DISSERTATION APPROVED BY

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THE JOURNEY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN TOWARDS

DIVISION I (FBS) COLLEGIATE ATHLETICS ADMINISTRATION:

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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By

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A DISSERTATION IN PRACTICE

Submitted to the faculty of the Graduate School of Creighton University in Partial
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Interdisciplinary Leadership

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Abstract

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative research study was to obtain a description of the lived experiences of African American women as they journey to upper-level administrative positions within Division I (FBS) collegiate athletics. The aim of this study was to provide recommendations that would support African American women who aspire for senior-level leadership at Division I (FBS) institutions. A phenomenological research methodology was utilized to garner the essence of African American women's experiences through in-depth interviews. Through the analysis of the data collected, the following themes emerged: strategy for upward mobility, external judgements impacting professional perceptions, and experientially shaped perspective. From these themes, several subthemes were also noted. Proposed recommendations were a person-focused professional development program and an institutional-level diversity training program. Practical implications of this research not only provide a proposed professional blueprint for African American women seeking comparable leadership positions, but also incite a deeper comprehension of the stereotypes and biases that African American women face within collegiate athletics. Implications for further research and leadership theory and practice were also reviewed.

Keywords: African American women, Division I, collegiate athletics administration, phenomenology

Dedication

To the one who inspired me and passed the torch—

allowing me to carry his legacy through to the finish line...

this is for "us," daddy.

I love you.

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To my Lord and savior, Jesus Christ—You have been my foundation of stability, mercy, and endurance. Amid thoughts of defeat, You provided me with an inner strength I never knew I possessed. Through my most trying times, You provided peace in the storm and fortitude during times of despair. You granted me productivity and knowledge throughout moments of distraction and chaos. I thank You for Your guidance as You continue to touch me and pour into me every day and with every experience. I praise You with every fiber of my being. May I continue to be directed down a path that is most pleasing to You. May this process and experience equip me to be a blessing to those I encounter, for I am ever and eternally grateful to and for you.… Amen.

To my wonderful, patient, loving, and supportive husband and best friend, George Stanley II—I absolutely **<u>CANNOT</u>** thank you enough for standing by my side, holding my hand, drying my tears, being a listening ear, and providing comfort during my most stressful and frustrating moments. You have patiently waited with bated breath for my undivided attention as my coursework has been the third-wheel of our relationship for four years. Please understand that all that you have done to support me and this family (e.g., cooking amazing dinners, forcing me to take a break and let my hair down, being my comic relief, etc.) **<u>has not</u>** gone unnoticed nor has it been taken for granted. I love you more than I loved you at my last breath. As this emotionally driven, time-intensive chapter of our lives comes to a close (PRAISE THE GOOD LORD), I thank you and will be "Giving You the Best of Me" (Anthony Hamilton)… (wink, wink).

Mommy and Daddy (Marsha and George Irby, Sr.), I remember sitting in Bubba Gump restaurant when I learned of and shared the news of my acceptance to the Doctor

of Education program at Creighton University. You shared in my excitement and offered the type of unconditional love and support one can only receive from one's parents. Daddy, you provided invaluable nuggets of the exciting yet challenging educational journey I was about to embark upon—that advice only **_you_** could provide. Mommy, you proofread papers and saved all my updated assignments to my very own "JOI" folder on your computer, should anything happen to my technology—you are so sweet. THANK YOU!!! Mommy and Daddy, throughout this journey, you opened your home to me every weekend, created a "Dissertation Warm Room," and left the most appropriate, motivational quotes which ultimately set the tone for a good working weekend. Daddy, though you think the "Bed & Breakfast" at 9338 will close, Mommy and I have worked out a deal (smile). In all seriousness, I am eternally indebted to you both, for your support, unconditional love, wisdom, and encouragement…thank you, Thank You, THANK YOU!!! I love you dearly and couldn't have done it without you.

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much to you, but it always came on time and at the right moment; so thank you, each of you, for your thoughts and well wishes.

To my best friends, Jessica Cherry and George Strother—I have known you both for a combined total of 39 years. There is much for me to say; however, for the sake of this space, I wanted to let you know that I thank you both for your love, your kindness, and your lifetime friendships. It means the world to me that you treat my parents as you treat your very own—George, you seeing them more than I even get to. I love you both for many different reasons, but do know and understand that your love, support, and loyalty are forever cherished.

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To my family members (Jeters/Stanleys/Johnsons/Winstons) and close friends who remain unnamed (because there are more than enough of you to name individually)—YOU KNOW EXACTLY WHO YOU ARE…. I love and appreciate your continued support, thoughts, well wishes, and positive energy. Your positively powerful prayers over my life and throughout this process have provided continued strength. Though your names are not written here, please understand that **DOES NOT** make you any less significant than anyone else. Do know that I will speak with each of you individually and in my own time, expressing my sincerest gratitude for your kindness, support, and love. Thank you….

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CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW OF THE DISSERTATION IN PRACTICE PROBLEM

Introduction

There are many leadership theories and ideologies about gender differences
in leadership positions and practice. Women across multiple disciplines are
underrepresented in leadership positions, especially in occupations that are and have been
historically dominated by men (Catalyst, 2014). While the general population of women
in leadership across educational, corporate, and service-based professional organizations
is small in number, African American women in leadership are scarce in comparison to
Caucasian men and women, as well as their African American male counterparts
(Catalyst 2014). For example, of the 16 women who serve as presidents (as of October
2015) of major Division I higher education institutions (12.5%), one is an African
American female (Lapchick & Baker, 2016). Similarly, in Fortune 500 companies, the
number of women in executive positions has been stagnant, holding at between 13.5%
and 14.6% from 2009 to 2013 (Catalyst, 2014). Xerox, a Fortune 500 company, has
employed the first and only African American female of an executive post as of July
2013 (Berman, 2013; Jerreat, 2013). This recurring theme is also descriptive of the
military, police force, and firefighting agencies (Baldwin, 1996; Catalyst, 2014; Chen,
2015; Hulett, Bendick, Thomas, & Moccio, 2008; Lang, 2008; Lonsway et al., 2002;
National Women's Law Center [NWLC], 2013, 2015a; Wilson, 2009).

The trend of few African American female leaders across multiple disciplines is
also descriptive of higher education athletics leadership. During the 2015 – 2016
academic year, there were 326 directors of athletics across all of Division I. Two
hundred ninety-four of those positions were held by men (90%). Women held 32 director

posts (10%). Of the 32 women who held director of athletics positions at all Division I

institutions, excluding Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), only two

were African American women (less than 1% of all director of athletics positions and 6%

of all women athletics directors) (National Collegiate Athletics Association [NCAA],

2016). Similarly, African American women comprise only 2% of the Director and

Associate Director positions within collegiate athletics leadership (NCAA, 2015b). An

insufficient number of leadership opportunities for African American women within

collegiate athletics presents a concern for the changing climate of not only the discipline,

but also the success of the organizations (Berman, 2013; Catalyst, 2014; Fink & Pastore,

2001; Jerreat, 2013; Sabo & Snyder, 2013). Sustaining homogeneity within athletics

leadership may impede an organization's overall achievements. Specifically, limited

diversity may create a lack of diversity in thought, ultimately causing unbalanced

decision making, inadequate strategic planning, decreased productivity, and discomfort to

minority populations (Fink & Pastore, 2001).

     Lapchick, Fox, Guiao, and Simpson (2015), Lapchick and Baker (2016),

Harrison, Lapchick, and Janson (2009), and the NCAA Demographic Database (2015b)

validated the noticeable dissimilarity between the student-athlete population and

administration, nationally and across all divisions. Specifically, there is typically a larger

racial minority population visible within the student-athlete body and a smaller minority

population visible within athletics administration. This contrast potentially reduces

opportunities for student-athletes to seek like-paragons within athletics leadership

positions (Avery, Tonidandel, & Phillips, 2007; Weaver & Chelladurai, 2002).

Subsequently, the narrow opportunity for observing like gender and ethnic role models

may instigate a false belief that African American women do not work in leadership within collegiate athletics, further discouraging African American female student-athletes from a career in collegiate athletics administration (Avery et al., 2007; Weaver & Chelladurai, 2002). Moreover, having a limited number of diverse athletics departments illustrating standards of excellence perpetuates a diminished priority for the advocacy of diversity within athletics leadership across all divisions of collegiate athletics, and more specifically, Division I.

While it is evident that further progress can be made in diversifying athletics leadership, efforts have been made to protect against discriminatory hiring practices through the adoption of Civil Rights Legislation—Title VII and Title IX (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [US EEOC], 2015). Additionally, the established and mandated Senior Woman Administrator designation within collegiate athletics has ensured a space for a woman's participation in executive-level decision making (NCAA, 2011; Tiell & Dixon, 2008). Furthermore, the annual submission of the Equity in Athletics Data Analysis (EADA) report, mandated by the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act, holds postsecondary institutions accountable to equity in sport as it relates to gender of employees, salary distributions, and participation in and funding of sports programs, based on participation, revenues, and expenses (Cheslock & Eckes, 2008; Sabo & Snyder, 2013; U.S. Department of Education [US DOE], 2015). Dr. Richard Lapchick, the Director of the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES), facilities the production of an annual racial and gender report card for college sport (TIDES, 2015). Since 2008, this report, in conjunction with the NCAA and colleagues, has demonstrated the progress, or lack thereof, towards diversity within college sport (TIDES, 2015).

Although the aforementioned practices were implemented to illustrate statistical

evidence, knowledge, and awareness of the diversity challenges in collegiate athletics

administration over the years, challenges remain that prevent equity for women within

athletics leadership, especially African American women.

The main goal of this study was to identify the challenges that African American

women have faced throughout their journey to senior-level positions within Division I

collegiate athletics leadership, and analyze the effects of these challenges and by what

means these barriers were overcome. Equipping African American women with essential

leadership tools may inspire their new and continued endeavors to reach senior-level

leadership positions and help diversify collegiate athletics administration. An awareness

of personal and professional roadblocks for African American women may lead to an

overall evaluation of hiring practices and organizational climates within the collegiate

athletics arena, specifically Division I collegiate athletics.

Statement of the Problem

Currently, there is a noticeable deficiency of African American women serving in

leadership positions within Division I collegiate athletics administration within Football

Bowl Subdivision (FBS) institutions (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Lapchick & Baker,

2016; Lapchick, Farris, & Rodriguez, 2012; Lapchick, Johnson, Loomer, & Martinez,

2014; Lapchick & Kuhn, 2011; Lapchick, Baker, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Fox, et al., 2015;

NCAA, 2015b). This lack of diversity within the collegiate athletics setting has the

potential to adversely impact other African American women seeking leadership roles

within collegiate athletics administration. Similarly, African American female student-

athletes may be negatively impacted by the lack of African American women in athletics

upper administration due to the shortage of like-role models from which an initial

impression and influence of leadership in athletics administration derives. Sabo and

Snyder (2013) and Avery et al. (2007) affirmed that one of the most impactful

mentor/mentee relationships is characterized by individuals of like gender and ethnicity.

For these reasons, it is invaluable and beneficial to uncover how African American

women have professionally navigated their way to upper-administrative positions within

the FBS. Moreover, this research may serve as a motivational and inspirational guide for

other African American women who seek similar positions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative research study was to obtain a

description of the lived experiences of African American women as they journey to upper

level administrative positions within Division I (FBS) collegiate athletics. The goal was

to identify shared occurrences among African American women that would ultimately

reveal an experiential phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). From the shared personal and

professional experiences, prominent themes were identified. Furthermore, the extracted

themes surrounding the phenomenon were utilized to further study current Division I

operational practices, provide a baseline knowledge of the experiences of African

American women as they pursued senior-level administration, and offer a point of

reference for other marginalized populations within Division I collegiate athletics

administration who seek similar opportunities—positions that have been historically held

by Caucasian males (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Lapchick & Baker, 2016; Lapchick,

Baker, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Donovan, et al., 2014; Lapchick, Fox, et al., 2015;

Lapchick, Johnson, et al., 2014; Lapchick & Kuhn, 2011; Lapchick et al., 2012).

Research Question

The underrepresentation of African American women in upper-level

administration within FBS institutions served as the motivation for this study. An

understanding of the personal and professional journeys of African American women in

Division I athletics may illustrate potential avenues for other African American women to

secure senior leadership within collegiate athletics administration at the Division I level.

The following research question guided this qualitative research study:

What are the lived experiences of African American women in their pursuit of

senior leadership positions within athletics administration at Division I

institutions?

Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to provide recommendations that would support

African American women who aspire for senior-level leadership at Division I (FBS)

institutions. Specifically, as a result of the analysis of the lived experiences of African

American women with upper-level leadership positions in athletic administration,

suggestions for professional development opportunities for both aspiring leaders, as well

as the institutions in which they work, will be presented.

Definition of Terms

In an effort to minimize ambiguity and uncertainty of terminology that may be

defined in varying ways, this section operationalizes terms that were frequently used

throughout this research:

Division I: Although Division I athletics is inclusive of institutions that are

Football Bowl Subdivision programs (FBS—formerly known as Division I-A),

Football Championship Subdivision programs (FCS—formerly known as

Division I—AA), and Division I—non-football programs (institutions that do not

sponsor football), this study used the term *Division I* (from this point forward) to

refer to FBS institutions only, unless otherwise noted. The terms *FBS* and

Division I are used interchangeably throughout this research.

Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS): High major Division I—athletics departments

that are Bowl-eligible based on football programs (formerly known as Division

I—A).

Sport Supervision: The authority to manage a head coach and athletics program

while regulating budgetary transactions, travel opportunities, student-athlete

welfare, and other related responsibilities.

Upper-/Senior-Level Administration: Titles of Associate and/or Director of

Athletics; part of the department of athletics' leadership and decision-making

team (while these are basic/root titles, some titles may begin with "Executive,"

"Senior," or "Deputy," among others, followed by director of athletics which

indicates even more seniority within the athletics department beyond the

Associate Director of Athletics title until the director of athletics position).

Method Overview

A phenomenological approach was used to capture African American women's

journeys toward securing senior leadership positions in Division I athletics. Pollio,

Henley, and Thompson (1997) noted that a phenomenological approach is a natural and

rigorous means of procuring a description of real-world experiences. Creswell (2013)

further asserted that this research method provides a platform for extracting thematic

resemblances among research participants, while suspending judgment and deconstructing conscious experiences to a single phenomenon. Endeavoring to identify relevant and similar experiences among the research participants, the phenomenological method was selected because it is a realistic means of uncovering, acknowledging, and emphasizing the overall personal and professional similarities of the lived experiences of African American women journeying towards leadership positions within Division I athletics. Although this research is not generalizable to the larger population of collegiate athletics or African American women collegiate athletics administrators, the researcher uncovered detailed, rich information that offered in-depth insight into the lived experiences of African American women who pursued and secured senior-level administrative positions in collegiate athletics. Furthermore, this research, though highlighting collegiate athletics, may serve as the catalyst for structural and institutional evaluation and/or change at the senior management-level center around hiring practice and promotion within university administration (e.g., presidents, provosts, chancellors, etc.).

Assumptions

According to the NCAA Demographic Database (2016), as of the 2014-2015 academic year, there were a total of 327 directors of athletics and 1,776 associate directors of athletics within all echelons of Division I (FBS, FCS, & Division I—non-football). Of both positions, 2% were African American women (1 director of athletics and 46 associate directors of athletics). No current documentation has confirmed the number of senior-level administrators specifically at the Division I level FBS. Despite this lack of confirmation of the exact number of African American women currently

serving in senior leadership at the Division I level, it was assumed that the review of

institutional websites and the application of the snowball technique would furnish the

sought-after target population. While it was assumed that saturation would be obtained

within the sample of the target population of African American women who agreed to

participate in the research, the reflections were personal and should not be considered as

identical experiences for all African American women employed within Division I

collegiate athletics. It was also assumed that the participants would answer all of the

interview questions openly and honestly as the purpose of this phenomenological study

was to extract themes from the interviews of participating African American women who

have obtained senior-level leadership positions within the male-dominated profession of

collegiate athletics.

Delimitations and Limitations

Delimitations

Delimitations, or boundaries set by the researcher, are the parameters that qualify

participants to be eligible to participate in the study. As Creswell (2013) noted, an

identifiable characteristic of a phenomenological study is conducting several in-depth

interviews in an effort to analyze and extract themes from shared experiences that may be

deconstructed into a single phenomenon and/or several phenomena. The target population

was African American women who work in Division I FBS athletics administration,

holding the title of Associate Director or higher while also having sport supervision

responsibilities. Participation in this study was voluntary, hence the sample was

determined by individuals from the target population who agreed to participate. Because

the sampling method did not use probability-based methods, the results are not

generalizable to the target population (Kukull & Ganguli, 2012).

Limitations

Limitations are the boundaries established by the research itself. Because

collegiate athletics span the United States, there are limitations due to the researcher's

proximity to potential participants. When the researcher secured interview time,

interviews were scheduled at different times of the day and night as participants ranged

across varying time zones. Distance limited possible face-to-face interviews. With the

void of in-person interviews, the use of technology was inevitable. However, the use of

unfamiliar technology may discourage participants from participating in the research due

to unfamiliarity and/or time necessary for technological set-up. Furthermore, finding

dependable primary and secondary technology to record interviews from a distance

presented a challenge for the researcher. Another limitation to the research was the timing

of data collection. The commencement of data collection abutted the football season,

which is one of the busiest times of the year for athletics administration and personnel.

Hence, it was difficult, at times, to solidify interview time with senior management. In

fact, the researcher extended the data collection time period beyond the initially

established November deadline and/or eliminated potential eligible participants due to

logistical challenges. Lastly, another limitation was the absence of multiple coders.

Berends and Johnston (2005) proposed that the use multiple coders increases reliability of

coding as multiple coders have the ability to "discuss disagreements in coding and

establish the parameters of each theme" (p. 375). Likewise, an objective reviewer

utilizing confirmed codes increases the validity of data. Because there was only one

researcher, reliability and validity of the research were priorities for the researcher (Gwet, 2008; Pollio et al., 1997).

Significance of the Study

While the number of women serving in leadership positions has been on the rise, this is still an aspect of organizational leadership and organizational composition in need of improvement, especially in male-dominated occupations (Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb, 2013). With few exceptions, collegiate athletics has seen overall growth in the percentage of women serving in senior-level administration over the last several years (Lapchick & Baker, 2016; Lapchick, Baker, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Donovan, et al., 2014; Lapchick, Fox, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Johnson, et al., 2014; Lapchick & Kuhn, 2011; Lapchick et al., 2012, NCAA, 2015a). However, there is a clear deficit of African American women serving in upper-level leadership within Division I collegiate athletics (Lapchick & Baker, 2016; Lapchick & Baker, 2016; Lapchick, Baker, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Donovan, et al., 2014; Lapchick, Fox, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Johnson, et al., 2014; Lapchick & Kuhn, 2011; Lapchick et al., 2012; NCAA, 2016). Because of this deficit, it is important to examine and identify distinct and apparent experiences surrounding the journey of African American women who have attained senior leadership positions within Division I athletics.

Summary

There have been some efforts to acknowledge and remedy the shortage of women serving in leadership positions across all professions (Ibara et al., 2013; Wilson, 2009). However, the scarcity of women in leadership positions is particularly visible in male-dominated professions—more specifically, African American women serving in

leadership positions within Division I collegiate athletics (Lapchick & Baker, 2016;

Lapchick & Kuhn, 2011; Lapchick et al., 2012, 2014a, 2014b, 2015a, 2015b; Wilson,

2009). In an effort to increase the representation of African American women in Division

I collegiate athletics, it is important to understand how the few African American women

in such roles secured their positions, and what barriers they faced getting there. By

obtaining personal reflections from African American women who have secured an

Associate Director of Athletics or Director of Athletics title through in-depth interviews,

the common phenomenon of experiences, personal and professional, was revealed.

CHAPTER TWO: PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Because of the visible deficit of African American women serving in leadership positions within Division I collegiate athletics, it is beneficial to understand this phenomenon by procuring and understanding the experiences of African American women who have secured senior athletics leadership positions at Division I institutions. However, in an effort to garner a well-rounded perspective of a specific population of women serving in a male-dominated profession, there is value in recognizing and appreciating the experiences of all women in pursuit of leadership within organizations.

This chapter reviews the literature on women and leadership, and specifically African American women and leadership, and concludes with collegiate athletics leadership. In the first section, Women and Leadership, women as transformational and transactional leaders, the history of women entering the workforce, and the impact of developing social capital for the purposes of career advancement are the focus. In the next section, African American Women and Leadership, attention is paid to the historical and modern-day challenges of African American women in the workforce as well as the shaped perspective of African American women, internally and externally. Chapter Two concludes with an overview of collegiate athletics leadership to address the masculinization of athletics, the history of women in athletics, and the current composition of collegiate athletics leadership.

Women and Leadership

Some of the earliest literature surrounding the relationships and gender roles between men and women dates back to the late 1950s (Beilin & Werner, 1957).

Behaviors associated with women included "good manners," "respect for authority," and "no discipline problems" while "being loud and at times vulgar, outspoken, [and] tactless" was associated with men (Beilin & Werner, 1957, p. 343). Since the 1950s, researchers have assessed attitudes towards individuals whose characteristics differ from those typically associated with their assigned gender (Martin, 1990). Martin's (1990) study that found that boys who display more feminine qualities were judged more harshly than girls who demonstrated more male characteristics. Despite the findings of this study, women are criticized when demonstrating male characteristics (Eagly & Carli, 2007), even when they are used in positions of leadership or attain such positions. In utilizing male attributes to attain leadership positions, women in leadership positions in the United States have increased exponentially over the course of the last century (Eagly & Carli, 2007). However, progress is still needed because significant disparities still exist.

Within the last decade, the United States has made a shift towards increased leadership opportunities for women in an effort to establish a distinct change in the traditional model of male leadership (Wilson, 2009). A deviation from the traditional male-dominated model of leadership may have been the result of the decline in the United States economy (Wilson, 2009). This is a national example of the *glass cliff*, a term coined by Susanne Bruckmuller and Nyla Branscombe (2010) that describes the challenges and reduced odds of a woman's ascent to leadership within an organization, except during moments of crisis. For example, Sargeant (2015) detailed the termination of both a head coach and director of athletics, whereby the University president initially appointed the female director of athletics "in 2013, at a time when the program was in turmoil…" (para. 7). This is a modern-day illustration of a woman being placed into a

position of leadership in an effort to create balance and calm amid tumult and disorder. While like scenarios present an opportunity for leadership, the question still remains whether this is the "right" or "fair" leadership opportunity for women. Finding no studies that point to men being hired to lead organizations during times of crisis, it can be contested that men are oftentimes presented with opportunities for managerial success while women are appointed to positions of leadership that have often led to failures.

