leader" often questioned their competence and belonging, or felt forced to overcompensate in masculine leadership styles and were subsequently perceived and evaluated negatively. Women need to see themselves as outdoor leaders on their own and equally valuable terms. Communal or interpersonal leadership styles should not necessarily replace competitive or individualist styles as the normative ideal of outdoor leadership. Rather, a critical feminist lens allows for multiple ways of enacting outdoor leadership from a gender fluid continuum from which all people can and should draw (Henderson, 1996).

   In addition, the findings of this study parallel what scholars have identified in their research on women's interpretations of adventure in the outdoors, in that women may have broad definitions of what adventure means to them (Little, 2002; Mitten & Woodruff, 2010). Ewert and Sibthorp (2014) define adventure as "an exciting event that contains elements of risk and/or danger and where the outcome is uncertain" (p. 4), while research shows women may define adventure as a state of mind rather than a risky activity (Little, 2002). In making sense of how participants define and perceive outdoor education and leadership, perhaps it is the masculine notions of adventure as equated with risk that create dissonance in how participants define outdoor leadership compared with mainstream definitions of outdoor leadership.

Sexism and Gender Bias

Findings from this study indicate that these women continue to experience gender bias, sexist discourse, sexist environments, and lower perceptions of competence than men in outdoor education. The study supports research on women in the outdoors about how masculine notions of an ideal outdoor leader disadvantages women. Expecting women to lead and behave like men is problematic on several levels. First, it reinforces the assumption that masculine leadership is the ideal in outdoor education (Humberstone, 2000). Second, as narrated by participants, it ignores the reality that women who lead like men are often perceived negatively (Wittmer, 2001). Finally, it precludes a critical and historical analysis of how and why women and the feminine have been devalued in outdoor leadership to begin with (Henderson, 1996). A common result of sexism in outdoor education literature is that women perceive themselves as less competent than their male counterparts, particularly in technical skills (Warren & Loeffler, 2006), and that men can transcend the gender binary without negative consequences (Wittmer, 2001). When women pursue outdoor technical skill development

and take on masculine leadership styles, they must be perceived as demonstrating expertise and competence, not overcompensation.

Intersectionality and DEI in Outdoor Education

The participants in this study identified how their intersections of identities play a role in their experiences as outdoor leaders, and influence how they perceive DEI in the outdoor field. White privilege and social justice (Rose & Paisley, 2012; Warren, Roberts, Breunig, & Alvarez, 2014) address why the outdoor education field continues to be a White male-dominated space, and what barriers may exist to including more diverse populations. However, limited research addresses how women in outdoor leadership perceive their White privilege and how this may influence their experiences, as well as their perspectives around DEI. Because (predominantly White) women make up approximately 25% of outdoor leadership positions in higher education (Rogers et al., in press), it is critical that their voices and perspectives are heard. Most study participants identified that they are actively self-educating around DEI in outdoor education, including gaining a deeper understanding of their White privilege (Rose & Paisley, 2012), as well as barriers to participation people of color and other diverse groups have identified in the outdoors (Finney, 2014). This is particularly critical for those who are in positions of privilege to create the *systemic* change (Rose & Paisley, 2012; Warren et al., 2014) that may be necessary in outdoor education. Although participants discussed White privilege at considerable length during interviews, participants did not refer to class privilege as an identity and the role that it plays in accessing outdoor activities and programs that often require substantial financial resources.

Another study finding around intersectionality relates to sexual identities. Christine and Sam found that identifying as lesbian and queer has been supportive for them, despite the field's predominantly heterosexist culture (Barnfield & Humberstone, 2008). Both women stated that they have met many gay or queer women in the outdoors and have felt a sense of belonging in that community. This finding suggests that if LGBTQ-identifying women who participate and lead in outdoor education are more visible, it may foster more positive and supportive experiences for people who identify as LGBTQ in the outdoor community.

Implications

This study has several implications for research, policy, and practice in outdoor education. Further research needs to be conducted with marginalized and underrepresented populations in the field of outdoor education and leadership, such as women outdoor leaders who are mothers, participants of color, older women, women whose body types do not conform with outdoor leader stereotypes, women of color, people with disabilities, people of lower socioeconomic status, and people who identify as LGBTQ. Additional critical frameworks may be necessary for future outdoor education research. Exploring people's experiences through intersectionality, queer theory, and (toxic)

masculinity frameworks may help broaden perspectives of how outdoor education is conceived and practiced (Humberstone, 2000; Warren, 2015). Leaders can interrogate the policies and practices in place in outdoor programs that create barriers for women and other underrepresented populations. For example, outdoor leaders can revisit hiring policies that may be exclusive, reallocate budgets around DEI efforts and recruitment, and reexamine training and curriculum materials through a DEI lens. Finally, inclusive teaching is a growing and well-researched aspect of education that validates, welcomes, and draws on diverse perspectives, voices, and backgrounds (Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, & Norman, 2010). Outdoor leaders can incorporate inclusive teaching practices within the experiential education framework to work toward a more inclusive outdoor education field.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Funding

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Jeff Rose is an assistant professor-lecturer in Parks, Recreation, and Tourism at the University of Utah. His research uses qualitative methods to examine systemic inequities expressed through class, race, political economy, and relationships to nature. He uses this justice-focused lens on homelessness in parks, socioecological systems, outdoor education, and place attachment in protected areas.