      As the appearance of organizational leadership subtly shifts from the traditional Caucasian male to the not-so-common female, Eagly and Carli's (2007) research led to the proposal of the fading "glass ceiling" theory. This theory suggested that although women have penetrated senior levels of leadership, they do not do so at the same rates as their male counterparts or without challenge. The most recent and visible example of this theory was illustrated during the 2016 U.S. presidential election. The United States saw its first female presidential nominee of a major political party. However, despite being voted as most qualified (52%, Hillary Clinton; 38%, Donald Trump) and more honest (*ABC World News with David Muir*, 11/9/16), and receiving the popular vote by 667,855, Hillary Clinton was not elected the next Commander in Chief (*ABC World News with David Muir*, 11/14/16). In fact, she lost the election by what political analysts considered a "landslide" (*ABC World News with David Muir*, 11/14/16).

      Not having the benefit of a model of a traditional hierarchical trajectory to senior leadership, similar to the Caucasian male, women must overcome personal and professional roadblocks with little direction (Eagly & Carli, 2007). These challenges may include, but are not limited to, familial responsibilities that may negatively impact the development of social capital, declining confidence, hiring discrimination, and

stereotypes, among others (Cheung & Halpern, 2010; Eagly & Carli, 2007). These myriad challenges are what Eagly and Carli (2007) termed the *labyrinth*.

McDonagh and Paris (2012) found that women have often encountered professional challenges that can be viewed as unfair, daunting, and even disheartening. However, rather than embracing defeat, McDonagh and Paris suggested that women utilize their experiences as professional development opportunities for mastering a plethora of leadership attributes inclusive of strength, competitiveness, and endurance. They further noted that if women take full advantage of such opportunities, they will develop skills that will enhance their individual leadership styles and better prepare them for leadership.

Women and Leadership Styles

Leaders utilize various leadership styles and philosophies in an effort to create an organization that produces desirable outcomes and successes. Some notable leadership styles include, but are not limited to, transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, authentic, and charismatic (Johnson, 2012). Research has suggested that some leadership styles, more than others, are more effective and better suited in specific environments (Johnson, 2012). Additionally, some leadership styles can be supplemented by the simultaneous use of another leadership technique (Tyssen, Wald, & Spieth, 2014). While this may be so, one thing is certain—every leader is not equipped with the personal tools to employ any and all types of leadership styles effectively, appropriately, and/or confidently at a moment's notice. In fact, researchers have argued that there may be a correlation between employed leadership styles and characteristics associated with gender (Dahlvig & Longman, 2010; Druskat, 1994; Eagly, Johannessen-Schmidt, &

Engen, 2003; Fels, 2004). This may further suggest that men and women may be more inclined to evoke a particular style of leadership as opposed to another.

Two styles of leadership that have commonly been associated with either men or women are transformational and transactional leadership (Dahlvig & Longman, 2000; Eagly & Carli 2007; Eagly et al., 2003; Rudman & Glick, 2001). Because of this relationship, having an understanding of gendered attributes associated with leadership styles is important. To explore this concept, a review of the potential relationship between gender norms and social role theory and how they pertain to transformational and transactional leadership qualities is fitting.

Prescriptive gender norms/social role theory. Current research has demonstrated conflicting opinions about the deficiency of women in leadership positions, noting that gender roles often influence the effectiveness of the leadership (Applebaum, Audet, & Miller, 2003; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Kawakami, White, & Langer, 2000; Koenig & Eagly, 2014). The long-established paradigm of leadership is described as being agentic, aggressive, dominant, and results-oriented—traits typically ascribed to men (Bem, 1974; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Prentice & Carranza, 2002). Because of this commonly accepted paradigm, using the aforementioned qualities to describe women tends to be met with resistance and cynicism (Bem, 1974; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Rudman & Glick, 2001). Supporting this deeply rooted standard of leadership, Bem (1974) conducted a foundational study on sex roles with 100 college students (50 men, 50 women). Specifically, he asked participants to identify feminine and masculine characteristics from a list of 400 possible personality characteristics. These qualities were confirmed only if both genders agreed to their appropriateness for the respective gender.

After confirming 40 characteristics as masculine and/or feminine (20 for men and/or 20 for women), participants assigned characteristics to a gender based on its gender appropriateness. In other words, the "desirability of the masculine and feminine items was significantly higher for the appropriate sex than for the inappropriate sex" (p. 157)—an obvious result during the selection and assignment process. According to Bem (1974), the selected feminine qualities were described as being expressive and communicating concern for others. In contrast, the masculine attributes were described as instrumentally-oriented and driven by task completion.

A more recent study by Prentice and Carranza (2002) furthered the social role research. Specifically, 208 participants (half men, half women) completed two questionnaires containing 100 personality traits. Seventy-five of the terms were condensed from Bem's (1974) original list of 400 characteristics, which included the 40 confirmed qualities used in his study, while the remaining 25 items were selected from previous studies reviewed by the researchers. The first questionnaire familiarized the participant with the characteristics by conducting a self-inventory based on how well the items described the participant. The second questionnaire included five different tasks that specifically sought societal judgments of the 100 items related to their possession by men, women, a person in general, and then its typicality in adult men and adult women. Although the sample should not be considered a representation of the greater society due to its lack of cultural and regional diversity, it was found that traditional trait prescriptions still applied. There was an emphasis on women as having "interpersonal sensitivity, niceness, modesty, and sociability whereas...men reflected...strength, drive, assertiveness, and self-reliance" (p. 275). These attributed societal qualities for men and

women can be traced back even further to birth throughout the traditional rearing and developmental process (Conry-Murray & Turiel, 2012).

From infancy, people of the western culture are molded to be identified based on gender; girls are dressed in feminine pink and boys are donned in masculine blue. As children grow, they are even conditioned to participate in what Conry-Murray and Turiel (2012) considered fixed gendered activities. For example, girls are advised to play inside, play peacefully with other girls, and attend to domestic responsibilities. In contrast, boys are encouraged to play outdoors, compete in athletically related activities with other boys, and complete occupational and/or trade-related tasks (Conry-Murray & Turiel, 2012). In evaluating the gendered activities of girls and boys, girls are trained and encouraged to be mild-mannered, maternal, collaborative, and emotionally linked with others (Prentice & Carranza, 2002). Comparatively, boys are guided and reared to be aggressive, agentic, dominant, and strong (Prentice & Carranza, 2002). Consequently, girls and boys are not only fashioned to partake in specific activities in accordance to their socially prescribed role, but they are expected and required to uphold their respective roles, often facing scrutiny, judgment, and punishment upon divergence from their prescribed roles (Conry-Murray & Turiel, 2012; Dahlvig & Longman, 2000; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Prentice & Carranza, 2002). According to Bem (1974) and holding true more than four decades later, much of society conceptualizes individuals to be masculine or feminine, not both.

Potentially having additional influence on the ideals surrounding prescribed gender norms, especially for persons of a religious background, Lybeck and Neal (1995) proposed that "the view that the church holds [may also] affect the way in which a girl or woman is expected to behave and may affect her development as well" (p. 8). In

compliance with some religious ideals, this then means that men are the leaders and women serve as support. Furthermore, Fels (2004) found that, when asked, young girls appeared to have clear, concise, and ambitious aspirations. However, through their development, society and/or religion began to corrode the ambition of these young women because such ideals tended to personify women negatively as illustrating egotism, conceit, and selfishness. Conversely, these negative connotations towards women carry a positive association when describing ambitious males.

As adults, women and men settle into their prescribed gender roles which transcend to leadership styles within the workforce. For example, men, commonly described as decisive, competitive, and authoritarian, are found to be dominant in leadership positions, while women are most often defined as displaying communal, supportive, and empathic behaviors, but are not present in the same positions, despite comparable training, expertise, and skillset (Applebaum et al., 2003; de la Rey, 2005; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Kawakami et al., 2000). By comparison, Prentice and Carranza's (2002) study demonstrated that although traditional judgments persist, women overall are perceived as being just as competent as their male counterparts due to their participation in traditional and nontraditional roles that demand multiple competencies, including intelligence, rationality, efficiency, and common sense. They further noted that the assigned prescriptive gender roles for men and women are the specific qualities that each gender needs in order to execute their traditional roles. Men typically adhere to societal pressures of functioning in positions requiring strength, resiliency, and competitiveness, while women must be equipped with and competent in not only the prescribed gender roles for women (e.g., roles needing sensitivity, modesty, sociability, etc.), but also

demonstrate the capacity to perform in roles traditionally associated with men (Prentice

& Carranza, 2002). However, women are still sanctioned to not completely defy their

prescribed gender attributes because exercising social dominance directly opposes and

competes with traditional norms and expectancies (Eagly et al., 2003; Rudman & Glick,

2001; Smith, 2013). Rudman and Glick's (2001) study demonstrated that women with

agentic traits that are aligned with competence and ambition must also exhibit communal

traits in order to limit discrimination in the workforce, thereby mastering the requirement

of being professionally bilingual—a task not necessary for their male counterparts.

Because women are considered to have qualities that are expressive, relational,

and attending to others, in addition to being equipped with competencies necessary to

perform in nontraditional roles, it is comprehensible to observe women as both

transformational or transactional leaders. There are benefits and challenges to women

who practice transformational and/or transactional leadership styles, given that either

leadership style may be more accepted or beneficial dependent upon the task,

subordinates, and/or organizational culture. The next section details women as

transformational and transactional leaders, in addition to the benefits and challenges both

styles create within the workplace.

Women as Transformational Leaders

Transformational leadership encompasses the foundational attributes necessary to

achieve effective leadership, despite the ever-changing workforce (Craig, 2012; Druskat,

1994; Eagly et al., 2003). The root word of transformational, *transform*, is the purpose of

this particular leadership style. The goal is to revolutionize an organization, to elevate it

from mediocrity to a caliber worthy of being distinguished as a model (Saleh & Khine,

2014). It is a more modern term for a leadership style characterized by a leader's ability

to share a vision of an organization and collectively progress towards that vision by

transforming minds, igniting motivation, encouraging collaboration, and promoting

positive self-efficacy and the value of employees within the organization. Bass and

Riggio (2006) and Kendrick (2011) proposed four distinct components that formulate

transformational leadership:

- Idealized influence – Grounded on trust, the leaders must habitually practice

  morally and ethically acceptable standards that are aligned with high values.

  This ultimately creates trust and develops the bond between employer and

  subordinate.

- Inspirational motivation – The leader's ability to create an environment that

  promotes a shared vision throughout the organization based on the established

  goals.

- Intellectual stimulation – Ability to motivate employees to challenge the status

  quo and find creative solutions to problem solving, avoiding traditionally

  employed practices.

- Individual consideration – The leader finds value within each member of the

  organization and grows them personally and professionally through honest,

  timely, and constructive evaluation.

In a study by Dahlvig and Longman (2010), two thirds of the female participants

described their respective leadership styles as being consistent with transformational

leadership. This grounded theory approach analyzed the defining moments of 16 women

in leadership within Christian higher education who served as either faculty or

administrators. The results showed that the most defining moments encompassed the application of transformational leadership: (a) someone igniting untapped potential from within, (b) someone experiencing an event that generated creativity during the problem-solving process, and (c) someone stepping into a leadership role during times of injustice and/or disaster. After such defining experiences, it is understandable why these women were compelled to partake in transformational leadership practices as concerns surfaced.

Benefits. Transformational leadership is argued to be the best-suited leadership style in today's society because of its volatility, competitiveness, complexity, and momentum shifts (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This requires organizations and its managers to adapt to the change in workforce climate in order to be successful and adept. This democratic leadership style allows for a collective unit of individuals to share in the vision of the organization by regularly exercising groupthink. This practice maximizes examination through decision-making process (Drenkard, 2013; Saleh & Khine, 2014). In doing so, it incites personal accountability for individual actions and behaviors while endorsing creativity and collaboration (Drenkard, 2013; Kendrick, 2011; Saleh & Khine, 2014). Furthermore, this leadership style calls for employers to attend to the needs and concerns of subordinates while stimulating and motivating employees to grow as professionals (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Such a climate fosters the development of future leaders and incites employees to have a sense of working *with* their supervisor as opposed to working *for* their respective employer (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Knorr, 2012). Women who possess characteristics of transformational leadership are more often accepted as leaders because the attributes exuded are congruent with the socially acceptable

prescribed gender norms for a woman (Dahlvig & Longman, 2010; Prentice & Carranza, 2002; Rudman & Glick, 2001).

Women serving in leadership positions have been sought after and successful during times of crisis due to the leadership components of transformational leadership which are associated with female leaders (Applebaum et al., 2003; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Kawakami et al., 2000). Specifically, women's leadership is characterized as motivational, collaborative, encouraging, and empowering (Eagly & Carli, 2007)—qualities that have given way to success during times of organizational distress.

Challenges. Transformational leadership, and its practice of a clear focus on the employees of the organization, is demonstrated by bringing about positive changes and attitudes within employees' perceptions, individual professional worth, organizational direction, and overall expectations (Tyssen et al., 2014). While this type of leadership has been acknowledged as being suitable in organizations experiencing turbulence and instability and needing drastic change (Miller, 2011; Tyssen et al., 2014), it may not be the best leadership style when more emphasis must be placed on task completion.

As transformational leaders, women have demonstrated emotional intelligence by attending to the emotional needs of employees (Dahlvig & Longman, 2010). This emotional intelligence, potentially viewed as being too sensitive, demonstrative, fragile, and feeble, is aligned with the opinion that women are not "competent" or "strong" enough to lead. That is to say, the aforementioned description is not in sync with the traditional portrayal of leadership—strength, assertiveness, and dominance (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Eagly et al., 2003). Furthermore, as deadlines approach and project

commitments need to be fulfilled, an individual's feelings are not a priority–the end

product takes precedence.

Women as Transactional Leaders

Transactional leadership is described as being structured in a hierarchical format

that focuses on competitiveness which may lead to aggressiveness and conformity

through a consequential system of reward and punishment (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Saleh &

Khine, 2014). Characterized as being task-oriented, transactional leadership has typically

been attributed to the leadership qualities of men (Dahlvig & Longman, 2010; Druskat,

1994). Several studies have been conducted to determine if men exhibit more

transactional leadership traits than women (Druskat, 1994; Eagly et al., 2003; Lopez-

Zafra, Garcia-Retamero, & Martos, 2012). While each of the studies has resulted in

women displaying significantly more transformational leadership characteristics than

their male counterparts, Druskat (1994) found that men exhibited more transformational

leadership than transactional leadership. Because this research focused on leadership

within the Catholic church (e.g., sisters, brothers, and priests), the results could be in

direct relation to the nontraditional infrastructure of the organization (women lead

women and men lead men, etc.), differing pressures external to that of corporate

America, and the strength of spirituality and religious order throughout leadership.

Furthermore, although women have been noted to employ transformational leadership

traditionally, some women also practice characteristics of transactional leadership. Eagly

et al. (2003) conducted a meta-analysis comparing women and men and three leadership

styles: transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire. After gathering data from studies

conducted from 1985 to 2000, the researchers determined that "on the Contingent

Reward subscale of transactional leadership, [women] show significantly higher

scores...than men" (p. 583). This meant that women, more so than men, exhibited

leadership styles where a leader assigned a behavior and the employee agreed on it in

order to obtain an award after the behavior was completed with a satisfactory outcome

(Bass & Riggio, 2006). This supports the opinion and belief that all women do not

practice transformational leadership all the time. Despite popular convictions, women

display characteristics that are aligned with transactional leadership, showing both

benefits and challenges.

  Benefits. Transactional leadership, known for rewards and punishments based on

tasks completed, may be the most efficient and effective manner in which to accomplish

tasks and conduct business depending upon the organizational culture. The theory of

operant conditioning is helpful in understanding how behavior is influenced and affected

by rewards and punishments. Operant conditioning was originally studied by the famed

psychological behaviorist, B. F. Skinner (O'Donohue & Ferguson, 2001). Operant

conditioning is described as change in practice or behavior when the practice or behavior

is associated with an outcome and/or consequence (Tobin, 2007). If the practice or

behavior is associated with an attractive consequence, the likelihood of the behavior

being repeated increases. Likewise, if the behavior is associated with a less desirable

outcome, the behavior will less likely reoccur (Tobin, 2007).

  In applying operant conditioning to the transactional leadership model, rewards

and punishments for task completion conditions subordinates to reach deadlines and

maintain quality work in occupations within the industrialized workforce (e.g., mass

production factories, etc.). This same practice may also be observed by educational

institutions as they render services to their constituency (e.g., students, parents, donors, etc.). For example, if students are positively rewarded with early registration for maintaining a high cumulative grade point average (GPA), the likelihood that a serious student will work to achieve a high GPA increases. By contrast, if a factory worker does not meet the mass production deadline and is severely reprimanded, the probability of repeated missed deadlines decreases.

Miller (2011) proposed that transactional leadership may maintain its integrity as long as clarity, consistency, fairness, and openness are regularly practiced, creating simplicity within the workplace. These guidelines allow for clearly defined regulations and/or policies with which to follow. Moreover, this allows for consistency surrounding rewards and disciplinary actions within the work environment. Having a full understanding of the policies limits ambiguity in the regulations governing the work environment. This, in turn, requires regular and timely communication efforts on behalf of administrators and employers to constituency and employees (Miller, 2011). This foundation of consistency and clarity breeds trust between employers and subordinates within the established hierarchical structure (Miller, 2011).

Challenges. Women are often met with pushback when demonstrating transactional leadership because this leadership style is typically characterized as being assertive, autocratic, and solution-driven. Women as transactional leaders are challenged in the workplace when displaying such a leadership style because the aforementioned qualities, aligned with prescriptive gender norms of males, are incongruent with the socially accepted gender norms for women. Women who appear domineering, assertive, agentic, and aggressive, and who demonstrate limited emotional intelligence are harshly

scrutinized, unforgivingly evaluated, and labeled as being "bitchy," "mean," or "too masculine" (Dahlvig & Longman, 2010; Eagly & Carli 2007; Eagly et al., 2003; Rudman & Glick, 2001). Eagly noted in a 2010 interview with Cookson that no person desires to be demanded to do anything, especially by a woman. Because of the pressures for women to practice communal and collaborative behaviors, some women may be forced to act outside of their innate agentic leadership comfort zone, further tarnishing and/or challenging the integrity of their respective leadership style/capability (Eagly et al., 2003). Eagly et al. (2003) further proposed that "incongruity between leader roles and the female gender role could make it...difficult for women to attain leadership roles" (p. 573). Consequently, in combating gender role conformity, women may be overlooked during the hiring process which systematically represses them from achieving senior leadership positions. Additionally, Saleh and Khine (2014) noted that a transactional work philosophy may shepherd in and/or induce the temperament to win at all costs, thereby limiting creativity and collaborative opportunities and inducing more job-related stress. This type of leadership style may initiate a work environment where employees function more so in silos as opposed to teams.

Occupational Advancement

It is often suggested that a professional seeking to advance in his or her career must develop a professional network that includes mentors and social capital (Weaver & Chelladurai, 2002). Mentors and social capital may be utilized to abet developing professionals in reaching their professional aspirations and garner a better understanding of the professional climate within an organization and/or industry (e.g., personnel changes, professional landscape, positional advantage, etc.). Being armed with this type

of support and information can be essential to professional advancement. These tangible

human resources, however, are not always easy to obtain because other variables (i.e.,

familial responsibilities, isolation, limited access, etc.) may impede the development and

maintenance of mentor/mentee relationships (Wang, 2009). The following subtopics

review the benefits of and challenges to the development of a professional network of

mentors and social capital.

        Mentoring and sponsorship. Mentoring and sponsorship are integral to the

development of individuals seeking to blossom and grow personally and/or

professionally. O'Brien, Martin, Heyworth, and Meyer (2008) proposed that while

professionals may be readily equipped with knowledge and/or specific skillsets for the

successful completion of work-related tasks, mentors may assist mentees by creatively

applying and leveraging their knowledge and skills to become more effective in their

professional position. Avery et al. (2007) conducted a study that examined the

relationships of mentors and mentees and what qualities of the relationship have a

stronger positive impact on the development of the protégé and mentor. This study

showed that the longevity of the relationship and the compatibility of the mentor and

protégé heightened the development of the mentee. Furthermore, having a White male

mentor increased the possibility of promotion and status (Avery et al., 2007). Avery et al.

stated that "White men tend to be associated with more power.… Due to the increased

power, White male mentors are often better positioned to assist in the sponsorship and

career development of their protégé" (p. 74). These findings suggest that if African

American females were able to procure a White male mentor who is able to mentor,

sponsor, and assist with growth in a professional field, it is possible that the numbers of

African American women in upper administration across professions would increase.

Conversely, in a study by Salas-Lopez, Deitrick, Mahady, Gertner, and Sabino (2011),

respondents unanimously agreed that it is more important to acquire a mentor who is a

mutual fit as opposed to having a mentor who is of the majority race and gender.

Justifiably so, it is critical to develop a mentor/mentee relationship that is inclusive of

trust and willing to receive and provide positive and negative critiques, while also

viewing the mentor as a role model (Salas-Lopez et al., 2011).

As a Caucasian male leader in the Army, Farnell (2017) acknowledged that

although mentors may support diversity and the benefits associated with it, majority-

member leaders still tend to invest their time in protégés who most closely remind them

of their less-experienced selves. Admitting that a greater effort should be made to mentor

a diverse group of individuals, Farnell (2017) recognized that it may be challenging for

minority group members to verbalize concerns. These relationships tend to be mutually

beneficial for mentors. As they become aware of minority challenges, they may become

more empathetic to personal and professional matters (Farnell, 2017).

Penny and Gaillard (2006) found that women feel it is lonely to work in male-

dominated professions or work environments where the positions were previously

dominated by men in higher education. Women would benefit from having a support

system that is able to provide honest and open feedback and guidance. Other studies have

shown evidence that supports the notion that mentorship and sponsorship help to

facilitate the upward mobility of employment for African American women (Allen,

Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995; Crawford & Smith, 2005; Smith & Crawford, 2007).

Similarly, it may be advantageous for African American women working in collegiate

athletics to secure a mentor to assist them in professional development and navigate the

male-dominated hierarchical landscape.

   Social capital. "It's not always what you know, rather it's who you know." This

timeless adage is an accurate depiction of social capital, most specifically in reference to

employment. Social capital is described as a network of social relationships among

individuals for the advancement of shared goals (Alfred, 2009; Coleman, 1988; Putnam,

1995; Seippel, 2006; Wang, 2009). While this definition provides a foundation for studies

about social capital, Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1995) have highlighted and shared

similar philosophies regarding the development of social capital. Coleman (1988)

suggested that social capital can only exist within the relationships among people. If there

are no relationships, there can be no development of social capital. Aligned with this

sentiment, Putnam (1995) proposed that the more of a connection individuals are able to

develop, the stronger the social capital connections. Wilson (1997) further supported the

notion of relationship growth by asserting that these connections do not require specific

resources outside of the networking parties. Deciding whether to participate in

developing a connection and the level or strength of the desired relationship outcome

rests in the hands of the individuals involved. This further implies that social capital

networks are strengthened through the development of a mutual trusting relationship

(Coleman, 1988; Helliwell & Putnam, 2007; Hurrelmann, Murray, & Beckmann, 2006;

Putnam, 1995). Hurrelmann et al. (2006) approached the trusting relationship of social

capital by illustrating the relationships between civic engagement, interpersonal trust, and

confidence in the leadership. In order to garner trust in leadership, an individual must be

willing to spend time engaging with peers and/or individuals in leadership positions. The

more one engages with peers and/or those in leadership positions, the more interpersonal

trust can be developed. The more trust that is developed, the more confidence that

individual will ultimately have in his or her peers and/or the leadership (Hurrelmann et

al., 2006).

Although this example demonstrates the trust necessary for the development of

social capital, this scenario also highlights the evolution of horizontal and vertical

relationships. Horizontal relationships are considered more informal relationships—ties

with peers and/or equals. Vertical associations are connections with individuals of higher

status and influence or the converse—usually professional network connections

(Hurrelmann et al., 2006). Simply stated, horizontal relationships are defined as mutually

powerful relationships, while vertical relationships are described as those that encompass

a power imbalance or hierarchy among those within the relationship. For example, a

relationship with a comparable co-worker is a horizontal relationship, whereas a

relationship with one's supervisor is considered a vertical relationship. The distinguished

network connection differences are critical to information sharing and the

accomplishment of defined goals. Individuals with more power and influence tend to

have more beneficial information. Aligned with this idea, if someone is able to secure a

horizontal relationship with a supervisor and/or mentor, that individual is more apt to

have knowledge of opportunities as opposed to a colleague with only horizontal

associations.

In an effort to connect individuals vertically and/or horizontally, Hurrelmann et

al. (2006) made a distinction between three taxonomies: bonding, bridging, and linking.

Bonding is described as a connection between individuals who are similar in background.

By contrast, bridging joins people of differing backgrounds and characteristics. Linking is the unity of people across power lines (Hurrelmann et al., 2006). As noted, bonding and bridging refer to the association of horizontal relationships while linking denotes a vertical relationship.

Although these differing classification systems seem straightforward and beneficial to the individual seeking advancement, what may be disregarded is the idea that social capital can be unequal, culture-dependent, and/or position-dependent (Alfred, 2009; Torkelsson, 2007). Expressly put, some individuals will have access to and benefit from the power and influence of social capital by virtue of their position and culture, whereas the lack of this resource will be a detriment to those not aligned with the applicable professional status or culture. Torkelsson (2007) further suggested that the more social capital one is able to secure, the more benefits will be available. On the contrary, the less social capital one is able to secure, the less benefit afforded. Access to resources varies considerably among men and women (Torkelsson, 2007). Men appear to have perpetual access to the development of social capital, whereas women seem to have less opportunity for developing social capital (Alfred, 2009; Wang, 2009). Moreover, education, time, and money are variables that affect the ability to develop social capital (Alfred, 2009; Coleman, 1988; Helliwell & Putnam, 2007; Putnam, 1995). Individuals with limited access to higher education, time, and monetary resources are generally excluded from the benefits of a strong social capital network (Alfred, 2009; Helliwell & Putnam, 2007). Furthermore, Putnam (1995) and Torkelsson (2007) noted that when women are able to network, they tend to spend more time developing informal relationships while men spend time forging dominant, formal networks. Wallace and Kay

(2012) concurred by noting that women tend to provide significant emotional support

because they are attributed with being communicative and maternal, and wishing to

establish and preserve relationships with others.

In short, social capital can be a benefit or a hindrance to the ascent of women

seeking to secure leadership positions. Social capital, viewed as a means to an end

(Coleman, 1988), could potentially assist women in developing a professional network

that may eventually propel them towards leadership positions within collegiate athletics

based on information sharing. Conversely, because the culture of athletics is dominated

by Caucasian males, social capital could potentially exclude women and other minorities

from progression towards leadership positions based upon culture, time, money, and/or

education.

Familial responsibilities. Despite a shift towards the leadership of women in

organizational culture over the last decade (Wilson, 2009), it is still a prevalent practice

for women to be significantly challenged in making organizational advancements towards

senior-level leadership. While there may be various reasons women have been hindered

from reaching upper-level leadership positions within organizations, familial obligations

have been cited as one of the main interruptions and/or barriers in the ascent towards

upper administration (Cookson, 2010; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Stone & Lovejoy, 2004).

Eagly and Carli (2007) have suggested that evolutionary psychology has played a

foundational role in such ownership of family commitments by women, ultimately

precluding women from professional advancement.

In accordance with evolutionary psychology, a woman's role consists of seeking

and obtaining a dominant male to reproduce with, and who would ultimately become the

provider of the family and supply its security (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Guéguen & Lamy, 2012). Similarly, men maintain a dependence on women for sex, reproduction, child care, and the maintenance of domestic duties (Rudman & Glicik, 2001). This, in turn, affords men the opportunities to shape attributes of competitiveness, assertiveness, and aggressiveness when pursuing leadership positions in an effort to achieve status and provide for their families. On the contrary, the woman's role was to take care of and nurture the family (Bleske-Rechek, Fuerstenberg, Harris, & Ryan, 2011; Eagly & Carli, 2007). Subsequently, these practices warranted the superiority of men and the subordination of women, not only in their families but in society (Bleske-Rechek et al., 2011; Rudman & Glick, 2001). Because of the two distinct and contrary functions that men and women have practiced, it is believed that this historical and involuntary routine has shaped men, more so than women, with a more dominant and commanding presence in senior leadership positions (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Accordingly, only a limited number of women present at the leadership table with their male counterparts (Catalyst, 2014; West & Curtis, 2006; Wilson, 2009).

Consistent with the theory of evolutionary psychology, women more often than not are the primary caretakers of the family. Often, this responsibility becomes a deciding factor for women when choosing whether to continue with full-time employment or become a full-time caregiver (Cookson, 2010; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Salas-Lopez et al., 2011). Consistent with this perspective, women have acquired the domestic duties that serve as a support and caretaker for the family unit, outside of establishing and maintaining a career. Because of their strong ties to familial obligations (i.e., caring for ill children and elderly parents, etc.), women are perceived as being easily diverted from a

professional career by illustrating priority and passion for family commitments and responsibilities (Cheung & Halpern, 2010; Cookson, 2010; Hymowitz & Schethardt, 1986; Stone & Lovejoy, 2004). Because of this, many women, despite having degrees, have chosen to find part-time/flexible work, become self-employed, and/or become stay-at-home mothers (Cheung & Halpern, 2010; Cookson, 2010; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Stone & Lovejoy, 2004). This decision may be further encouraged and endorsed by women after the revelation that the United States has failed to reach minimal human rights standards in the areas of maternity leave and affordable child care, as compared to other nations (Bassett, 2015). Yearning for flexibility and financial freedom from additional care expenses may highlight a possible explanation for why women do not hold more upper-administrative positions. This exemplifies women who may lack interest in such leadership positions because of the time and mental/emotional domination of a career engulfed by senior-level leadership.

Though perhaps not the only reasons, some research has suggested that men will continue to dominate leadership positions (Maume, 2006) because women have been shown to have a weaker attachment to professional responsibilities (Cheung & Halpern, 2010; Hymowitz & Schethardt, 1986; Stone & Lovejoy, 2004), accepting a traditionalistic lifestyle as the familial caretaker. Consequently, because women have generally maintained their household position as the primary custodian, they often become employees with reduced and/or flexible hours, even seeking part-time employment. These flexible hours and part-time positions are a result of what has been described as work-family spillover (Grzywacz, Almeida, & McDonald, 2002). Work-family spillover is defined as one's professional life negatively or positively impacting

his or her family life (Grzywacz et al., 2002). However, it can be assumed that the need

for flexible work hours is the consequence of negative work-life spillover. Grzywacz et

al. discovered that negative work-life spillover was more prevalent in younger

professionals. As employees age, negative work-life spillover appears to decrease. By

contrast, a study by Salas-Lopez et al. (2011) demonstrated that although there is an

overwhelming perception that male colleagues view familial obligations as a liability for

professional women, women view the daily manipulation and multitasking of work and

life as an unparalleled management skillset that should exemplify their natural ability and

capability to lead at the executive level.

        Despite the increased presence of women in the labor force, their male

counterparts still have limited family responsibilities, only slightly increasing their family

duties from 1965 to 2005 (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Grzywacz et al., 2002; Maume,

Sebastian, & Bardo, 2010). However, an earlier study by Maume (2006) found that men

who supported gender equality played a larger role in domestic family support, especially

if women were considered to be the family breadwinners. Of the male population,

minority men were more likely to assist with caregiving than their White male

counterparts (Maume, 2006). Partnerships where women are work-centered and men are

more domestically active make it possible for women to be linear to what western society

considers the "modern woman" or the "21st century woman" (Hakim, 2000). Akin to this

standard, other studies have revealed that African American females *and* males identified

the "ideal" African American woman as being more independent and liberated from the

traditional caregiving capacity (Crovitz & Steinmann, 1980; Omori & Smith 2010).

Beyond demonstrating the characteristics associated with being the "ideal" African American woman according to Crovitz & Steinmann (1980), Omori and Smith's (2010) study revealed that African American women also worked longer hours than other racial-ethnic groups. Ultimately, these studies may be perceived as African American women demonstrating a greater commitment to their professional careers as opposed to their familial responsibilities. In harmony with Maume's (2006) notion that commitment to careers should propel African American women towards leadership positions, data should then illustrate that African American women are, in fact, more prevalent in leadership positions; however, this has not been verified or supported (Catalyst, 2017; Lapchick & Baker, 2016; Lapchick, Baker, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Donovan, et al., 2014; Lapchick, Fox, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Johnson, et al., 2014; Lapchick & Kuhn, 2011; Lapchick et al., 2012; Wilson, 2009).

Although Maume's (2006) study conflicted with the results found in two of Lapchick's studies (Lapchick & Kuhn, 2011; Lapchick et al., 2012), familial obligations need not be discounted as a reason for the absence of African American women in senior leadership positions. While Maume found that African American men, in general, and other men in support of equality play a larger role in the household, a disproportionate number of women still handles more familial obligations than their male counterparts (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Until there is shared responsibility with domestic tasks in modern households, women will continue to feel the pressure of negative work-life spillover (Grzywacz et al., 2002). Thus, women will continue to seek flexible and/or part-time work, allowing men to dominate power positions within organizations (Maume, 2006).

African American Women and Leadership

While women in leadership and the study of leadership styles continue to be a growing topic of interest, research specifically focused on African American women and leadership has been inadequate. African American women are merely mentioned in research that places a gross focus on either Caucasian women or diversity in leadership in its entirety (Eagly & Chin, 2010; Hite, 2004; Howard-Vital, 1989; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). However, it would be a flagrant misconception to presuppose that Caucasian women and African American women face identical challenges professionally. In her essay, Beal (2008) asserted that it is impossible to unite the professional and/or personal grievances of Caucasian and African American women because the two perspectives and experiences are not in the least comparable, regardless of gender similarities.

To build on the current body of research, it is essential to highlight the personal and professional experiences of African American women's leadership and leadership styles independent from other ethnic groups. Some of the personal and professional challenges that African American women face will be reviewed, beginning with the historical perspective that has influenced and sculpted the overall identity of African American women within society.

Historical Perspective

The transitive properties of inequality as related to the job market (Mathwords, 2016) suggest that if Caucasians are superior to African Americans and men are superior to women, then African American women are positioned at the bottom of the professional race and gendered hierarchical continuum. Cicely Tyson (Winfrey, 2014) described this

very scenario, from her own experience, on an *Oprah's Master Class* episode by stating that "it was difficult...to get a job because I was black, and then I was a woman...I see this whole image as a ladder...white males on the top, white female, black male, black female with her hands on the last rung of the ladder fighting to get up."

From slavery to present day, African American men and women have faced resistance and oppression from White America, both socially and professionally. However, throughout slavery, African and African American women were not only exploited for the purpose of reproduction via rape and sexual abuse (Robnett, 1997; Taylor, 2005), but they also worked as housekeepers and servants (Margulies & Haley, 1977; Taylor, 2005). Additionally, women worked alongside men in the fields of the plantation (Margulies & Haley, 1977; Taylor, 2005). Enduring repeated sexual abuse coupled with tireless, hard labor demonstrates reduced differentiation in the degree of oppression and subjugation between African and African American men and women (Taylor, 2005; Truth, 2015). In support of this logic and so profoundly stated by Berry Gordy, Jr. on *Oprah's Master Class* (Winfrey, 2013), "the difference between [all people/humans] is so much less than the sameness."

Post-slavery, through the mid to later part of the 20th century, the majority of African American women worked in a domestic capacity in the homes of Caucasians (Taylor & Stockett, 2011). This established and common lifestyle consequently made women the breadwinners of their families yet deprived their children of their maternal presence and support (Taylor & Stockett, 2011). The conventionally prescribed gender role of men functioning as the highest wage earner of the family was subsequently replaced by women (Beal, 2008; Taylor & Stockett, 2011). Advancing through

employment history to the present, African American women expanded their classical

education and continued to comprise a sizable portion of the workforce, laboring in

occupations other than those of a domestic nature (Beal, 2008; Catalyst, 2014, 2017;

Taylor & Stockett, 2011). In doing so, African American women had to navigate their

professional paths collectively and individually, while demanding respect and equality in

the face of race and gendered discrimination. This collective movement was highlighted

throughout the Civil Rights Movement (Robnett, 1997).

The Civil Rights Movement marked a time period where African American

women began to fashion identities unfamiliar to those outside of the Black community.

This seemingly new identity of empowerment and liberation defied the traditionally

prescribed gender roles and rebelled against the systematic discriminatory barriers of

society (Robnett, 1997). During this time, African American women were exploding with

courage, inspiration, and a vocal expression in support of their emancipation from the

submissive and bigoted norms of the 1960s. Albeit societally blemished by the biological

utilities of being both female and African American, African American women were

faced with the unfortunate division of loyalty to race and gender, with race receiving

preference (Robnett, 1997). Although finding solace within the Black community,

African American women not only worked alongside men, but also served as support for

the men by continuing to work in opposition to prescribed gender norms (Robnett, 1997).

These experiences, paired with prejudice, discrimination, and harassment, throughout the

Civil Rights Movement helped to shape the African American female perspective, and

identity now known as Black feminist thought.

Shaping the Perspective of African American Women

In understanding that the collective of women have fought tirelessly for their recognition, intellect, ability, and status in society, African American women acknowledged another layer of complexity to their personal struggle—their race. From the waves of feminism and the robust desire to combat oppression related to gender and race, *Black feminist thought* was introduced, developed, and evolved throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Some renowned pioneers, supporters, and enthusiasts of Black feminist thought have ranged from Sojourner Truth, Maria Stewart, and Ida B. Wells to the modern-day Patricia Collins, Angela Davis, and Bell Hooks (Collins, 2000). All of these women and countless others who are not named have abetted and fashioned what is known as contemporary Black feminist thought and intersectionality.

Critical race theory, on the other hand, materialized in the 1970s as the incremental advances during the Civil Rights Movement began to lose its momentum (Crenshaw, 2011; Delgado, Stefancic, & Harris, 2012). Charged with addressing subtle racist encounters, activists composed of lawyers and scholars developed what is known as critical race theory (Delgado et al., 2012). In combatting the racist subtleties African American women face within the workplace and during their ascent to leadership positions, critical race theory serves as a foundation for combatting these challenges by attending to these very instances. Some of the known founding members of critical race theory are Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado. In the following sections, Black feminist thought and critical race theory are discussed in more detail as they interface with African American women and shape their perspectives and/or responses to the work environment. These following theories provide a foundation that will help to

inform the recommendations that support African American women who aspire for

senior-level leadership positions in collegiate athletics administration.

     Black feminist thought (identity). Oppression, the root of Black feminist

thought, is the discriminatory and inequitable practice over a period of time that

negatively impacts an individual or group of people from progress and growth, ultimately

preventing access to societal resources (Collins, 2000). Some illustrations of oppression

throughout American history began with the seizure of American colonies from

indigenous peoples, the enslavement of Africans and African Americans, rejection of the

voting rights of women and African Americans, and the denial of a standard education to

African Americans and those of low socioeconomic status. These injustices limited

access to authority, freedom, education, and occupations exterior to those of domestic

and industrial origins, further exacerbating oppression.

     Revealed in different constructs, oppression can be emotional, mental, physical,

and social. Although different, these varying forms may directly affect one another. For

example, an emotional or a mental oppression may affect an individual's physical

behaviors and health, while social oppression may affect a person's mental and emotional

responses to a situation (David, 2013). Enduring oppression from varying aspects of

society, African American women have had the need to strive for equality and the

resistance of injustice (Collins, 2000).

     Valiant, unaware, unconcerned yet debatably anxious and not anticipating the

resounding support from Caucasian women, an original pioneer of Black feminism rang

through the courageous words of Sojourner Truth at the Women's Rights Convention in

1851 (American National Biography Online, 2015). There, Sojourner Truth demanded

respect as a woman, along with Caucasian women, despite the color of her skin. Ignoring the denunciation from the audience who feared the convention would be mistaken as an abolitionist movement, she courageously expressed her ability, capability, and desired esteem and treatment from men and society (Truth, 2015). She reminded the spectators that Christ, men, and humankind have life because of the strength and presence of a woman (Truth, 2015). One hundred forty-two years later, and still in agreement on the behavior towards and detriment of African American women, the late actor and rapper Tupac Shakur (1993) stated in his song "Keep Ya Head Up" that "…and since we all came from a woman, got our name from a woman...I wonder why we take from our women, why we rape our women, do we hate our women?" Despite the century differences, both Truth (2015) and Shakur (1993) emphasized the continued relevance, strength, and value of African American women in society.

As one of the first African American female public orators of the mid- to late-1800s, Maria Stewart was instrumental in not only challenging other African American women to discard the negative paradigms of African American womanhood, but she encouraged the African American female community to unite as one voice in support of their rights and worth, while rearing their offspring to become a new wave of societal perspective (Collins, 2000). To Stewart's point, educator and women's rights activist Fannie Williams affirmed that African American women are invisible and hence doubted in intellect, ability, and authority (Collins, 2000). This perspective is affirmed in modern-day society by the absenteeism of African American women in senior-level administration across professions (Catalyst, 2014, 2016).

Black feminist thought, grounded in the struggles of African American women, ignited empowerment amid oppression, resistance, activism, and politics. Critical to understanding and counteracting oppression, Alinia (2015) and Collins (2000) emphasized the importance of obtaining a thorough comprehension and awareness of the process and configuration of power and authority, its normalization in society, the relationship linking dominant and subordinate groups, and the acknowledgement of the disempowered group's involvement in its own victimization. African American women may continue to experience challenges in the workplace including, but not limited to, hiring/access to opportunity, tokenism, and double jeopardy.

Critical race theory. Critical race theory began as a movement to transform the relationship between race, racism, and power, when the incremental advancements of the Civil Rights movement appeared to lose its momentum (Crenshaw, 2011; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Delgado and Stefancic (2012) proposed that critical race theory provides strategies for addressing subtler forms of racism, also known as microaggressions. Some of these microaggressions are illustrated below (Challenges in the Workplace). According to Bimper (2015), critical race theory was embraced as a means of exploring how people of minority groups are impacted by inequities. More specifically, it may be used to examine how African American women, as subordinates to Caucasian men, can eliminate the power disparities encountered by White supremacy (Bimper, 2015). As written by Ansley (1997):

[By] "white supremacy" I do not mean to allude only to the self-conscious racism of white supremacist hate groups. I refer instead to a political, economic, and cultural system in which whites overwhelmingly control power and material

resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement

are widespread, and relations of white dominance and non-white subordination

are daily reenacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings. (p. 592)

As stated by Ansley (1997) and observed across professional lines, Caucasians and men

hold and historically have held a proportionately higher percentage of leadership

positions. Although leadership disparities may not be perceived as White supremacy or as

any form of racism, critical race theory challenges this colorblindness by emphasizing

that "…[because] racism is embedded in our thought processes and social structures as

deeply as many [critical race theorists] believe, then the 'ordinary business' of society—

the routines, practices, and institutions that we rely on to do the world's work—will keep

minorities in subordinate positions" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 27). In short, racism

will always be difficult to address when it is not acknowledged (Delgado & Stefancic,

2012).

Challenges in the Workplace

African American women, frequently positioned within the lower levels of

professional infrastructures, have had to navigate what Eagly and Carli (2007) termed the

occupational "labyrinth" in order to acquire positions within upper-level administration.

The labyrinth is typically described as a path towards success that is inclusive of

impediments, regressions, and challenges prior to reaching what one perceives as her

professional zenith. This professional maze is not identical for all women. Some women,

specifically African American women, tend to encounter and endure more challenges and

deterrents than others (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Rhimes, 2015).

African American women must circumnavigate through potentially subtle racist remarks, treatment, and/or practices. Sometimes, navigating the profession presents the challenge of deciphering which encounters are intended to be offensive versus those that are rationalized as obliviousness and/or ignorance. These instances are what critical race theorists have termed microaggressions (Delgado et al., 2012). As described by Shonda Rhimes' African American female character, Dr. Pierce, to a Caucasian female colleague, Dr. Shepherd, on the Season 12, Episode 7 of *Grey's Anatomy*, potential racist encounters are "like a low buzz in the background and sometimes you don't even notice it and sometimes it's loud and annoying and sometimes it can get dangerous and sometimes it is ridiculous." Furthermore, this flawless portrayal of the monotonous and regular experiences African American women face within personal and professional environments is debriefed, noting two essential takeaways: (a) one African American person is not and should not be considered the spokesperson for all African American people; and (b) if Caucasians ever "feel uncomfortable having [done anything that may be misconstrued as racist], check your white privilege and don't do it again" (Rhimes, 2015). The rationale for this, as Collins (2000) noted, is because not all African American women have, receive, and internalize the exact same encounters despite having shared challenges. While the added layer of race may be a factor in navigating the workforce, Salas-Lopez et al.'s (2011) study noted that women believed gender was more of a hindrance and deterrence during their occupational ascent.

Hiring/access to opportunity. Stereotyping shapes and influences how information is processed about others (Bielby, 2000). This, in turn, can have a direct effect on gender and racial biases as related to the hiring of potential candidates for

specific positions and promotions within a workspace. In an attempt to illustrate the impact of this bias, Bielby researched approaches that endeavored to minimize the gender and racial disparities within the workplace. From an institutional perspective, Bielby found that male and female applicants, despite having identical traits, tended to be hired for positions that were historically held by their like gender. Moreover, in the event that women secured positions in leadership that had been predominately male-oriented, the women were evaluated more strenuously, were documented as receiving less support from internal personnel, and were generally regarded as being a distraction as compared to their male counterparts (Bielby, 2000; Chin, 2011). Battling such scrutiny within the male-dominated profession of collegiate athletics administration prior to having an opportunity to perform could be another potential reason why African American women opt out of upper-administrative positions. Supporting this idea, Evans and Herr (1991) asserted that African American women often utilize a coping method when working in such environments. These professional survival tactics are inclusive of career avoidance and reduction or alteration of career aspirations (Evans & Herr, 1991). Accordingly, this then suggests that African American women may either bypass leadership positions and opportunities or accept that mid-level positions are satisfactory.

On the contrary, Wiggins and Coggins (1986) conducted a research study that compared three male and three female résumés that were similarly credentialed. A sample from the State School Board Association ranked the six candidates from most to least desirable for the superintendent position. Because the candidates were similarly credentialed, gender was underscored when determining candidate desirability. Upon analysis of candidate selection, the findings suggested little difference in the selection of

the six candidates for the male-dominated superintendent position. In other words, no gender bias was present. Despite these findings, a limitation of this study was the non-representative sample of school board members, which may not reflect the population of all school board members in that state. Because of this, it is possible that the results were unrealistic as they were not aligned with the extensive research already conducted. Furthermore, King, Keohane, and Verba (1994) recommended that research should be conducted with large sample sizes to gather a variation of outcomes for the purpose of providing a well-rounded study in an effort to limit bias.

Similarly, Kang, DeCelles, Tilcsik, and Jun (2016) conducted a study in which racial minority job-seekers attempted to conceal their ethnic identities on résumés and job applications to appear aligned with the majority Caucasian group, a technique referred to as "résumé whitening." Fifty-nine interviews were conducted with 29 Black and 30 Asian students. Ninety-five percent of the students were undergraduates in their junior or senior years while 5% were professional degree-seeking students, all of whom were pursuing employment opportunities. Fifty-five percent of the participants were females. Thirty-six percent of the research participants (31% Black and 40% Asian) admitted to utilizing résumé-whitening methods. Additionally, research participants reported that they knew others who practiced similar methods. One third of the participants believed that résumé whitening was necessary in order to have the same professional opportunities as their White counterparts—at minimum, solidifying a job interview. Although participants found these techniques useful in "appearing white on paper" or "to fit a more American or Western friendly kind of persona" (Kang et al., 2016, p. 479), it was acknowledged

that hiring practices are not always aligned with the diversity statements of the organization.

In another study conducted by Singh, Robinson, and Williams-Green (1995), members of the Virginia Black Faculty and Administrators Association were surveyed to assess their views surrounding their academic professional experiences related to tenure, promotion, retention, and recruitment. The researchers found that men and women were almost equally represented and employed by public and private institutions from four categories: White doctoral institutions, 4-year White institutions, 4-year Black institutions, and 2-year mixed demographic community colleges. Although the male and female respondents began their tenure-track positions in equal numbers and served in their current positions for an identical number of years, 39% of the men were tenured while only 21.9% of the women reached tenure. Further, it was documented that African American women did not achieve tenure at the same rate as their African American male counterparts with the same starting qualifications. This finding was explained by a lack of support from administrators, the shortage of collaborative opportunities with others, and the absence of guidance and mentorship (Singh et al., 1995). Aligned with the impeded promotion of women, Baldwin's (1996) study found that women and minorities were promoted in the Army at a much slower rate than their Caucasian counterparts. This imbalance of promotion increased with the ascent in position (Baldwin, 1996). Not only are these variables significant enough to detain African American women in lower positions within academia and the military, but within athletics administration.

With documented evidence that African American women are promoted at disproportionately lower rates compared to African American men and Caucasian men

and women, African American women may endure additional workplace experiences that

may not necessarily be comparable to other minority populations. These added

experiences are not limited to tokenism and double jeopardy, which tend to create a sense

of workplace isolation (Kanter, 1977; Yoder, Schleicher, & McDonald, 1998). Although

tokenism and double jeopardy may present challenges for African American women, it is

necessary to acknowledge and recognize that not all African American women receive

and exploit such encounters in the same manner. Each individual may manage such

circumstances differently or uniquely in accordance with her specific professional

circumstances.

      Tokenism. As described by Kanter (1977), tokenism is the symbol and/or

representation of a minority group that is identified by an ascribed attribute (e.g., gender,

ethnicity, sex, religion, etc.) based on the numerical representation of individuals within a

group. Specifically, Kanter noted that token status is the 15% representation of a minority

group within the larger population. Examples of tokenism may be observed when women

work within a male-dominated organization; African Americans work within a

Caucasian-dominated population; heterosexuals work within the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual,

Transgender, Questioning, Asexual/Allied (LGBTQA) community; and Catholics are in

attendance at a Protestant convention. Although tokenism refers to any minority group

within a larger population, there is a focus on marginalized groups within the work force.

      While Kanter (1977) highlighted the numerical skewness within an organization

as an illustration of tokenism, Yoder (1991) moved beyond the numerical representation

of a population and placed emphasis on his/her status within an organization as a

portrayal of tokenism. For example, Yoder, along with Danaher and Branscombe (2010),

stressed the perseverance of status that maintains a token office climate and further

legitimizes the status of the dominant group members. Hence, as the number of

minorities increases, subsequently offering more comfort to marginalized individuals,

they become more of a professional threat to the dominant group. To counteract such

feelings of imposition and invasion, the majority group may leverage its status within the

organization by restructuring the work environment and/or exacerbating blocked access

to promotion and higher monetary compensation (Yoder, 1991). This is an illustration of

what Kanter (1977) described as boundary heightening.

Supporting the position that status within an organization produces a climate of a

majority group and a minority group, Hughes (1945) suggested that society establishes

codes of expectations that subsequently create stereotypes about groups of individuals.

For example, despite the heterogeneity of society and the increased participation of an

assortment of qualified individuals (e.g., based on ethnicity, gender, sex, etc.) across

professional boundaries, Caucasian men remain the expected position holder of status and

favor within organizations. Hughes (1945) and Yoder et al. (1998) further proposed that

dilemmas arise when societal expectations are contradicted. Namely, when an African

American female is the Chief Executive Officer of a Fortune 500 company or a woman is

the head architect of a construction company, individual expectations of the typical or

traditional person holding those posts are defied and stereotypes concerning performance

in the respective positions are reexamined. Supplementing conditioned societal reactions

to defied expectations and stereotypes, Yoder et al. found that only when female leaders'

credentials and qualifications were highlighted and presented to employers prior to

leadership opportunities did they receive more support for their competencies.

Danaher and Branscombe (2010) offered research examining women's responses to hiring practices within a male-dominated organization that facilitated tokenism through three systems: open (50% of women hold positions), token (10% of women hold positions), or closed system (no women hold positions). Although members of token groups tend to preserve positivity by attempting to employ convictions or strategies of individual mobility and/or collective advancement, it was found that women holding token status appear to have a distorted perception of tokenism by harboring the impression that "they have arrived," ultimately promoting individual mobility (Danaher & Branscombe, 2010). Similarly, Hughes (1945) described a scenario of Caucasians spearheading the belief that an African American who obtained a leadership position represents an exception to the African American stereotype as opposed to truly being qualified. He further noted that this experience may breed the internal and ethnically detrimental sentiment of being unlike others within the African American group. These and similar instances illustrate the buffer or distortion of tokenism, regardless of its discriminatory methodology due to the appearance of a permeable hiring structure.

Despite all efforts to cast away the responsibility of being a population representative, persons of token status involuntarily become the symbol of a minority group (Kanter, 1977). As a result, individuals in such circumstances must circumnavigate the intensified pressures to perform at the highest level, as their performance will become the benchmark and/or baseline for all other individuals of similar token status. Yoder et al. (1998) indicated that individuals of token status endure environmental conditions and pressures unlike those of the majority status. In addition to tolerating tokenism, African American women also combat the tensions of double jeopardy.

Double jeopardy. Double jeopardy, according to Berdahl and Moore (2006), is the discrimination of an individual based on multiple attributes inclusive of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and so on. Ethnicity and gender, however, tend to be the most researched in relation to workplace discrimination. Discrimination remains prevalent despite efforts to reduce its blatancy because it can emerge through elusive, subtle, and/or haphazard practices. As Eagly and Chin (2010) indicated, "People can unknowingly discriminate by means of 'mindless' processes that operate beyond their conscious attentional focus, all while thinking that they are merely choosing the best person for the job or...acting in an unbiased manner" (p. 217). Although this subtlety and ignorance may be a common defense and an explanation for some, there is no mistaking the overt system that supports the practice of double jeopardy. For example, African American women, while embodying a significant portion of the workforce (Catalyst, 2014), are among the lowest paid professionals in the workforce, in conjunction with other non-White women (Beal, 2008; Catalyst, 2014; NWLC, 2013a, 2014). Furthermore, professions that have been consigned to women are typically in a lower salary bracket and have limited promotional mobility (Beal, 2008; Berdahl & Moore, 2006).

Berdahl and Moore (2006) conducted research on minority women and the double jeopardy hypothesis in the workplace. This study investigated female participants employed in a male-dominated organization and males in a female-dominated organization. They hypothesized that minority women faced prejudice based on gender and ethnicity. By testing two versions of the double jeopardy hypothesis, additive (gender and ethnicity are independent of each other) and multiplicative (gender and ethnicity are not independent of one another and intensify discrimination), the researchers

hypothesized that minority women faced significantly more workplace discrimination

than minority men as well as Caucasian men and women. The results supported this

hypothesis. However, evidence clearly supported the additive version of double jeopardy,

not the multiplicative version. Simply put, ethnicity does not affect gender discrimination

and gender does not influence ethnic discrimination; rather, they each have an

independent effect on workplace discrimination. Despite the findings of this study,

documentation supports the considerable suffrage of minority women within the

workplace due to variables beyond their control—genetics and pigmentation (Berdahl &

Moore, 2006; Catalyst, 2014; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Eagly & Chin, 2010; NWLC, 2014;

Rhimes, 2015; Yoder et al., 1998).

Challenges within the workforce present African American women with

challenges that are not likely experienced by their Caucasian male cohort (Berdahl &

Moore, 2006; Eagly & Chin, 2010; Rhimes, 2015; Yoder et al., 1998). African American

women must learn to navigate, cope, and/or concede to the environment within which

they work. Receiving limited support from colleagues, lacking mentorship influence,

being aware of intense performance scrutiny, and withstanding slower rates of promotion

are documented as common professional qualms and impediments of professional

African American women (Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Bielby, 2000; Chin, 2011; Danaher

& Branscombe, 2010; Eagly & Chin, 2010; Rhimes, 2015). Furthermore, maneuvering

through a landscape of tokenism and combating double jeopardy, which often leads to

isolation, presents an added layer of complexity to performance pressures and the

construction of a challenging work environment for African American women. It is

possible, however, that other marginalized populations endure their own version of

professional difficulties and hindrances. Further research is necessary to support such

claims.

Collegiate Athletics Leadership

Collegiate athletics leadership has been dominated by Caucasian men for decades

(Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Lapchick & Baker, 2016; Lapchick, Baker, et al., 2015;

Lapchick, Donovan, et al., 2014; Lapchick, Fox, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Johnson, et al.,

2014; Lapchick & Kuhn, 2011; Lapchick et al., 2012; Wilson, 2009). Despite small

victories to increase minority participation in collegiate athletics leadership (e.g., civil

rights and educational legislation, committees, title designation, etc.), the traditional

ideals of athletics leadership dominated by Caucasian men have not shifted enough to

celebrate a complete and widespread leadership transformation. To attend to this issue,

this section addresses the idea of hegemonic masculinity and its influence on a male-

dominated profession. Furthermore, to illustrate the dominance of Caucasian men within

collegiate athletics leadership, a brief history and current composition of senior-level

administration is reviewed.

Hegemonic Masculinity

To understand the term *hegemonic masculinity*, it is necessary to clarify the

relationship between masculinity and femininity and how those concepts intermingle with

hegemony. Typically, the terms *masculine* and *feminine* have been used to describe the

male or female gender. However, as Connell (1995) suggested, masculinity and

femininity extend beyond the basic biological sex differences of men and women to

explicate and describe their behaviors. Inadvertently, a masculine/feminine spectrum is

generated, ultimately creating intensities/strengths of masculinity/femininity. For

example, the most masculine man may be described as a blue-collar worker who loves

and/or participates in aggressive and physical sport(s). A moderately masculine male may

be characterized as a white-collar worker who may watch sports, but has no desire to

participate. A man who may be described as abutting and/or seeping into the feminine

segment of the spectrum may be described as the metrosexual who is extremely particular

about his appearance and would rather shop than be involved in any of the

aforementioned activities. The most feminine male may be depicted as the flamboyant

homosexual that partakes in any given activity and/or attire considered grossly feminine

(i.e., acting prissy, wearing makeup and dresses, etc.). Conversely, women may be

labeled as more feminine or masculine based on their participation in and mobility

throughout the aforementioned activities. Alternatively, Watzlawik (2009) challenged the

idea that masculinity and femininity are assigned to males and females based on

prescribed gender traits and/or behaviors. Specifically, Watzlawik questioned whether

"this assignment [was] solely based on the probability with which people *believe* a

certain trait [or behavior] can *more likely* be observed in one or [the] other sex…" (p.

134). Most people would likely confess that men and women are capable of possessing

similar traits and/or behaviors, yet do not feel that their masculinity/femininity was being

contested (Watzlawik, 2009). Therefore, the continuum of masculinity and femininity

may be presented as fluid concepts. Nevertheless, masculinity is commonly linked with

the level of physicality of the most masculine male (based on the spectrum) which in turn

legitimizes his dominance and "alpha male" status over all other men and women who

are unable to compete physically (Smith, 2013).

Aligned with this theory, Smith's (2013) qualitative study of 15 Australian women who worked in male-dominated trades found that women not only needed to be qualified for their post, but it was a necessity for them to embody masculine attributes (e.g., tough, aggressive, physically strong, etc.) within their professional lives in order to be respected and accepted within their position. Because it is typically contradictory and potentially threatening for women to demonstrate masculine attributes, Smith's research participants noted that they also had to display feminine qualities in conjunction with their masculine practices. This, again, is an illustration of the fluidity of masculinity and femininity.

Wright, Eagleman, and Pedersen (2011) described hegemony as the state in which certain social groups have and conserve power and authority over another and/or others "through imposition, manipulation, and consent" (p. 38). This definition was leveraged by Kanter's (1977) and Hughes' (1945) research on tokenism and dominance. Specifically, the presence of dominance based on status and/or numerical majority creates a culture that reflects hegemony. Connell (1995) also suggested that hegemony is "established only if there is some correspondence between cultural ideal and institutional power" (p. 77). As detailed above in the Prescriptive Gender Norms/Social Role Theory section, men have been fashioned from an early age to be aggressive, dominant, and competitive—all attributes that appear to be the hegemonic standard concerning leadership. Because of this ingrained societal norm, hegemony has traditionally favored masculinity and supports the prevalence and influence of men and the inferiority of women (Connell, 1995). Although the hegemonic culture of an organization can shift when the dominant group is challenged by a new group or culture (Connell, 1995),

Caucasian men have consistently dominated leadership across professional boundaries, especially within collegiate athletics (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Catalyst, 2014; NWLC, 2013a, 2015a). While challenged by legislation such as Title VII and Title IX to shift the traditional hegemonic culture, these pieces of legislation were written in support of equitable professional opportunities, not the complete polar shift of the hegemonic culture to women and/or minorities. Moreover, an imbalance of leadership presence remains, given that Caucasian men dominate athletics administrative leadership (Lapchick & Baker, 2016; Lapchick, Baker, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Donovan, et al., 2014; Lapchick, Fox, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Johnson, et al., 2014; Lapchick & Kuhn, 2011; Lapchick et al., 2012; NCAA, 2015b; NWLC, 2013a, 2015a).

History of Women in Collegiate Athletics Leadership

It is evident that women are underrepresented in the aforementioned male-dominated professions; however, the current presence of women may not be possible had it not been for the adoption and adherence of the Civil Rights legislation. In an effort to expel employment discrimination, ensuring that opportunities were equitable for all persons despite ethnicity, color, denomination, and/or gender, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was approved and accepted (US EEOC, 2015a). Not only does Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protect persons against employment discrimination, but it is supposed to safeguard employees from discrimination as relation to salary, promotion, benefits, and any other condition of employment (US EEOC, 2015c). However, some have argued that these protections have not been executed in a fashion that illustrates complete race and gender equity (NWLC, 2013b, 2014, 2015b, 2015c; Sabo & Snyder, 2013).

Narrowing the scope of employment to education, more specifically higher education, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 was approved in an effort to limit and/or abolish sex discrimination within educational institutions that received federal financial support (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Anderson, Cheslock, & Ehrenberg, 2006; Buchanan, 2012; Cheslock & Eckes, 2008; NWLC, 2012, 2015a). Most recognizable for its application to athletics, Title IX has increased the participation of females in collegiate athletics (NCAA, 2015b; NWLC, 2012). While female participation in sports programs has increased, unfortunately, the visibility of women in upper-level athletics administration has not paralleled the continuous climb to achieve equity in collegiate athletics (Lapchick & Baker, 2016; Lapchick, Baker, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Donovan, et al., 2014; Lapchick, Fox, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Johnson, et al., 2014; Lapchick & Kuhn, 2011; Lapchick et al., 2012; Sabo & Snyder, 2013; Tiell & Dixon, 2008). Likewise, data have demonstrated that women in coaching leadership have also declined since the employment of Title IX (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Lapchick & Baker, 2016; Lapchick, Baker, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Donovan, et al., 2014; Lapchick, Fox, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Johnson, et al., 2014; Lapchick & Kuhn, 2011; Lapchick et al., 2012; Sabo & Snyder, 2013).

Dating back to the 1960s and 1970s, there was clear discrimination within collegiate athletics as exemplified by having separate athletics departments and work demands for the coaches of male sports and female sports (Lopiano, 2016). For example, female athletics directors and coaches not only administered the operations of women's sports, but they were also required to teach courses at the university, unlike their male counterparts (Stringer & Tucker, 2008; Wright et al., 2011). Although the majority of

today's collegiate athletics departments operate as one unit, there remain inequities in

salaries and disproportionate gender representation in administrative positions (for

example, the University of Texas at Austin has a separate women's department headed by

a woman) (Lapchick & Baker, 2016; Lapchick, Baker, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Fox, et al.,

2015; NCAA, 2015b; NWLC, 2015a; Wilson, 2009). Wright et al. (2011) also noted that

while females occupied almost half of the administrative jobs within athletics

departments in 2008, just over 13% of collegiate athletics programs employed *no* women

within the administrative structures.

   After the merging of the separate men's and women's athletics departments and

9 years following the institution of Title IX, the NCAA affiliate institutions began to

develop the designation of the senior-most female of the athletics department. Initially

titled Primary Woman Administrator (PWA), the current title of the senior-most woman

within athletics administration is Senior Woman Administrator (SWA) (NCAA, 2011;

Tiell & Dixon, 2008). The purpose of this designation originated under the premise that

women's interests, experiences, and perspectives would not only be protected, but also

articulated and advocated during the decision-making process at the institutional,

conference, and national stages (NCAA, 2011). This mandated position was integral to

creating a leadership position for women as many of the job functions of the women

heading the women's athletics departments were assumed by males after the merger

(Tiell & Dixon, 2008). Consequently, the percentage of women's representation in

collegiate athletics administration increased after departments merged through the 1991–

1992 academic year (NCAA, 2011; Tiell & Dixon, 2008). Although the number of

women in athletics administration increased after the institution of the SWA title

designation, as documented in Acosta and Carpenter's (2014) longitudinal study and later

logged through the TIDES reporting from 2008 to the present, women—and more

specifically, African American women—are and have remained underrepresented in

collegiate athletics administration.

In addition to collected data through Acosta and Carpenter's (2014) longitudinal

study and the TIDES annual research report (Lapchick & Baker, 2016; Lapchick, Baker,

et al., 2015; Lapchick, Johnson, et al., 2014; Lapchick & Kuhn, 2011), Division I

institutions are required to submit gender equity data for the previous year through the

annual EADA reporting system, as mandated by the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act of

1994 (NWLC, 2007; US DOE, 2015). This information is reported federally in October

and to the NCAA in January of each academic year (NCAA, 2015b). If this information

is not submitted to the NCAA by the respective deadline, athletics programs will suffer a

penalty for the violation of Bylaw 3.2.5.15 (NCAA, 2015a, 2015b). Penalties commence

with an investigation by the NCAA Office of Enforcement and any may conclude with

the expectation of self-inflicted consequences (NCAA, 2015b).

As illustrated, several laws have been adopted in an effort to diminish gender and

race inequities within collegiate athletics. An evaluation of the implementation of the

aforementioned laws at the respective institutions further calls into question the equality

and diversity of an athletics department by releasing regularly updated studies. Because

Acosta and Carpenter's (2014) longitudinal study and Lapchick and Baker's (2016)

annual study demonstrated a lack of progression related to gender and racial visibility

within athletics administration, it is necessary to analyze and reflect on the state of

women—more specifically, African American female leadership—within the athletics realm.

Current Composition (Women and African American Women)

In intercollegiate athletics, the White House Project (Wilson, 2009) found that women were grossly underrepresented within senior-level athletics administration. Similarly, Weaver and Chelladurai (2002) maintained that there has been a significant absence of women in senior-level administrative positions because of minimal female applicants, nominal qualified female applicants, and high burnout rates. Consistently, at the major Division I level, Lapchick, Baker, et al. (2015) found that there were no female commissioners, women do not possess half of the head coaching positions for women's athletics programs, women hold a mere 5.6% of director of athletics positions, and 33% of the Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR) positions were held by women (FAR is a position appointed by the university president). In 2015, none of the female directors of athletics were African American and 4 of the 43 women serving as FARs were non-White (Lapchick, Baker, et al., 2015).

It is further noted that women of color are extremely rare in collegiate athletics administration, despite the increase of administrative positions and female student-athlete opportunities/participation (Harrison et al., 2009). Aligned with this statistic, former NCAA president, the late Myles Brand, affirmed that there was, in fact, a significant absence of women and minorities in director of athletics positions across all divisions (Harrison et al., 2009). Substantiating such claim, the NCAA Demographic Database (2016) and Lapchick and Baker (2016) reported that 29 (8.9%) of Division I Directors of Athletics (at all levels) were women and only 1 (less than 1%) was African American.

Summary

Women in leadership have faced impediments during the rise to leadership for many years. Researchers have introduced several concepts that describe women's pursuit of professional leadership positions: cement ceiling, glass ceiling, and glass cliff (Bruckmuller & Branscombe, 2010; Eagly & Carli, 2007). While these theories demonstrate advancement equivalent to a small victory, they are not without restriction and challenge. Although women have been able to break through some leadership barriers, they must modify their leadership styles in accordance with the established organizational culture and prescriptive gender norms/social role theory. Often, these two variables conflict as females were conditioned to be communal, collaborative, and maternal, while males were socialized to be agentic, aggressive, and decisive (Applebaum et al., 2003; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Kawakami et al., 2000). Despite this societal practice, women must have the ability to balance communal and agentic qualities necessary to lead and limit scrutiny while increasing respect within the workplace (Rudman & Glick, 2001; Smith, 2013). In having such background and skill, women are able to employ transformation and/or transactional leadership as there are benefits and challenges to both leadership approaches. Still, occupational advancement for women presents challenges due to the limited opportunities to develop social capital and nurture mentor/mentee relationships in addition to lending more attention to familial relationships.

While understanding the general challenges women face, these impediments are amplified for African American women pursuing leadership roles because of the added layer and complexity of their visible ascribed attribute—ethnicity. The shaped

perspective of African American women is attributed to the harassment, discrimination, and prejudice they have faced throughout history. Black feminist thought ignited empowerment among African American women to have the wherewithal to pursue positions of power. This pursuit is, however, not met without resistance. African American women do not have the same access to leadership opportunities as they are scrutinized and discriminated against based on variables beyond their control—skin pigmentation and genetics (Berdahl & Moore, 2006). Facing tokenism and double jeopardy, African American women experience social and professional isolation within the workplace, which ultimately limits access to information, support from supervisors and colleagues, and access to upward mobility.

Collegiate athletics leadership, also dominated by Caucasian men, has utilized several pieces of legislation in an effort to shift the hegemonic masculinity that exists within the profession. Although hegemony can shift when challenged by a new group or culture (Connell, 1995), Title IX and Title VII were created to establish equity within higher education and, most notably, within collegiate athletics. While only limited research has been conducted on collegiate athletics, several studies have highlighted the gender and ethnic composition of collegiate athletics leadership spanning the last three decades (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Lapchick & Baker, 2016; Lapchick, Baker, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Donovan, et al., 2014; Lapchick, Fox, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Johnson, et al., 2014; Lapchick & Kuhn, 2011; Lapchick et al., 2012). These studies demonstrated the gross absence of not only women, but of African American women from senior leadership positions within collegiate athletics. In sum, Chapter Two demonstrated the necessity of conducting further research on the journey of African American women

towards senior-level leadership in an effort to close the numerical disparity between

Caucasian men and African American women in collegiate athletics leadership at

Division I institutions.

CHAPTER THREE: PROJECT METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Within the male-dominated profession of collegiate athletics administration, the disparity between males and females, and specifically African American females, exists, is highly visible, and has been for years (Lapchick & Baker, 2016; Lapchick, Baker, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Donovan, et al., 2014; Lapchick, Fox, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Johnson, et al., 2014; Lapchick & Kuhn, 2011). According to the most current annual minority report card on collegiate athletics, there is a limited presence of African American women serving in senior-level administration campus-wide and within Division I collegiate athletics (Lapchick, Baker, et al., 2015). Prominent leadership roles have remained White and male. For example, 88.6% of collegiate leadership positions are held by Whites and 7% are held by African Americans, yet only five of those posts are held by African American women (1%) (Lapchick, Baker, et al., 2015). White men have secured 101 of the 128 presidential seats at the Division I level and White females hold an additional 14 presidential posts. Thirteen presidential positions are held by persons of color, and of those 13, only one is an African American female (Lapchick, Baker, et al., 2015). Lapchick and colleagues (Lapchick, Baker, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Donovan, et al., 2014; Lapchick, Fox, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Johnson, et al., 2014; Lapchick & Kuhn, 2011; Lapchick et al., 2012) have shown that there are no African American female Directors of Athletics or Conference Commissioners in Division I. To understand the limited presence of African American women serving in senior-level administration within collegiate athletics, the researcher conducted a qualitative phenomenological study

to understand and capture the lived experiences of African American women during their pursuit of leadership within collegiate athletics administration.

Chapter Three includes a detailed account of the study's research methodology, a description of the study's participants, an evaluation of the researcher's role in the study, the data collection and analysis procedures, and an acknowledgement of the overall ethical considerations.

Research Question

The underrepresentation of African American women in senior-level leadership positions in Division I athletics has been documented for years and is a growing concern (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Lapchick, Baker, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Donovan, et al., 2014; Lapchick, Fox, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Johnson, et al., 2041; NCAA's, 2015b; NWLC, 2015a; Wilson, 2009). The goal of this study was to understand the lived experiences of African American women who have attained leadership positions in Division I athletics.

This study was conducted to answer the following research question: What are the lived experiences of African American women in their pursuit of senior leadership positions within athletics administration at Division I institutions?

Method

The researcher employed a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of African American women in upper-level administration positions within Division I collegiate athletics. Phenomenological research was utilized as a means to understand interactions and connections that individuals have with others and their surroundings (Lien, Pauleen, Kuo, & Wang, 2012). In this case, the researcher's goal was

to understand *what* African American women experience and how that *what* was actually experienced (Creswell, 2013). Creswell (2013) and Moustakas (1994) noted that this method of data collection allows the researcher to deconstruct conscious experiences into a single phenomenon. Specifically, phenomenology is aimed at discovering the meaning of shared occurrences among a group of individuals rather than making generalizations about the experiences and formulating specific connections by which to create a theory (Grounded Theory Approach) (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). Furthermore, the frame of the research question does not present a problem or existing phenomenon to be studied (Case Study Approach), but seeks to explore an experience (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell, 2013). With the employment of phenomenology, the researcher was able to reasonably analyze and isolate thematic similarities among the research participants that characterized the phenomenon under study. The application of phenomenological study for this particular research was effective because unearthing a specific and common phenomenon among the shared experiences of African American women's personal and professional journeys was utilized to answer the research question.

Participant Recruitment and Sampling

There were several reasons for limiting the research pool to FBS conferences:

1. FBS conferences are the most recognizable, visible, and celebrated conferences within collegiate athletics.

2. FBS conferences are the most visibly researched and documented.

3. FBS conferences, to many, are revered as the standard for collegiate athletics as related to resources, budgets, competition, advertisements, sponsorships, television deals, and so on.

Prior to participant recruitment, the researcher used the Google Search engine to obtain the names of all of the FBS conferences—a total of 10. According to the NCAA Race and Gender Demographic Database (2016) and Lapchick and Baker (2016), nine Directors of Athletics and 267 Associate Directors of Athletics were women within Division I of FBS institutions during the 2014–2015 academic year. Of this population, there were no African American female Directors of Athletics and only 31 Associate Directors of Athletics who were African American women (totaling 12%) (NCAA 2016). In two conferences in the western region of the United States, no African American women were represented in senior-level leadership; one conference had seven African American women and another had six. The remaining six conferences had one to five African American female representatives in senior leadership positions.

After visiting each conference website and noting its conference affiliates, the researcher examined each individual institution's athletics staff directory, for a total of 129 athletics websites. The researcher compiled a list of each of the individuals having a title of Associate Director or higher (e.g., Senior Associate, Executive, Deputy, etc.) and a published photo that confirmed gender and presumed ethnicity. LinkedIn and Google search engines were referenced for those who did not have a posted picture on the athletics website. Additionally, colleagues at conference offices or at individual institutions were phoned for confirmation when some pictures were not published. Prior to receiving confirmation of ethnicity, the researcher identified a working total of 32 women, presumed African American with the Associate Director title or higher, with published pictures (note that 15 institutions had unpublished pictures of staff and no pictures were found via LinkedIn or Google). The total number of presumed African

American women serving in senior-level leadership was different than the population

documented by the demographic database—the demographic database confirmed 30

African American women with the Associate title or higher, while the 32 African

American women in this category were tallied during the initial evaluation of the

institutional websites. A numerical difference was possible because the generated reports

are representative of the 2014–2015 academic year and the researcher commenced data

collection in the fall of 2016. A shift/change in organizational structure and/or personnel

during the lapse in time may have also affected the documented numbers. Furthermore, it

is possible that some of the African American women documented with the Associate

title or higher did not have sport supervisory responsibilities. This, in turn, may have

impacted the true research-eligible target population. The snowball technique was used at

the conclusion of the interviews in order to obtain the names of and contact information

of other African American women who met the research criteria within the respective

conferences (Noy, 2008). This technique yielded one additional eligible participant. Noy

(2008) proposed that the snowball sampling technique allows for the development of

organic relationships between the researcher and the participants. At the completion of all

of the phone calls/email correspondence and snowball technique, 33 women were

confirmed as African American with the Associate Director title or higher.

After the study's target population was identified, the researcher electronically

(via email) sent a formal invitation (Appendix A, Formal Invite) to each eligible woman

to participate in the research. It was hoped that the wording of the formal invitation

would serve as an electronic version of the snowball technique as it requested the

invitation to be forwarded to anyone the potential participant knew who also met the

denoted criteria. One hundred percent participation would have been ideal. However, the research sample was determined by the number of individuals who volunteered to participate in the research. The goal was to obtain consent from enough participants to conduct well-rounded research. Specifically, the sampling goal was to collect enough data to achieve saturation. Saturation refers to collecting enough data where no *new* information can be collected (Creswell, 2013). Although saturation was the goal, the researcher continued to solicit interviews from the target population with efforts to achieve a representative sample of the target population (Versta Research, 2009). This practice continued until participants declined to be interviewed or were non-responsive (e.g., members of the target population not responding or replying to two phone calls and/or three electronic communications, etc.) (Creswell, 2013; Mason, 2010). To evoke a larger response rate for participation, the researcher sent follow-up emails (Appendix A, Follow-Up Email) 10 days after the initial solicitation email in order to establish personalized contact between the researcher and the potential participants—especially those who had not responded and/or confirmed participation (Anseel, Lievens, Schollaert, & Choragwicka, 2010). According to Anseel et al. (2010), advanced notice, follow-up phone calls, topic relevance, perceived anonymity, university sponsorship, and the use of technology are effective techniques with which to incite participation.

After confirmation communications were completed, each participant ultimately met the following criteria in order to participate in the research:

Self-identified

1. African American

2. Female

3. Senior-level Administration (Associate Director and/or Director of Athletics Title, etc.)

4. Division I (FBS) Collegiate Athletics

5. Sport Supervision Responsibilities

Based on the aforementioned criteria, 28 of the 33 women were confirmed as encompassing the components necessary to qualify for participation in the research.

Demographics of Participants

From the target population, 11 participants agreed to partake in the research study. Of the 11 interviews conducted, only 10 interviews were used in data analysis totaling a 36% response rate. One interview conducted was with a senior-level administrator who did not have sport supervision; hence, she did not meet the requirements of the study. Of the 10 qualifying participants, three had terminal degrees and seven had master's degrees. Two had a background in external operations (development/fundraising and operations/facilities management, etc.), while the remaining eight had internal backgrounds in either compliance and/or a branch of student services (e.g., academic, development/life skills, etc.). Each of the women oversaw anywhere from four to eight sports at their respective institutions. Three women were married or had life partners and seven were single (e.g., no partnership recognized by law/court system). Participant localities ranged from East Coast to the Midwest; there were no participants from the West Coast (see Table 1 for demographic information. Note that regional location was intentionally omitted from the table to further protect the identities of the research participants).

Table 1

Demographic Information

Name	Title	Level of Education	Background Experience	Number of Sports Supervising	Marital Status
Agnes	Deputy Athletics Director	Masters	Internal: Student Affairs	17	Legal Partnership
Amy	Senior Associate Athletics Director for Administration/SWA	Masters	External: Development	4	Single
Ann G	Executive Senior Associate Athletics Director/SWA	Masters	Internal: Compliance	7	Legal Partnership
Faith	Executive Associate Athletics Director	Terminal	Internal: Compliance	5	Legal Partnership
Hallie	Senior Associate Athletics Director/SWA	Masters	Internal: Student Affairs	8	Single
Jeyah	Senior Associate Director of Athletics	Masters	Internal: Student Affairs	6	Single
Katrina	Senior Associate Director of Athletics/SWA	Terminal	Internal: Student Affairs	5	Single
Lola	Senior Associate Athletics Director/SWA	Terminal	Internal: Compliance	6	Single
Mitchell	Associate Athletics Director	Masters	External: Operations	5	Single
Renee	Senior Associate Athletics Director/SWA	Masters	Internal: Student Affairs	8	Single

Instrumentation

A phenomenological study, as Creswell (2013), Moustakas (1994), and Pollio

et al. (1997) noted, requires the researcher to identify common experiences among the

sample population after obtaining personalized reflections and recollections of events and

details surrounding such events (e.g., thoughts, feelings, causes, effects, etc.). In this

research, phenomenology allowed the researcher to reveal what African American

women experienced and how those occurrences were actually experienced. To garner

such data, the researcher conducted interviews and addressed experiences with race,

gender, and access to opportunity (an example of the interview questions may be found in

Appendix B). Open ended questions along with supplementary probing questions were

asked of individuals where further reflection needed to be solicited. Probing questions

were inclusive of the following and can be found in Appendix B:

1. How did that make you feel?

2. How does/has that impacted your experience in your current position?

3. What does this mean for others trying to secure a comparable position?

Interviews were conversational in order to establish rapport and comfort during the

reflection and interview process. The use of this research technique allowed for follow-up

questioning where clarity was warranted (Pollio et al., 1997).

The Researcher's Role

The researcher selected this topic because of her direct and indirect experiences

and observations as an African American woman in the collegiate athletics arena.

Additionally, because of the researcher's desire and aspiration to ascend to senior

leadership within the profession (i.e., associate director and/or director of athletics, etc.),

there was concern that bias could potentially invade the research process. While it was

crucial to remain objective throughout the research process, Lien et al. (2012)

acknowledged that the researcher of a phenomenological study should be reflective

through the practice of empathy. To limit personal bias, it was important for the

researcher to bracket her feelings and experiences from the research study (Creswell,

2013). Having an awareness of personal goals, desires, and experiences was integral to

the research because a mishandling of these personal biases would be a detriment to the validity of research conclusions (Maxwell, 2005). Furthermore, Maxwell (2005) noted that this same awareness "can provide…a valuable source of insight, theory, and data about the phenomena [studied]" (p. 19). However, to counteract flawed research and encourage objectivity, it was important for the researcher to journal her personal biases to reference during the formulation of interview questions and the analysis process. This allowed the researcher to reflect upon any personal emotions surrounding personal and professional experiences. The bracketing of feelings safeguarded against directed, guided, and/or leading interview questions that may provoke directed answers. All inquiries had to be as objective as possible, allowing participants to respond openly and freely despite the researcher's personal experiences and feelings. Furthermore, it was important to not allow personal experiences to permeate the study during data analysis for care must be given to not misinterpret the reflective experiences of the participants. To do so, the researcher journaled her feelings and biases after each interview on a Dell laptop computer. Addressing these concerns ultimately impacted the findings and validity of this research.

Data Collection Procedures

In-depth interviewing was the method for data collection for the purpose of acquiring personal reflections about each participant's journey toward senior-level leadership. Interviewing was selected for several reasons. First, the timing of the research and proximity of the researcher and all potential participants did not allow for alternative forums such as focus groups. Second, individualized, in-depth interviewing perpetuated a private space for personalized reflection and was a natural yet rigorous method for

obtaining descriptive experiences of the participants (Pollio et al., 1997). This type of

dialogue allowed for clarification where necessary. Lastly, conversational style

interviewing was aligned with the comfort and skillset of the researcher.

After participants agreed to participate, dates, times, and locations of interviews

were scheduled in accordance with the researcher's and participants' respective schedules

(see Appendix A, Meeting Confirmation). Additionally, participants received an

informed consent document for initial review and participant documentation (see

Appendix C) (this document was reviewed by both the researcher and the participant

prior to the start of the interview). Due to the nature of collegiate athletics competition

and the timeliness of the research, interviews were scheduled during the month of

October of 2016. Ideally, interviews would have been conducted through face-to-face

interaction in a space of comfort for the participant. However, because of the

geographical locations of each participant, the most suitable method of data collection

was via video-conference (bluecafe.webex.com) and traditional conference call (e.g.,

audio).

Participants were forwarded a brief outline and/or description of the content of the

interview at the moment the interview was confirmed so that internal reflection could

ensue (Appendix D). The participants did not review the actual interview questions prior

to the interview. Participants were instructed to spend 15–30 minutes reflecting on the

interview outline without journaling their experiences. This was to assist with limiting

and/or eliminating any tainted and/or rehearsed interview responses by the participants

that would negatively impact the validity of the research findings. The goal was to solicit

and obtain uninhibited interview responses—garnering authentic reflections about

personal and professional experiences throughout the advancement to leadership. Interviews lasted 35–75 minutes (depending on the reflection and candidness of the participant) and were centered around race, gender, and access to opportunity.

To protect the identity of the participant and the institution, the interviewees were asked to create a personal alias at the start of the interview. This alias was utilized throughout the interview and applied during the formal written composition of this research. To garner additional reflection, clarify responses, and limit misinterpretation, the researcher asked additional probing and follow-up questions when necessary. Participants were also notified that they may be contacted post-interview for any follow-up questioning or point of clarification.

To ensure the exactitude of collected data, each interview was recorded with participant permission. Recording interviews allowed for accurate transcription prior to data analysis. All interviews were recorded using the Bluecafe video-recording feature or the voice memo application on iPhones 5 and 6. Additionally, the researcher wrote key interview notes during each interview, and then typed additional notes on a Dell laptop computer for supplementary reference purposes.

After the taping of each interview, the recording was either converted from video to an mp3 file and/or emailed from the voice memo application and saved to the Dell laptop computer and external hard drive. All files were uploaded to rev.com for transcription. The processing time for each interview was within 24 hours or less. Written transcripts were saved to the Dell laptop computer and external hard drive. After receiving the hard and electronic copy of each transcribed interview, the researcher reviewed all transcripts while listening to each recording to ensure that all transcripts

were accurately transcribed; and edits were made where necessary. After confirming the accuracy of the transcripts, the researcher commenced data analysis. After analysis, all recorded and transcribed interviews were kept in a locked box in the researcher's home office. They will be stored for 3 years prior to termination.

Data Analysis

Participant interviews were recorded and professionally transcribed. The researcher reviewed and analyzed the transcripts thoroughly for thematic similarities. It was important to report the interviewee's personal reflections accurately for the purpose of documenting the parallel and/or uncommon experiences. Furthermore, identifying the techniques employed when overcoming personal and/or professional challenges was critical to the research.

When analyzing data to seek a phenomenon, Bernard and Ryan (2010) noted the following eight techniques for identifying themes:

1. Repetition—repeatedly referred-to ideas;

2. Indigenous Typologies/Categories—use of unfamiliar native verbiage and/or familiar vocabulary in unfamiliar ways;

3. Metaphors and Analogies—explanation of personal thoughts, actions, and occurrences through figures of speech (metaphors) and/or comparisons (analogies);

4. Transitions—natural swings or shifts in content;

5. Similarities and Differences—comparing parts of the texts for resemblances and contrasts;

6. Linguistic Connections—looking for patterns in phrases that signify casual or conditional relationships;

7. Missing Data—intentionally leaving out or abbreviating text (e.g., what has been left unsaid); and

8. Theory-Related Material—narratives that encompasses themes that group experiences. (pp. 56–63)

Although these methods may be largely suitable in thematic analysis, the researcher used repetition, similarities and differences, and cutting and sorting (e.g., identifying quotes and expressions of importance and arrange into piles) (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). Furthermore, Bernard and Ryan suggested identifying as many themes as possible (e.g., splitting method) and then minimizing the wide range of themes through the process of lumping (e.g. condensing like-themes into a shorter list, etc.). Through the aforementioned process, categorizing themes, generating sub-themes, and/or hierarchies materialized (Bernard & Ryan, 2010).

The researcher first hand-coded each of the hard-copy transcripts. A plethora of themes emerged and were then lumped in an effort to reduce redundancy. This process was repeated until themes and sub-themes were revealed. Due to the absence of a second reviewer, an intra-rater reliability approach (Gwet, 2008) was employed to ensure reliability of the data. Two weeks after hand-coding and analyzing the hard-copy interview transcripts, the researcher utilized Dedoose to code common contextual patterns throughout the transcribed participant interviews absent of the initial set of codes. When using Dedoose during the analysis process, the researcher employed descriptive coding (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). After the texts were coded, the

researcher categorized and clustered similar codes to identify the overarching themes.

The researcher compared the themes from the hand-coding and the software-coding to

(a) determine reliability, and (b) identify any additional themes found. The researcher

determined that there was reliability between both methods of coding when the themes

were repeated between both sets of codes. Gwet (2008) noted that reproducibility of

data is essential for corroborating scientific inquiries. Furthermore, the researcher was

able to tease out two additional themes with corresponding sub-themes using software-

coding because the 2-week time span allowed for (a) familiarity with the data and

(b) computerized organization that was not possible with hand-coding. After the theme(s)

were confirmed, the phenomena emerged.

Ethical Considerations

As an African American woman in the collegiate athletics arena seeking an ascent

to senior leadership within the profession (i.e., associate director of athletics or director of

athletics, etc.), the researcher's bias had the potential to bleed throughout the research

process. In order to limit personal bias, it was important for the researcher to bracket her

feelings and experiences from those participating in the research study (Creswell, 2013)

through the process of journaling. The researcher made sure that the interview questions

were not presented as leading questions which might provoke answers in a specific

direction. All inquiries had to be as objective as possible, allowing for participants to

respond openly and freely despite any personal experiences and feelings of the

researcher. For assistance with this, the researcher initially drafted potential questions for

the interview and conducted three mock interviews with individuals who were isolated

from the research. After conducting the interviews, the researcher surveyed the mock

interviewees about their thoughts, feelings, and feedback on the questions (e.g., Were the questions leading? Were the questions clear? Did the questions allow for honesty and transparency? Was the interview too long, short, just right?, etc.). Based on the feedback from the mock interviewees, the researcher made adjustments to the interview questions. Next, the researcher obtained institutional approval by gaining consent through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Appendix E). This process further confirmed that the interview questions were appropriate and all other precautions were taken to limit harm to the participants. Additionally, the researcher sought feedback and approval from the dissertation committee regarding the objectivity of the interview questions.

After garnering approval to proceed with the study, the researcher disclosed the purpose of the study to the individuals who expressed an interest in participating in the research (Creswell, 2013). All participants understood their respective value to the research and the literature. By gaining the participants' consent to proceed, the researcher ensured confidentiality to the best of her ability by allowing each participant to assign a personal alias at the start of the interview. This confidentiality was critical for participants in order to limit any potential professional power imbalances at the conclusion of the research based on interview responses (e.g., supervisors unhappy with personal and institutional portrayal, colleagues angered by personal and professional portrayal, etc.) (Creswell, 2013), as well as affording interviewees a safe space in which to speak freely and comfortably. Additionally, confidentiality is necessary for the protection of the institutions in which they were/are formerly/currently employed.

Summary

In Chapter Three, the researcher detailed the selected methodology for this qualitative study. A rationale for the selection of the phenomenological study to uncover the research question was provided. A thorough explanation of the sample, participant selection process, and the method of data collection were presented. Data analysis and the method used to verify the results were also reviewed. In remaining transparent, the researcher outlined ethical considerations along with the preventative precautions practiced to limit research error. After this comprehensive outline of how the phenomenological research was conducted, Chapter Four thoroughly presents and reviews the research findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative research study was to obtain a description of the lived experiences of African American women as they journey to upper level administrative positions within Division I (FBS) collegiate athletics. The following research question was used to drive this study: What are the lived experiences of African American women in their pursuit of senior leadership positions within athletics administration at Division I institutions? This chapter provides details of the research findings concerning the journey of African American women towards leadership in collegiate athletics administration. The following sections present an analysis and synthesis of the findings.

Presentation of the Findings

All participants were asked questions pertaining to their overall navigation of collegiate athletics. More specifically, they were asked to describe their personal/professional experiences, positive and/or negative, as related to race and gender and their effects on their overall navigation of the workplace and athletics industry, professional advancement, and solidifying a professional network. Themes that emerged throughout the interview process were: (a) strategy for upward mobility, (b) compensation due to the awareness of African American female stereotypes, and (c) shaped perspectives based on experience. Within each theme, subthemes were presented. Strategy for upward mobility included experience and skill development, networking and professional development, communication, and professional opportunities. Compensation due to the awareness of African American female

stereotypes encompassed overall appearance and professionalism. Shaped perspectives based on experience included personal approach and outlook related to professional challenges, personal responsibility, and work ethic. Each subtheme is discussed in accordance with the respective overarching theme.

Navigating Collegiate Athletics

Prior to reviewing the themes that emerged, a brief overview of the participants' general navigation of collegiate athletics will be provided as a foundation for their experiences. In navigating the collegiate athletics industry, participants either experienced and/or observed professional encounters where race and gender have been particularly impactful. When asked whether race or gender had the most impact, positive or negative, on their professional advancement, the responses ranged from not having the ability to distinguish between the impact of gender and race to each variable bearing a more positive or more negative effect. Five women affirmed that they were unable to select one variable over the other when determining the most impact, positive or negative, on their career. This was largely due to the fact that they are never going to be female without also being African American. In other words, their gender and race will never be inseparable—they are African American women. Two groups of two women believed that either race or gender had the most impact. In both groups, one participant felt there was more of a positive impact on her career and one participant felt there was more of a negative impact on her career. Jeyah, unlike all other participants, believed that neither race or gender played a role in her professional advancement; rather, her job performance was the sole determining factor of her advancement. Overall, the majority of the women expressed feeling "fortunate" or "blessed" to have secured senior-level

leadership positions in collegiate athletics. They acknowledged that while they have

positioned themselves to attain a leadership position at the Division I level, the overall

challenges that African American women face in a White male-dominated profession are

"real" and present.

Strategy for upward mobility. A deliberate plan to achieve a goal is often

referred to as a strategy (Dictionary.com, 2017). Strategizing, a noticeable theme found

throughout the data, appeared as the research participants navigated and continue to

navigate the collegiate athletics profession. Strategy emerged throughout the following

subthemes: experience and skill development, networking and professional development,

communication, and professional opportunities.

Experience and skill development. Participants noted that experience, or the lack

thereof, and skill development assisted and/or hampered career progression. When

reflecting upon their careers, eight of the participants maintained that obtaining a wealth

of experience across athletics administration would have been more beneficial to their

professional progression within collegiate athletics. They further expressed that the

additional external experiences (e.g., development/fundraising, etc.) would have

bolstered their internal experience in student affairs, student development, and

compliance backgrounds.

Katrina, Jeyah, Mitchell, Ann G., Faith, and Lola insisted that diversifying one's

experiences within the organization and/or the surrounding community was beneficial for

them and advised that it may be beneficial for other African American females aspiring to

leadership roles. Mitchell posed such scenarios:

But if there are opportunities to branch out into other areas, if you're on campus, can you help out at development events? Can you help the marketing staff at a football game? Can you just show that you're taking initiative, you're proactive, and you're willing to get involved in other things and other experiences that make you more well-rounded? People notice that, and people see that. I think that's always a good thing.

Although not all participants felt equipped with experience in every capacity within the jobs they held and/or sought, they shared that development/fundraising experience was one of the most essential skills to possess when seeking director of athletics positions—so much so that when participants were asked what they wished they would have known that may have assisted in their professional advancement or what advice they would provide other African American women seeking senior-level leadership, over half of the participants definitively responded with the attainment of development/fundraising experience. Despite Ann G. eventually acquiring development opportunities later in her career, she described her sentiments concerning African American women and fundraising as such:

A lot of times we don't get that access. We don't get that development, that cultivation piece. A lot of people want to use fundraising expertise and hold it in a fundraising setting as a means to eliminate some of us as candidates. It's almost like a self-fulfilling prophesy. We don't get exposed to the donors and therefore we get denied opportunities and access because we can't check that box. Unless you have a very progressive AD that's going to make an effort to allow you in front of the donors and allow you to develop a certain level of comfort interacting

with donors, then you're always going to feel like a piece of your resume is

missing.

Supporting Ann G.'s outlook, Katrina reflected upon a time she interviewed for a senior-

level position where development experience was an expectation of the position. She

detailed the hiring committee's response to her lack of development experience when

they stated, "We don't know if you've ever made the 'ask.' If you'd made just one ask,

then we would've probably brought you back in for a final round because you have a

personality that can do it." Nine out of 10 participants believed that limited

development/fundraising experience may be due to the observation that African

Americans and women appear to be more frequently employed in student affairs, student

services, and compliance positions. However, after learning that not having direct

fundraising experience thwarted her from obtaining the sought-after position, Katrina

realized that she needed to obtain the experience, despite the experience of being outside

the athletics department. She explained that:

> I happened to be nominated to a board of directors…they have appointed me to
>
> several committees. One is not specifically the development fundraising but it's
>
> helping and assisting in doing things [with development/fundraising]. I think they
>
> understand they're trying to help me professionally, even though I can't get the
>
> experience now. They're trying to help me in that area to really gain experience
>
> so I can say, "I'm not doing it in the athletic department. Let me tell you where
>
> I've done it and how it's very similar because the board of directors is an athletic
>
> association." Even though I haven't done it in my department, I've done it on a

national scale. Definitely getting involved in other activities outside of athletics to

gain that development experience…is just key.

At her next interview, Katrina noted that she would then be able to demonstrate how the

experiences outside of the athletics department are transferable to an athletics scenario.

She further admitted that if given the opportunity to obtain fundraising experience at a

younger age, she most certainly would have capitalized. Because of this, she strongly

encouraged younger professionals, male and females, to secure such exposure wherever

and whenever possible.

Six of the participants stated that development experience is a valuable skillset to

have in one's dossier, especially when seeking senior-level administrative positions.

Networking and professional development. Networking was the one activity that

100% of the participants felt was integral to career progression. These experiences

included networking with peer colleagues at conferences and conventions, with donors

and with institutional constituency. Several participants cautioned against securing a

network of individuals who were solely African American and/or African American

females. Faith explained her philosophy for diversifying her professional network:

Don't just network [with] people who look like you. You've got to network with

the power players. You can see people who have gone on in leadership that are

people of color, their mentors have been people who have a name in the industry.

Usually that has been White men. Even White females I've talked to said, "Look,

we need the men so don't go and start bashing them because they're the ones who

have helped me." If you look at some of the athletic directors, female athletics

directors in Division I…a majority of their leaders and people that were their leaders in the athletic department were men.

Ann G. concurred that people tend to pursue mentors of comfort (e.g., look like self, etc.), but advised that "You've got to know who holds the power and seek mentors in that group because that's who they're going to call to ask about you." These people of power tend to be Caucasian men. She went on to mention that as she was seeking employment opportunities, although potential employers fielded a call from her Black male mentors, they were more apt to pick up the phone to call her White male mentors. Ann G. continued by declaring that:

> We have to be seen [intermingling with other races and genders]. If everybody wants to assume we're just going to hang out with other Black folks, we should. We should be able to do so without it being criticized. We do need a network within our race and within our gender. I mean I don't need to be seen by my female colleagues as "too good" for them. They need to be comfortable with me in their circle and I need to be comfortable in their circle. I do need to hang out and get to know other females and other Black females and other minorities and other Black administrators. I also need to be comfortable in the company of White administrators too.

Agreeing with Ann G., Mitchell stated that in her previous position, she was able to network with a plethora of different people across the profession. In benefiting from her networking experience, she affirmed that "You can't be afraid, in this industry, to put yourself out there…. You can't be afraid to network with all races and genders. You've got to have strong relationships with all the above [in order] to advance."

When asked about the composition of mentors/sponsors who have assisted with

career progression, Lola stated:

A lot of sponsors, most of them men, but the people who talk well about you in a

room…oftentimes, they've been people that I wouldn't have expected to be the

person. I think a lot of, and this is my own personal belief, I think we all have

sponsors that we don't know about. I don't think that's a bad thing because that

means that things are working the way they're supposed to. I don't know if you

will always know who your sponsors are. Usually you do, but I think you often

have people that you would never guess. For me, they have mostly been

men…mostly White men.

According to Avery et al. (2008), White men are most likely associated with

power and are better equipped to assist in a protégé's positioning for leadership than men

and women of all other ethnicities. Moreover, Eagly and Carli (2007) noted that African

American women experience greater challenges when establishing social capital because

race and gender become perceived barriers when securing powerful Caucasian male

mentors. Supporting Eagly and Carli's (2007) idea, a couple of the women in the study

admitted to being challenged with the development of a professional network over the

course of their career. Illustrating this perspective, Jeyah affirmed her networking

experience by acknowledging that:

I'm not good at networking. Like I said, I don't have mentors that I rely on. I kind

of just figure it out, which has made things a lot more difficult than it needs to be

if you have someone that you can go to, pick up the phone and call to ask advice

and get advice for situations that you deal with on a day-to-day basis. Most of my

job is putting out fires, and so if I could have developed earlier in my career, a

relationship with a mentor or sponsor, I think that probably would have helped. It

would make my day-to-day a little bit easier probably. Instead I'm just doing

things by trial and error.

Like Jeyah, Agnes confirmed that she, too, did not have a lot of mentors. She admitted to

doing the job to the best of her ability and in the best way she knew how. While absent of

a professional network, she attributed some of her professional growth to weekly

coaching meetings with her supervisor who, in turn, became her dominant mentor.

According to all of the participants, networking must be deliberate. When asked what

techniques are used in an effort to develop these relationships, Agnes noted that she

researches conference attendees, selects those she desires to connect with, and prepares

several questions to initiate conversation. Furthermore, Hallie emphasized the importance

of developing "authentic relationships with people that, not only do I feel good around,

but who will also give me the tough love." According to Hallie and Renee, and aligned

with Salas-Lopez et al. (2011), these genuine relationships should incorporate honesty,

which may later evolve beyond a mere professional affiliation and morph into true

friendships.

In addition to developing a network of peers within the industry, Lola emphasized

the importance of fostering a network with institutional personnel, more specifically with

the university administration. Lola articulated her efforts when cultivating relationships

with her institutional administration:

When we do have interactions, I always made sure they were positive. I always

made sure that we talked about things of substance and not "Oh! That's so pretty

> here." [I] just showed [him] that I had the wherewithal, and I could do the job,
>
> and I knew what I was doing, and I knew what I was talking about. Really just
>
> showing [potential mentors/sponsors] things about me that made me good at what
>
> I do…showing…that competence.

Developing this type of relationship proved to be beneficial for Lola's professional progression. Lola went on to share that as a new administration replaced the previous, the institutional personnel with whom she developed relationships were able to speak positively on her behalf to the incoming administration. Like Lola, Amy was able to develop relationships with institutional personnel at her previous institution. Though a mid-level manager at the time, Amy "made sure they [male senior-level administrators] knew who [she] was." The gentleman she connected with ended up becoming the director of athletics at her current institution and brought her with him as a senior-level administrator.

In addition to developing relationships with peers in the industry and institutional personnel, Mitchell recommended that professionals aspiring for leadership should advocate for attendance at conferences (e.g., NACDA, etc.). Furthermore, she suggested seeking opportunities within their institution, even outside of their department, as additional professional experiences that may assist in the development of their overall network. In addition to attending conferences, Ann G. advised assisting with championship tournaments and volunteering for NCAA Committees in an effort to: (a) grow social capital by being exposed to individuals from other universities and conference offices; and (b) showcase knowledge, talents, and abilities beyond the institutional level.

Communication. Eagly and Carli (2007) proposed that African American women are typically perceived as being overly assertive or threatening. Three participants declared that they must always be mindful of their communication with supervisors, subordinates, and peers. For instance, Hallie professed that "being a strong female and African American creates even greater challenges," especially when articulating an opinion. She went on to declare that exercising her voice was often received "differently" than if those same opinions were expressed by her White male counterparts. Because of some of these very scenarios, stereotypes, and perceptions, participants have had to be mindful of their verbal delivery. For example, Renee described how her approach has evolved when responding to colleagues during discussions where there is a difference of opinion. In an effort not to present herself as a threat, she now replies to her colleagues by stating, "I understand where you're coming from theoretically, but in my practical experience, this is what works." This, for Renee, often lessens the tension and perceived threat during a disagreement. Likewise, Ann G. has had to temper her delivery of suggestions and opinions to her supervisors, with whom she has had more industrial experience, in order to demonstrate support as opposed to resistance and opposition:

> I come across as a threat just because I know more, but I'm able, because of my previous training, to be a good follower and I try to be one. I offer advice, but I don't do it in a condescending manner. I do it in a supportive way to inform them of things that they need to be aware of. I make recommendations on how we should handle something, but I defer to them on the final decision.

Furthermore, six of the participants admitted that they had to "pick [their] battles." Renee professed that "I don't feel the need to fight every fight, because every fight ain't mine. I

just don't believe in wasting my energy, and less so as I get older." Like Renee, Agnes

divulged that throughout her career she had to "pick and choose what issues were

important to bring or battles were important to fight." Hence, some concerns took

precedence over others.

An added component to the stereotypes of African American women are some of

the negative perceptions associated with the SWA designation. According to four

participants, these negative perceptions tend to stem from a lack of knowledge

surrounding the purpose and role of the SWA. While not all of the participants held this

designation, those that did had additional concerns related to the title, requiring even

more mindful communication. The SWA designation, at most institutions, is the senior-

most female in the athletics department (NCAA, 2011; Tiell & Dixon, 2008). Typically,

the individual with this title has additional job responsibilities encompassing concerns

with Title IX and gender equity (NCAA, 2011). As Agnes explained:

> …when you look at tensions in the workplace, the relationships and especially the
>
> position of the senior woman administrator, and you're advocating for all athletes
>
> but also keeping an eye on the Title IX gender equality component, that naturally
>
> creates some tension. There are times that you've got to be strong about the equity
>
> component of what it is that we do. That's sometimes how my colleagues receive
>
> it, but it's part of what the role of the SWA is. In my experience, there have been
>
> ways that I've tried to mitigate the tension, and I think that I've been pretty
>
> successful at doing that, but still getting those components of what I do heard.
>
> Sometimes there is a positive result and sometimes not.

Agnes went on to explain how her communication about Title IX matters has matured

and become more effective over the years. Similarly, Renee explained that she has and

continues to find ways to maneuver communicatively beyond preexisting biases in order

to uphold her duties as the SWA:

> The reality of my role as SWA is that there are times that we're going to be
>
> diametrically opposed on something. That doesn't mean I don't like football. It
>
> just means in the grand scheme of what we're trying to get done, football getting
>
> everything they want is going to hurt us. It's not about me not liking football. It's
>
> about me wanting to make sure that we can be healthy as a whole, not just one
>
> aspect of healthy.

Agness and Renee agreed that communicating these and similar interests has taken

experience, perseverance, and maturity.

In addition to having the ability to respond to peers and make recommendations to

employers, Jeyah believed that being courageous and intentional with communicating

professional aspirations with one's supervisor is essential. It has proved to be beneficial

in her career progression, as she explained:

> My first meeting with our athletic director here, he asked me what my career goal
>
> was. I was very clear. I said within the next year or two I would like to be either a
>
> senior woman administrator, or a senior-level athletic director, or an executive
>
> director at a Power Five school. Then I said I would like to be a sport
>
> administrator for football one day…. He knew exactly where I was coming from.
>
> I think that also probably let him know if it ain't going to happen here, it's going
>
> to happen somewhere else…. Then he asked me, which is a really interesting

question, if I had a succession plan. That let him know I was already thinking

about it. I said, "Yes. I know exactly who would step in if I were to ever leave." A

month later he told me about [my] promotion.

Jeyah described the outcome of her direct and deliberate communication with her supervisor by noting that "I asked if I could have sports. If I hadn't asked, I probably wouldn't have gotten them because they wouldn't think to just hand them out." She further advised that "asking for ways that you can grow professionally where you are at will help…. Closed mouths don't get fed…"

In short, six of the participants acknowledged being involved in verbal exchanges with supervisors and/or co-workers where awareness of their communications and responses was critical. They expounded on the importance of being mindful of their delivery of opinions, and differences thereof, as well as recommendations with efforts to ease tensions and the perception of being threatening or argumentative. In so doing, deciding which causes took precedence and which were not as urgent was key. Four of the participants articulated the significance of communicating professional desires and aspirations to their supervisor. This level of communication eventually led to their professional advancement.

Professional opportunities. The participants shared sentiments about selecting professional opportunities. In order to discern whether a professional opportunity was fitting, Renee admitted that she has approached job opportunities much as she has approached dating. She stated that:

I'm not for everybody, and everybody ain't for me. When I interviewed at [a

previous institution], I told them, "Look, we've got to figure out whether we want

to be in a relationship together. That's what this is going to be. Do you like me

and do I like you? Not just one way or the other because one way is going to be

stalking. We've got to figure out if we like each other, and in order for us to

figure out if we like each other, I've got to show you who I am, right off the bat.

If I pretend to be something that I think you're looking for, at some point in time,

I'm going to get tired of pretending and I'm going to show you who I am, and one

or the both of us is going to be really disappointed."

Additionally, several of the participants cautioned against chasing titles. Instead of

focusing solely on the title, Amy noted that "It's really about the people that you're

working for." She continued by recommending that African American women:

go places where people have that mindset to help you develop and grow. They

want to see you be better because at the end of the day that makes them look

better. That makes them look like they prepared you for that role. That's what my

AD is doing now. He's preparing me for my next role and trying to make him

look a lot better once I'm out there…. If you're going to a place and you know

that that AD really isn't involved in NACDA or not really involved in developing

his staff, then that's probably not the best place for you to go.

Similar to Amy, Faith concurred that the people you work for are most important when

deciding to change organizations/jobs. She indicated that:

I think really critical was making good choices about who you work for, who I

worked for. Again, those were the folks that had the biggest impact on my career

and my next moves. Being thoughtful about who I was going to work with, I

think, philosophically, I think that's really important. I think a lot of jobs can be

good jobs if you work with people who care about you and care about your

profession and care about your development.

In addition to doing research on the people and their management styles and

philosophies, six participants suggested that African American women take note of the

executive staff already in place. Jeyah and Mitchell described their executive staff as

being progressively diverse, inclusive of people of color as well as men and women in

leadership. However, not all organizations value diversity and inclusion. For this reason,

Jeyah advised that African American women must:

> make sure you are very intentional as you move from one place to another. Really
>
> do your research on leadership teams at each institution. Really find out if they
>
> really believe in developing and promoting from within. Do they have a history of
>
> doing that? So that you are not necessarily pigeonholed, so that you are given
>
> opportunities as they arise.

In review of participant backgrounds, six of the participants researched the administrative

team and philosophies of the organizations where they sought employment. Though

receiving promotions, research participants did not transition from institution to

institution seeking promotions. Job changes discussed were typically based on personal

philosophical appropriateness. By and large, they worked their way to promotions at a

single organization. For example, Katrina began as the Assistant Director for Life Skills

and Community Outreach and was eventually promoted to her current position as the

Senior Associate Athletics Director/SWA. Similarly, Agnes started at her current

institution as an Associate Director of Athletics. She noted that "over a period of time,

that title moved from Associate Athletics Director to Senior Associate Athletics

Director…and then that was changed to an Executive Senior Associate Director of

Athletics…and then elevated to Deputy Athletics Director." Participants who changed

jobs—for example, Amy, Jeyah, and Mitchell—mentioned that they conducted research

on potential employers and organizations concerning professional development, value

placed on diversity and inclusion, and the potential for internal promotion which was

vital to their professional advancement.

      Compensation due to the awareness of African American female stereotypes.

An old adage states "You will never get a second chance to make a first impression." In

other words, judgement is inevitable upon entering a room with others. Similarly, Bielby

(2000) proposed that judgements, preconceived or not, have a direct effect on racial

biases as related to hiring potential candidates. Because collegiate athletics is a

Caucasian, male-dominated profession and African American women rank in the bottom

portion of the professional infrastructure, Ann G. explained that the significance and

enormity of judgement facing African American women are substantial. The African

American women in this study have made efforts to avoid the biases associated with

being African American women by compensating with their appearance and

professionalism. This included making concessions regarding their clothing and hair.

      Overall appearance. According to four participants, attire and hair are some of

the first visible components that they felt have shaped their counterparts' first impression

about them. These four participants emphasized the importance of appropriate attire

while also remaining true to themselves as their counterparts grow to accept them. For

example, Lola recalled a time when she met an individual who had interviewed for the

same job she currently has. She explained that:

> After I met the candidate…I can definitely tell you why she didn't get the job…and why I did get the job…. My boss has this look that people should have. Not even knowing him that well, but just going with the idea of the look—not that girly look, but that very polished female professional look…I think…being a polished female helped to get the position. [My boss is] that kind of guy, when [we] hire people, he wants to visualize what those people look like and if they'll fit in with "the look" that he likes.

This was an example of how impactful first impressions, inclusive of attire, can be. Similarly, Ann G. confirmed that she is always wary of dressing professionally and for functionality. She continued by noting that she mentors young professionals, especially other African American women, by reminding them to:

> be mindful of your attire. We sometimes want to dress a certain way. We see dressing conservatively as boring and trying too hard to fit in. Well, you know what? If that's what I got to do to get that senior-level position that pays what I want to be paid and gives me access to the upper-echelon job that I want to have, then I'm going to dress a little bit differently. I like to wear dresses, but I'm mindful of the degree of the heels where I'm wearing them...you can dress for fashion or you can dress for function. You need to be dressing for function. You need to be mindful of not coming across too much like you're dressing for the club and more like you're dressing for the board room. There's a time when you're supposed to be dressed for the club. Then there's a time you're supposed to be dressed for the boardroom.

From a slightly different perspective, Renee demonstrated that using one's attire to one's

advantage was helpful throughout her career. She reminisced about a time she began a

new job venture in a previous leadership position:

> …probably the first three meetings I went to with the rest of the ADs, I never
>
> wore pants; and I'm a tomboy to my core. Wearing heels and whatnot is like a last
>
> fifteen-year thing…those first couple of meetings, I wore makeup, wore skirts or
>
> dresses because I needed their attention. My father always said, "Use what you
>
> got to catch people's attention. Use what you know to keep it." When they paid
>
> attention, if they were looking at me because they thought I was cute, just hold on
>
> because I'm getting ready to hit you with something.

As noted, selecting appropriate attire for specific occasions to achieve particular

results was integral to shaping the participants' presence in the industry. Participants

were attentive to and encouraged personal awareness of their clothing selection,

depending upon the environment they were entering.

Two participants noted that another facet of appearance lending way for

judgement is African American women's hair. As African American women are

embracing their natural hair (chemical-free and curly/coiled) (Perkins, 2016) more

frequently than in the past, it has become an additional aspect of their appearance that

opposes and counters the traditional and predominant straight hair styles (i.e., hairstyles

of Caucasian women) that senior-level professionals are starting to observe (Robinson-

Celeste, 2016). As a senior-level administrator with natural hair, Katrina described her

experience with decision making as it relates to how she may be judged based on her

appearance when preparing for an interview:

Even when it comes to…my hair. I know women who look like me who have

natural hair. They will feel like…they have to straighten their hair when they're

going to interviews or anything like that. Well, this is who I am, so you're either

going to see me this way on the interview and another way at the press

conference, or you're just going to see me how I am.

Two of the participants communicated that they must consider their natural hair during

the interview process. This is a concern because of others' potentially negative

judgements of their natural hair during the interview process, for their goal is to limit

negative judgement and "fit in" with colleagues while remaining true to themselves.

Professionalism. Half of the participants noted that professionalism is of utmost

importance when creating distance between themselves and negative perceptions

associated with being African American women. Professionalism was described as being

inclusive of all aspects of communication and appearance in and outside of the

workplace. Consequently, participants reported that their level of professionalism was

related to their likelihood of advancing within the profession. As confirmed by Ann G.:

…we need to always be mindful of developing effective communication skills

and knowing when it's appropriate to pick up the phone and call someone as

opposed to shooting an email as opposed to shooting a handwritten note…. All

those things [are] important. We are judged on them. They're extensions of our

professionalism in terms of being seen as one of the "club members."

"Club members," also known as the "Good Ole Boys Network/Club," is typically made

up of Caucasian men who hold power positions within collegiate athletics (Alfred, 2009;

Helliwell & Putnam, 2007). Ann G. asserted that a certain level of professionalism is

necessary in order to endeavor for equity with "club members." However, it was noted that it would take more than professionalism to achieve such a feat. Katrina stressed that "until presidents start opening up their minds to hire people who don't look like them as athletic directors, then I think it's always going to be a barrier for women and people of color" to attain senior-level positions within athletics—and more specifically, director of athletics positions. For example, despite Katrina's professionalism, she has experienced the following:

> I feel like sometimes that even when talking to search firms or people in the industry [I'm told], "Yeah, you shouldn't do this" or "They're not going to hire a female for this position" or "It's still a good old boy network."

Though she conceded to those reactions before, Katrina confirmed that she would do so no longer.

In addition to maintaining professionalism within the industry among peers, three participants divulged that they were noticeable members of the leadership team within the institutional and surrounding communities. As a member of senior-level leadership at her institution, Hallie confessed to being highly visible within the community, whether serving in the absence of the director of athletics at events and/or serving in the capacity of a game manager at home contests and events. Due to her high-profile status, she felt that it has been imperative for her to preserve a reputation of professionalism, even outside of her formal duties. For example, activities in which she participates during her personal time, though not related to the job, could negatively impact her professional reputation. Hallie described her attitude toward professionalism:

You're much more visible in any community so you're on all the time. You've

got to be comfortable about being on all the time. You're always being watched,

and I'm seen as a role model, as someone that people rely on to help make

decisions and to help through challenges.

Hallie and other participants asserted that with the understanding and expectation of

timeless professionalism, there is no room for mishaps in judgement or behavior because

poor choices may jeopardize their integrity and authority to serve in a leadership

capacity. Unfortunately for Hallie, due to her visibility, she confessed that "at times it can

become really lonely because [she doesn't] have that large network of people that [she]

once had when [she] was not in the position that [she's] in now." For Hallie, this has been

a sacrifice, yet not one that would make her reconsider her professional decisions and

aspirations.

     Shaped perspectives based on experience. Paralleling Black feminist thought

(Collins, 2000) and critical race theory (Delgado et al., 2012), seven participants

experienced some form of oppression and/or microaggression over the course of their

career progression. For instance, Ann G. and Katrina described several instances where

Caucasian men within their network discouraged them from applying for Athletics

Director positions because there was no intention of hiring a female or an African

American, especially at a Division I (FBS) institution, where positions have been

traditionally held by Caucasian men. Although these suggestions may have been innocent

in nature, it is however, consistent with Fannie Williams's belief that African American

women are, in fact, invisible in the workplace and doubted in intellect and competence

(Collins, 2000). Furthermore, Alinia (2015) and Collins (2000) underscored the value of

comprehending the relationship linking dominant and subordinate groups and the acknowledgement of the disempowered group's involvement in its own victimization. This very view was illustrated when Katrina decided not to apply to several of the Athletics Director positions because she was urged not to do so based on her Caucasian male counterpart's postulations. Moreover, the idea of the disempowered group participating in its own victimization was reinforced when Hallie maintained that:

> When you don't see individuals that look like you, at the top, you begin to question whether or not that is a possibility. It takes a great deal of courage, a great deal of support to be able to take on something that is not seen a lot around the country.

Additionally, Jeyah, Hallie, Lola, Katrina, and Agnes each confirmed that at several moments throughout their career, lack of confidence penetrated their psyche, prompting self-doubt, discouragement, and the need to reestablish self-assurance. This lack of confidence, coupled with the limited presence of African American women in similar positions, biases associated with being African American women, and other experiences that may not have been divulged, formed the participants' perspectives. Subsequently, these variables influenced their personal approach and outlook related to professional challenges, their personal responsibilities as senior-level administrators, and their work ethic.

   Personal approach and outlook related to professional challenges. As African American women in a Caucasian male-dominated profession, all participants have faced perceived barriers such as race, gender, age, lack of experience, and marital status. Eight of the participants described moments in their career where they were not extended the

same professional courtesies as their counterparts. For example, they described times when they had to professionally manage colleagues and/or subordinates who directed inquiries to others within administration, bypassing them as though they did not have the authority to respond to their inquiry, concern, or request. When asked how like scenarios and challenges have informed their navigation of the profession, several of the women responded very positively. Hallie embraced her challenges and stated that "I feel like I'm better for it, I think that those challenges, I truly believe that they happened for a reason because I can draw upon those instances that help, inform, and direct my decisions today." She continued with hope for cohesion when she articulated that "I just hope that things at the end of the day, we're all trying to achieve the same goals and that I would be seen as a great member of our leadership team." Likewise, Renee has appreciated the value of learning from past challenges. She stated that:

> Definitely looking back twenty-plus years, there are definitely things that I look at that I'm like, gosh, maybe I shouldn't have done that. Just like every other difficult experience that I've had in these forty-nine years, I count them as what I needed to make [me], and I like [me]. Looking holistically at who I am and the life I've lived, I like who I am and what I've done. Even the rough places I feel like were purposeful.

She followed by saying, "I have to remind myself that when I complain about work, that I don't dig ditches for a living. A lot of what I do is go to games, and that's pretty good, actually." The positive outlook and approach to their jobs, despite past challenges and/or disappointments, were the shared sentiment of seven of the research participants.

Personal responsibility. Seven participants noted that in addition to their positions in senior-level leadership in athletics, they accept and adhere to at least one of the three self-imposed responsibilities: (a) establishing themselves as professional, knowledgeable, and competent African American women as they are often generalized among the masses; (b) mentoring other African American women and people of color; and (c) ensuring that candidate pools are diverse (e.g., based upon gender, ethnicity, etc.), especially when Caucasian personnel assert there are no qualified individuals to diversify the hiring pool.

Aware of the gross generalization of African American women as being "angry" and "bitchy" (Eagly & Carli, 2007), many of the participants found it imperative to be positive examples of professionals in their effort to combat stereotypes. To counter such stereotypes, Ann G. professed that:

> I try to assume that they don't have such bias and I just interact with them as people and show them that I am first and foremost a professional. I want them to see the professional rather than the woman or the Black woman; come back around to where they can see a Black woman as a professional and appreciate that and therefore then give other Black women [the] benefit of the doubt that they will come into contact with. It's part of an educational circle that I find myself in. I try to be mindful that…I have to behave in such a way that I break stereotypes and get people to accept us as professionals and then notice our color and gender. Then go, "Wow, a Black woman can be professional."

Equally yet outside of the traditional professional setting and among her ethnic group, Agnes shared that:

In the African American community, there are expectations that I present myself

in a certain way, an expectation of how I interact within that community. I do

think that…gender biases and racial biases come into play. It impacts the [already

established] pressure. Maybe it's self-imposed pressure, but I do think that there is

pressure there.

Although the SWA designation was an attempt at inviting and establishing a place

for women at the senior leadership table (NCAA, 2011; Tiell & Dixon, 2008), Faith

professed that this designation is not "terribly useful [present day]." Despite such a

notion, Faith maintained that "there is a critical mass of qualified female administrators

and I think that designating one as your senior-woman administrator implies that you

only need to have one on your staff versus an entire staff full of very qualified senior-

level women administrators." Therefore, several of the participants believed it was a

responsibility to help other underrepresented persons propel into senior-level leadership

roles via mentorship/sponsorship or ensuring diverse candidate pools for job vacancies.

Renee shared a time when she mentored a young African American professional

looking to one day secure a senior-level position in collegiate athletics:

We had a young lady who used to work here…. The first conversation we had

when I arrived here was like, "I want your job." I said, "Okay, well, let's start

working on you getting it because I can't have it forever."

Renee further noted that she was not at all offended or threatened by their conversation as

she expressed that "helping her prepare for my job doesn't take anything away from me.

In my mind, it adds to my experience because there's yet another person" she has

positively touched who, in turn, may become a sponsor for her when she seeks the next

job opportunity. Similarly, Amy admitted to mentoring her students who have expressed interest in one day securing a position comparable to hers. She does so as she believes that "the more people of color that get into athletic administration, the more you'll see doors open." She also articulated that:

> Now that I'm in this role and I understand that there are barriers maybe I didn't experience directly, but what can I do as a woman of color in this type of role to assist in getting more women of color in the industry and men of color, just people of color in general.

> Because few African American women serve in upper administration at FBS institutions, several of the participants affirmed they have a responsibility to safeguard against majority-only search pools. Katrina noted that "When we hire, I make an effort to make sure that people have different genders, if that's appropriate and also people of color. I make sure that, that is in place." Likewise, Renee admitted that:

> Some of the things I've done in my Senior Associate role is say to folks, "You're going to interview this person. They are coming to campus. Beyond that, I'm not going to be involved, but you're going to give this person the opportunity to come and show you what they can do because I have knowledge of what they have done, and what it means on their resume that may not resonate with you, but I know what it means in terms of the amount/the depth of work that they had to do."

Jeya, too, disclosed that when she reviews applications and finds that candidates appear equal on paper, she will make efforts to select the underrepresented professional, whether that relates to gender and/or ethnicity.

Three participants disclosed that sometimes, in order to ensure there is a diverse candidate pool, they had to and will continue to sponsor others. By doing so, Renee affirmed that:

> those of us who reach positions that have some level of power have to be more courageous in doing that. You do have to be careful because you've got to make sure that the person is wholly prepared, where somebody else (i.e., a Caucasian candidate) can be partially prepared. You've got to make sure that person is wholly prepared for that challenge, and/or that you have the time, energy, [and] resources to protect them until they grow into [the position].

Three participants emphasized the importance of this because the sponsored person's performance will validate or nullify the legitimacy and credibility of the administrator sponsoring the candidate.

Work ethic. Seven participants disclosed that they had to go above and beyond the call of duty to appear as equals to their Caucasian male counterparts and/or separate themselves from negative stereotypes and perceptions. Because opportunities to exhibit capabilities did not arise often, Amy affirmed that she had to "do more than what's required [in order to] get noticed." She further noted that "You do more than what's required [and] you work your tail off…. I really choose to focus on my job and be really confident in my abilities and then continue to find ways to grow and get better." Likewise, Faith expressed that "doing good work, but also really challenging yourself to do it differently and better" has been integral in having her proficiencies and expertise noticed.

Sometimes, this work ethic has led to engulfing participants in their work, so much so that Mitchell acknowledged she consciously made the decision to "dive in." She went on to say, "Yeah, I certainly could have had more of a social life at that point in time, but that wasn't the purpose. I wanted to get lost in work…. It helped me to set up myself for whatever that next step was going to be or that I was hoping it was going to be." Admittedly, Lola stated:

> Do I work too much? Yeah, I probably do. Do I live a crazy schedule? Yeah, probably do. Did that hinder me in any way? Life is about choices and I think, for me, I made the choices that I needed to make at the time. I don't look at those as hindrances, it's all about choices and the decisions that you make. Any choices that were good at that time, and they worked at that time. Do I regret? I don't like to live a life of regret. It's about choice. You choose things. Things will just happen to you, choose things. Those are the choices that I made that I have to believe that they were the choices that were right at that time.

In combatting negative stereotypes and perceptions, Amy confessed that she had and continues "to do a little bit more than [her] counterparts and the White women in [an] effort to mak[e] sure that [she doesn't] appear as the angry black woman." This is an illustration of how Amy uses her work ethic to compensate for being an African American female in a White, male-dominated profession. She continued by explaining that she has to make sure she appears presentable and relatable by smiling and being congenial. In the same manner, Hallie Jacobsen has adjusted her leadership style to make others feel more comfortable around her. Hallie exclaimed that:

If my team is not responding to me well, I really dig into what it is. If it's because

I'm the first woman or Black woman that they've ever had to report to, then I

think about how can I stay assertive, make sure that I'm holding them

accountable, but not be a threat. Right? Not be threatening, that they can feel

comfortable, so I have to work really, really hard in breaking down some of those

barriers so that I can get productivity on my team, and garner the respect that I

deserve. Part of that is really just understanding where they're coming from

without them having to tell me. So asking questions, having one-on-one

opportunities, seeing the relationship evolve and not having the sense of urgency

in them being comfortable right away, but knowing that it is a transition, knowing

that it takes time, and knowing that they have to navigate some of their own

prejudices, and their own insecurities to feel comfortable in that I'm the right

person to lead the way.

In summary, the data showed that not only did these women have to be competent in their

day-to-day responsibilities, but they had to work to: (a) not be a threat, (b) detach

themselves from negative stereotypes and perceptions, and (c) make others feel

comfortable while preserving patience during this leadership process.

Analysis and Synthesis of Findings

Overall, the journey of African American women towards senior-level leadership

in Division I collegiate athletics administration was investigated. Generally speaking,

even though the terms *fortunate* and *blessed* were typically used to describe how

participants felt about their career progression, eight of the participants experienced, in

some form and level of severity, what Eagly and Carli (2007) described as the

labyrinth—myriad challenges along the career path prior to attaining senior-level leadership positions. Some of these challenges came in the form of declined confidence and self-doubt; hiring discrimination (e.g., lacking development experience which many African American women are not exposed to due to their internal backgrounds in compliance and/or student athlete services, etc.); and challenges related to gender. Accordingly, seven participants reported that African American women and other people of color were more frequently employed and appeared to be pigeonholed into internal positions such as compliance and/or student support services. Reinforcing these accounts, eight of the participants disclosed they had internal backgrounds in either compliance and/or student support services.

As noted by Avery et al. (2007), Caucasian men were and are associated with power and authority and are better positioned to assist African American women with their ascent to leadership. All but two of the participants cited having Caucasian male mentors who had the ability to sponsor and support them throughout their respective career endeavors. Furthermore, Cookson (2010) proposed that familial obligations were a hindrance to women in pursuit of leadership positions. However, seven of the participants admitted to being single and/or not in relationships recognized by the court system. One participant even declared that while others may believe that her not having children was a grave sacrifice, she firmly believed that bearing children was not supposed to be part of her life's story. She stated, "My career in athletics [is not] what kept me from doing that…. God's plan for my life…[was for] me to touch more children than I could [ever] give birth to." By contrast, she then affirmed that if she did have a family, she would not be in senior-level leadership because a "good parent," in her mind, cannot give 100% to

her family as well as to a senior-level position in Division I collegiate athletics. As illustrated, of the 10 participants, only two have families that include children.

Though three overarching themes were unearthed, strategy for upward mobility appeared to be the centralized theme throughout the African American women's journey in collegiate athletics. Although subthemes for strategy for upward mobility included experience and skill development, networking and professional development, communication, and professional opportunities, the basic act of strategizing for upward mobility was necessary to employ in order to divert negative judgment in appearance and professionalism, as well as how the participants would respond to challenges faced, ensure diverse search pools, and practice a tireless work ethic. Lastly, consistent with Sales-Lopez et al.'s. (2011) study, four participants reported that gender presented more of a challenge as it related to career navigation and progression as opposed to race. Four participants found it difficult to determine a distinction between gender and race as related to their professional experiences.

Summary

This chapter presented the research findings on African American women's navigation of the collegiate athletics profession. This navigation included three overarching themes: strategy for upward mobility, compensation due to the awareness of African American female biases, and shaped perspectives based on experience. Strategy for upward mobility utilized by the research participants encompassed professional experience and skill development, networking and professional development, communication, and professional opportunities. Compensation due to the awareness of African American female biases was comprised of the overall appearance and

professionalism of participants. The shaped perspectives based on experience included

participants' personal approach and outlook related to professional challenges, personal

responsibility, and work ethic. The chapter concluded with the analysis and synthesis of

the findings. Chapter Five next contains the conclusion and recommendations offered by

the researcher.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Chapter Five covers conclusions and recommendations concerning the journey of African American women in pursuit of upper-level administrative positions in collegiate athletics. After a brief review of the purpose and aim of the study, the researcher proposes a two-pronged solution to address the limited number of African American women in senior-level leadership. Next, the researcher reviews some key aspects of implementation of the recommendations (e.g., factors/stakeholders related to implementation, leadership roles, building support, additional considerations, global/external implications for the organization/industry, etc.). Lastly, implications from the research are detailed.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative research study was to obtain a description of the lived experiences of African American women as they journey to upper-level administrative positions within Division I (FBS) collegiate athletics. The goal was to identify shared and distinct occurrences among African American women that would ultimately reveal an experiential phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). From these shared personal and professional experiences, prominent themes were unveiled. Furthermore, the extracted themes surrounding the phenomenon may be utilized to provide a baseline knowledge of the experiences of African American women as they pursue senior-level administration and offer a point of reference for other marginalized populations within Division I collegiate athletics administration who seek similar opportunities—positions that have been historically held by Caucasian males (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014;

Lapchick & Baker, 2016; Lapchick, Baker, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Donovan, et al., 2014; Lapchick, Fox, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Johnson, et al., 2014; Lapchick & Kuhn, 2011; Lapchick et al., 2012).

Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to provide recommendations that would support African American women who aspire for senior-level leadership at Division I (FBS) institutions. Specifically, as a result of the analysis of the lived experiences of African American women with upper-level leadership positions in athletic administration, suggestions for professional development opportunities for both aspiring leaders, as well as the institutions in which they work, are presented.

Proposed Recommendations and Rationales

As declared by Katrina and in agreement with the other participants, "…until presidents start opening up their minds to hire people who don't look like them as athletic directors, then I think [there is] always going to be a barrier for women and people of color," preventing them from attaining senior-level leadership positions at the same rate as their Caucasian counterparts. As established throughout this research, there is an absence of African American women serving in senior leadership positions within Division I collegiate athletics. Proposed solutions that may aid in improving this deficit are presented as a two-pronged approach: a person-focused professional development program called "So You Want to Be an Administrator," and a university-level diversity training program. These recommendations are based on already existing programs (e.g., professional development programs, sponsored by national organizations that support athletics administration; diversity programs, human resource trainings/equal opportunity

and diversity, etc.) (NACDA, 2017; NCAA, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c, 2017d; UCI, 2017; WBCA, 2017a). The combination of these two recommended programs may assist with customizing professional development opportunities to the unique experiences and demands of African American women while creating a professional environment in which they can thrive. These recommendations should also generate acknowledgement, awareness, and accountability of ethnic and gender equality within and across universities. Each recommendation will be detailed individually.

Existing Professional Development Programming

Nationally, the NCAA is the member-led governing body inclusive of 1,123 colleges and universities, 98 voting conferences, and 39 affiliated organizations (NCAA, 2017). The purpose of the organization is to support the success of collegiate student athletes by creating policy that governs all aspects of collegiate athletics operations. In addition to the NCAA office employees, the organization is comprised of university presidents, athletics directors, faculty athletics representatives (FAR), compliance officers, conference staff, academic support staff, coaches, sports communication directors, and sports medicine personnel (NCAA, 2017). These members serve on committees to draft and update policies to be voted upon. NCAA office personnel manage the work executed by members, plan and facilitate all championship events, and administer programming while also conducting relevant research and compiling member demographic information (NCAA, 2017). The NCAA offers programs for administrators from entry-level to senior-level management, in addition to skill-specific professional development opportunities. For graduate assistants and interns, the NCAA offers graduating students the opportunity to solidify a position in the NCAA Postgraduate

Internship Program (NCAA, 2017, para. 6). This program provides on-the-job training

for graduates who aspire to a position in the collegiate athletics arena. Next, the NCAA

offers the Leadership Institute which "tailor[s] programming to assist racial and ethnic

minorities in strategically mapping and planning their careers in athletics administration"

(NCAA, 2017b, para 6). They also offer the Pathways program (NCAA, 2017c) for

middle managers seeking upper-administrative positions.

In addition to NCAA programming, Women Leaders in College Sports (WLCS)

(formerly known as the National Association of Collegiate Women Athletics

Administrators [NACWAA]) highlights, educates, equips, and progresses women and

minorities through its professional development programs. This organization maintains a

focus on the navigation of women within collegiate athletics by boasting that it "is the

premier leadership organization that empowers, develops, assists, celebrates, affirms,

involves, and honors women working in the field of intercollegiate athletics" (WCLS,

2017a). Current professional development opportunities hosted by WLCS are as follows:

- Women's Leadership Symposium – Pre-Level I;

- Institute for Administrative Advancement – Level I;

- Leadership Enhancement Institute – Level II; and

- Executive Institute – Level III (WLCS, 2017b).

These programs are developed for women in athletics at every stage in their careers—

from those aspiring to a career in athletics, to middle managers and those seeking senior-

level leadership. Participation in these intense programs allows women to garner tools as

they navigate the athletics profession while communing with others who experience

similar challenges within the industry. While these professional development

opportunities are tailored to and for women in the collegiate athletics industry, several of

the research participants cautioned against having exclusive involvement with the WLCS

organization. Participants conveyed the importance of intermingling with a diverse

population of professionals, especially those with power and influence. Collaborating and

building partnerships with the NCAA and affiliate organizations through joint committee

work and/or professional offerings may influence community while acknowledging the

challenges women encounter during their ascent to leadership.

In addition to these professional development training opportunities, the WLCS

organization has established a "Women of Color Initiative" which is intended to "address

the needs and barriers women of color experience in relation to access, advancement, and

retention in collegiate athletics" (WLCS, 2017c, para. 1). Although the organization

acknowledges and makes efforts to attend to the challenges faced by women of color, this

initiative does not solely address the needs of African American women. In appreciating

that women of color face challenges during the ascent to leadership, there are challenges

specific to African American women that other ethnicities of women may not necessarily

face. For example, African American women, as noted by Eagly and Carli (2007) and

further confirmed by Hallie and Ann G. in their interviews, may be perceived as a

"threat," "angry," or "bitchy." If at any point African American women align their

behaviors and actions with these negative stereotypes, they may experience what Steele

and Aronson (1995) termed a *stereotype threat*. Stereotype threat is "the risk of

confirming, as self-characteristic, a negative stereotype about one's group" (p. 797).

African American women must be cognizant of their behaviors in order to redefine

themselves outside the bounds of negative associations (Steele & Aronson, 1995). This

strategy was demonstrated during the interview with Ann G. when she detailed her efforts

to temper her interactions with donors so that they acknowledge her professionalism

before noticing her gender or ethnicity. Although only one example, these ethnic-specific

challenges are not addressed through the Women of Color Initiative. Consideration of

ethnic-specific challenges may be of interest and value when customizing a professional

development program that addresses the needs of African American women.

Furthermore, these considerations may assist institutions when developing diversity

programming for university and athletics department leadership.

Paralleling the NCAA and WLCS, the National Association of Collegiate

Directors of Athletics (NACDA) is the umbrella association that houses national sub-

organizations for each athletics administrative position (i.e., development personnel,

business personnel, compliance personnel, academic personnel, sport communication

personnel, etc.) (NACDA, 2017). Each of these national sub-organizations provides

conferences, trainings, and certifications for industry professionals. Regardless of an

individual's specialty, athletics personnel can participate in any professional development

offerings barring an application/acceptance process and financial obligations. As a result,

creating and maintaining a running log of African American women who have

successfully completed and/or gained certifications can be logged by NACDA and made

available for the access and review of search firms, university presidents, and directors of

athletics seeking qualified African American women to serve in senior-level leadership at

Division I institutions. Like the demographic database managed by the NCAA (2016),

this catalogue can potentially be filtered by title, certification(s), national sub-

organizations, total years of experience, and so on. Additionally, each person within the

database system may be connected to a link that discloses a professional vitae or résumé. In addressing the concerns of Katrina and other participants, this database would no longer allow hiring managers to continue to use the justification that "we can't find a woman and…we can't find a person of color." This catalogue would contribute to holding hiring managers accountable for establishing a diversified search pool for vacant leadership positions.

The "So You Want to Be an Administrator" Program

As the previous section illustrates, various guiding athletic organizations provide a variety of training opportunities for women in general, as well as women of color in collegiate athletics. However, based on the lived experiences of the African American women in upper-level leadership in this research study, gaps exist in the professional development opportunities for African American women who wish to pursue an upper-level athletic administration position. Based on these findings, the first professional development recommendation is the creation of a program entitled "So You Want to Be an Administrator," similar to the existing Women's Basketball Coaches Association's (WBCA) "So You Want to Be a Coach" program (WBCA, 2017), The NCAA, in conjunction with the WLCS and NACDA, could work together to coordinate and manage this program. This program would be designed to increase the African American female presence in senior-level administration by providing intense training sessions geared to core proficiencies detailed by research participants. In addition to other necessary proficiencies such as budgeting, media, and interviewing, skillsets of focus would be inclusive of directed networking and fundraising/development while also introducing and pairing participants with industry leaders and/or Caucasian male mentors. This

customized professional development program would attend to the identified

proficiencies participants wished they would have had earlier and/or throughout their

careers.

Mentor/Mentee Program

Regarding a targeted mentor/mentee program, many of the existing professional

associations offer mentor/mentee pairing opportunities. However, the specific

experiences of the women in this research study suggested the benefit of an African

American female with a Caucasian male mentor. As echoed by several participants and

aligned with Avery et al. (2007), having a Caucasian male mentor/sponsor has the

capacity to increase a protégé's advancement potential. In further utilizing the NACDA

platform, creating a program that pairs African American women with Caucasian male

directors of athletics, university presidents, and other persons of influence has the

potential to: (a) increase African American women's exposure and elevate the value of

social capital, (b) improve African American women's industry positioning, and

(c) afford African American women an opportunity to continue to grow and develop as

professionals.

Networking and Development/Fundraising Training

Many of the participants affirmed that they wished they had basic, foundational

skills surrounding intentional networking and development/fundraising earlier in their

careers. In conjunction with this sentiment, Mitchell shared in her interview that there are

no naturally progressive positions in collegiate athletics that prepare individuals for a

position in upper administration. Although participants admitted that having networking

and development/fundraising skills may not have landed them a director of athletics

position at an FBS institution, they did firmly believe that their professional trajectory

may have been more directed toward a senior-level leadership position and perhaps more

quickly. With efforts to reach African American females earlier in their careers and

provide these relevant and vital competencies, the NCAA, WLCS, and NACDA can

provide programming geared towards African American women pursuing senior-level

leadership in collegiate athletics.

Factors and Stakeholders Related to the

"So You Want to Be an Administrator" Program

Stakeholders related to "So You Want to Be an Administrator" program would

include personnel from the NCAA, WLCS, and NACDA organizations. Members from

these national organizations would serve as the developers of this professional

development opportunity. Furthermore, NACDA personnel may be responsible for

maintaining the professional development certification database that will be accessed by

directors of athletics and leadership team members, university presidents, and consulting

firms. Additionally, program participants, mentors, and presenters will have a stake in the

professional development programming because their feedback about the overall

experience will be instrumental in maintaining and/or improving the quality of the

programming (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013).

Potential Barriers and Obstacles

Designing a program that is geared specifically towards African American women

may incite the desire for programs to be geared specifically towards other ethnic and/or

marginalized groups (Ward, 2009). While this program would be intended to aid African

American women's navigation of the Caucasian male-dominated industry and create

cohesion and equity, this program could potentially breed discrimination and divide

within the profession (Ward, 2009) as other ethnic groups may seek programming

exclusive to their population.

On the other hand, it is possible that more African American women may be

interested in such a program than would be opportunities for them to participate in the

program. Consequently, there will be African American women who will not be afforded

an opportunity to participate in such a program or do so earlier in their careers. This may

leave some African American women at a disadvantage. Simultaneously, confirming

enough Caucasian males to serve voluntarily as mentors to African American female

participants may also present some challenges. Some Caucasian men may have no

interest in serving as mentors at all. Furthermore, some Caucasian men may benefit from

diversity training to be willing or comfortable enough to consider participation.

Conversely, a vast majority of Caucasian men may decline an invitation to participate in

such an initiative for a number of other unspecified reasons (e.g., timing, work/family

demands and pressures, etc.).

Implementation of the "So You Want to Be an Administrator" Program

In utilizing the various professional development structures from the NCAA's

Leadership Institute (NCAA, 2017c) and Pathways program (NCAA, 2017d), the

WBCA's "So You Want to Be a Coach" program (WBCA, 2017), the Women Leaders in

College Sports hierarchical leadership program (WLCS, 2017b), and NACDA's

mentor/mentee pairing program (NACDA, 2017), developing the "So You Want to Be an

Administrator" program would have a great foundation. Each professional development

program encompasses components necessary for designing a program that would be

invaluable to address the professional needs of African American women who seek

senior-level leadership. In addition to the already existing components, adding

mentor/mentee pairings with Caucasian men, directed networking, and

development/fundraising components would be valuable. As participants complete the

program, they will be certified and entered into the experiential database maintained by

NACDA for active review by consulting firms, university presidents and cabinet

members, and athletics directors and leadership team members. Because these already

established professional development programs will serve as a foundation when

developing the customized professional development program for African American

women, the implementation of the program may vary, based on the timeline for adding

the mentor/mentee pairing, networking, fundraising, and database components.

Factors and Stakeholders Related to the Implementation of

the "So You Want to Be an Administrator" Program

When implementing a proposed solution to a problem, factors and stakeholders

should be taken into consideration. For example, what role do the stakeholders play

during implementation? How is support generated in order to implement a plan

successfully? The answers to these questions are addressed in the following sections.

Leaders' roles in implementing the "So You Want to Be an Administrator"

program. Any leader(s) responsible for heading the implementation of the "So You

Want to Be an Administrator" program must be organized and have the ability to manage

varying personalities. Such an undertaking will have a plethora of components to

supervise. This may require smaller committees within the larger planning committee.

First, the leader(s) must select committee members from the NCAA, WLCS, and

NACDA organizations. After assembling the group and outlining the objectives, smaller

committees may be formed. Committees may include, but are not limited to,

sponsorships, budget/finance, programming, venue/facilities, marketing, and so on. While

the smaller committees meet to complete assigned tasks, they must reassemble to report

progress to the leader(s). It will be the leader(s)' responsibility to provide feedback where

necessary and ensure that established deadlines are reached.

Support for this program will be garnered through the efforts of the sponsorship

and marketing committees. The sponsorship committee must convince potential program

sponsors that monies donated will benefit the educational and professional development

of participants. Also, sponsors must know that their dollars will support the larger efforts

of generating an increased number of qualified African American women who will be

prepared for and trained to serve in senior-level leadership. The marketing committee

will be responsible for advertising the program to the NCAA membership and sports

management programs.

Institutional Diversity Training

In addition to focusing on the individualized professional development needs of

African American women, educating employers (e.g., university presidents, cabinet

members, athletics directors, leadership team members, etc.) on the lived experiences of

African American women seeking leadership would be beneficial. Educating institutional

personnel on the lived experiences of African American women addresses any existing

institutional biases that may hinder the fostering of an environment that not only hires

African American women, but also breeds their success as leaders. With efforts to

address comfort concerns mentioned by Katrina, institutional Human Resources, in

conjunction with any necessary campus and outside partnerships (e.g., multicultural affairs, White Privilege Conference, speaker programs/Tim Wise [2008, 2013], etc.), may facilitate annual diversity and inclusion training and/or speaker programs for directors of athletics and leadership team members as well as university presidents and cabinet members. Diversity training, argued to have limited long-term impact within an organization, does have value in workspaces where there is a commitment to diversity and inclusion (Kochan et al., 2003). It is hoped that this specialized training would expose concerns surrounding stereotypes and personal biases while increasing the comfort and acceptance of other individuals who are not Caucasian.

Factors and Stakeholders Related to Institutional Diversity Training

Celebrating and supporting diversity and inclusion within the institutional structure are important. According to Phillips (2014), "Being around people who are different from us makes us more creative, more diligent, and harder-working" (p. 1). Furthermore, building institutional leadership and an employee base that reflects the overall institution and department of athletics constituency promotes diversity and inclusion and supports an increasingly diverse student population (Parsi, 2017). With efforts to increase diversity among leadership within the department of athletics, human resource departments, other institutional constituencies (e.g., multicultural affairs and/or a diversity task force [James Madison University, 2017], etc.) and outside partners (speaker programs) can create diversity trainings for presidents and cabinet members, directors of athletics, and their leadership team members.

Potential Barriers and Obstacles

Lindsey, King, Hebl, and Levine (2014) found that not everyone responds to and/or gains the same level of benefit from a streamlined diversity training program. Because of this, it would be advantageous to provide diversity training that incorporates varying training strategies. Lindsey et al. suggested a perspective-taking method of training that demonstrates positive crossover effects, regardless of training style or target population of focus. These trainings may help leadership identify personal biases.

In opposition, mandatory training sessions added to a lengthy and intense calendar of meetings may become monotonous. Furthermore, when people opt to attend a training session, there is usually a vested interest in the subject matter. On the contrary, when people are required to attend training, their participation may come with a level of resistance and cynicism to the process. This reluctance may negate the purpose and importance of the training, limiting their personal investment in the subject matter. Hence, the training would have limited impact on the overall culture of the organization (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016). In short, as stated by Dobbin and Kalev (2016), "You won't get managers on board by blaming and shaming them with rules and reeducation" (para. 6).

Implementation of Institutional Diversity Training

The institutional diversity training program implementation will vary according to each institution. Its implementation will be predicated on some or all of the following variables:

- the level of importance of diversity and inclusion to the organization (Piercy et al., 2005),
- timeline/prioritization of already established projects (Piercy et al., 2005),

- already existing diversity and inclusion structures on campus,

- the complexity of the program to be established and implemented, and

- monetary obligations.

Factors and Stakeholders Related to the Implementation of

Institutional Diversity Training

As with all proposed recommendations, there are factors and stakeholders related to institutional diversity training. Potential barriers and obstacles of this recommendation are reviewed.

Leaders' roles in implementing the institutional diversity training. A committee of individuals from human resources, multicultural affairs, diversity task force, athletics department, student body, and the faculty athletics representative will be of value when planning and implementing diversity training. In structuring diversity training, a budget for the desired type of training should be developed. This may require several departments to co-mingle monetary resources. Lastly, identifying program participants, dates, locations, and diversity training topics must be accomplished. Support for this training may be generated by revisiting the institutional mission statement, values, and goals—especially any verbiage that promotes diversity and inclusion. Furthermore, highlighting the importance of building a leadership team that mirrors the student body (Parsi, 2017) and understanding that everyone has personal biases to confront may ignite a personal investment in diversity training. Lastly, comprehending that this training is intended to shape inclusive attitudes through role play (experiential), speaker programs (didactic), constructive confrontation (didactic), and reflective

practices (Ferdman & Brody, 1996) may attract participants who identify such training as worthwhile.

Evaluation and Assessment

Although recommendations are offered to assist in the improvement and/or resolution of a problem, it is possible for recommendations to malfunction, fail, and/or no longer be appropriate. To determine the feasibility of a recommendation, there should be an evaluation of the suggested solution(s). Although a suggestion appears viable in theory, it may not always be practical based upon available resources and a timeline in which to achieve the goal.

One method of evaluating the "So You Want to Be an Administrator" program and the institutional diversity training program would be to conduct a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013). This assessment provides an overall evaluation of the programs as well as its feasibility and impact on the participants and surrounding environment. Another method of assessing the professional development and diversity training programs would be to garner feedback from the participants. Disseminated evaluations should focus on specific workshops and the overall programs in order to assess the delivery of information and the overall client experience (e.g., Were objectives met? Has knowledge base improved? What could have been done better? etc.) (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013). Evaluations are necessary to improve components of the programs prior to welcoming new participants. The reputation of each program will supplement the SWOT Analysis and formal evaluations.

After the implementation of the "So You Want to Be an Administrator" program(s), the experiential database, and the institutional diversity training programs, an assessment of their impact on the hiring of African American women in athletics leadership would be essential in determining benefit and worth. In doing so, utilizing the most updated longitudinal study by Acosta and Carpenter, as well as the Racial and Gender Report Cards in College Sport by Lapchick and associates, would be imperative as they provide years of annual data concerning diversity within athletics administration. Furthermore, running aggregate reports through the NCAA Demographic Database is another tool that will help assess the program's effect on the hiring of African American women throughout the athletics industry. As the numbers and percentages of African American women increase, it can be assumed that the implementation of some or all of the aforementioned recommendations had a positive effect on the presence of African American women in collegiate athletics administration.

Implications

Implications from this study prompt further exploration that may extend the boundaries of this study's findings and/or segue focus on to research that attends to other marginalized groups in leadership across professional bounds. Below, practical implications and implications for future research are reviewed.

Practical Implications

Practical implications for this research detail the knowledge gained from the research: who will benefit from the study, what is learned, and what insight is gained (Roberts, 2010). In Chapter One, the significance of the study centered around the deficit of African American women in upper-level administration in collegiate athletics.

Highlighting distinct and apparent experiences of the journeys of African American women who have secured positions in upper-level administration provides practical implications to be considered by African American women who aspire to senior-level leadership. For instance, some of the experiences shared in Chapter Four served as information and/or advisement. One theme, strategy for upward mobility, provided information about garnering pertinent professional experience, especially in the development/fundraising area. On the other hand, advice was offered about the importance and impact of professionalism (during and outside of working hours) and communication strategies with peers and supervisors. Furthermore, Caucasian men and others in power positions would benefit from having a deeper comprehension of the types of experiences that African American women encounter that may not otherwise be discussed or revealed. Young professionals, other people of color, and marginalized groups may also find value in this research as a foundation to further study their respective experiences surrounding leadership and/or their ascent to leadership positions.

From this study, African American women, young professionals, other people of color, and marginalized groups may discover how to strategize as it relates to developing a skillset, networking, communicating, and researching and engaging in professional opportunities to demonstrate marketability and corral support in a competitive industry. Additionally, these groups will garner an understanding of the importance of their overall appearance and professionalism while gaining clarity about how their experiences shape their perspectives and outlook moving forward.

In short, this study provides honest and important insight into the professional labyrinth of African American women inclusive of challenges surrounding networking

and securing mentors/sponsors, skill development and opportunities (e.g., development/

fundraising, etc.), and communication. A variety of audiences, including Caucasian men,

will become aware of the subconscious and/or deliberate judgements, stereotypes, and

biases that African American women face. These experiences ultimately become part of

what shapes their overall perspective and inform their outlook and approach in the future.

Implications for Future Research

Although this research focused specifically on the journey of African American

women who have secured senior-level leadership positions, other potential research

approaches may build on the findings of this study. For example, future researchers may

be interested in the population of African American women who aspire to senior-level

leadership yet have been unable to secure such positions. To some extent, their career

path is/was different from those who participated in this research. What are the

differences and/or additional variables that have impeded them from securing a senior-

level leadership position? Having not secured senior-level leadership positions, it is

possible that their professional journey would not prompt them to label themselves as

being "fortunate" and/or "blessed." This generates additional questioning such as:

(a) What has their professional labyrinth encompassed and how different is it from those

who have secured senior-level leadership? (b) Do/did they move forward in collegiate

athletics or do/did they change their career field? and (c) If they remained in collegiate

athletics, how has their perspective been shaped? For such research, a phenomenological

study similar to this current research may be conducted.

However, in knowing that the population of women who have not secured senior-

level leadership is larger than the population of women who have, future research may

employ the use of focus groups or a questionnaire to collect data about their professional

experiences when seeking leadership. In using focus groups, researchers must consider

the possibility of groupthink permeating data collection. If the researcher decides to use

an electronic questionnaire data collection tool, he/she must remember that computers

and the internet must be available to the sample/target population (Bowling, 2005).

According to Bowling (2005), while the use of an electronic questionnaire was the

preferred mode for administering surveys, it ranked poorly as it related to retrieving

survey responses. In short, comparing the experiences of the African American women

who have not secured senior-level leadership with the women of the current research may

serve as a complete picture of the experiences of African American women who aspire to

leadership and further highlight the differences between those who have achieved

leadership and those who have not.

      Another research approach that would build on the findings of this research and/or

the findings of the previously mentioned study of African American women who have

not secured senior-level leadership is to conduct a grounded theory research study. This

study would utilize the current participants with the hopes of obtaining additional

participants from the target population. Securing a heterogeneous representation of

individuals from across the nation from the target population would allow for the

grounding of a theory that would not be described as a regionally-specific theory. The

theory would stand, regardless of location. In utilizing the grounded theory approach, the

researcher's goal would be to generate a theory explaining why the research participants

were able to secure senior-level leadership as opposed to the vast number of African

American women who were unable to do so (Creswell, 2013). Comparing the findings of

both studies would not only provide a complete picture of African American women in

senior-level leadership, but also present a theory that may be used to explain why few

African American women have secured these positions.

Implications for Leadership Theory and Practice

The findings of this research study demonstrated that although there are African

American women who have secured senior-level leadership positions in collegiate

athletics administration, the total number is few compared to their Caucasian male and

female counterparts. Recommendations have been outlined for the purpose of increasing

the presence of African American women within collegiate athletics administration.

However, several of the research participants emphasized that there will be an increase in

African American women in senior-level leadership when directors of athletics and

university presidents become comfortable hiring individuals who do not look like them.

In reflecting on the role of a leader as it pertains to this research, one thing is

certain—leaders should be constantly evolving while being relentless in their overall

growth and participatory in their work environment. The moment leaders undoubtedly

believes they have reached the zenith of leadership is the very moment that those leaders

reveal an unmistakable error of judgement. It would be unwise to believe there is a final

destination to leadership techniques and philosophies, especially as the landscape of the

work environment modifies and transforms (i.e., diversity and inclusion, generational

differences, new policies, varying personalities and moods, etc.). Just as each

aforementioned recommendation should be evaluated for the purpose of improving and

strengthening its operation and function, so should leaders reflect on and evaluate

themselves and their decision making because there will always be better, more efficient,

and more inclusive ways to lead. The act and art of reflection afford an opportunity for personal and professional growth that anchors an individual throughout the self-awareness process (Lowney, 2003). As Lowney (2003) further noted, "only those who know their weaknesses can deal with them and even hope to conquer them" (p. 95). This sentiment confirms the importance of constant leadership assessment.

Summary of the Study

In investigating women in senior-level leadership across the broader workforce, only little research has been conducted that solely attends to African American women in leadership (Eagly & Chin, 2010; Hite, 2004; Howard-Vital, 1989; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Endeavoring to supplement the growing body of research pertaining to African American women in leadership, this research focused on the journey of African American women towards senior-level administration at Division I collegiate athletics institutions. Although focusing on the journey of African American women who have secured senior-level leadership, it would be careless to disregard the obvious; there is a gross deficit of African American women serving in collegiate athletics administration, as the target population of this study confirmed. Furthermore, several studies have also documented and supported the fact that there is an absence of African American women in upper management in collegiate athletics (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Lapchick & Baker, 2016; Lapchick, Baker, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Donovan, et al., 2014; Lapchick, Fox, et al., 2015; Lapchick, Johnson, et al., 2014; Lapchick & Kuhn, 2011; Lapchick et al., 2012; NCAA, 2016).

At the time of data collection, a list of African American women who worked at Division I (FBS) institutions with the Associate Director title or higher was composed.

In addition to having the title, these women must have also had sport supervision responsibilities. Across all FBS institutions, this list began with 33 women. After sending introductory communications soliciting confirmation of self-identified ethnicity and sport supervision responsibilities (Appendix A) in addition to utilizing the snowball technique, ultimately, 28 women satisfied the components of the defined research criteria. Of the 28 women, 11 were interviewed; however, only 10 of these interviews were utilized during data analysis (it was confirmed in the interview that one participant did not have sport supervision responsibilities).

After all interviews were conducted and transcribed, the researcher analyzed them for thematic similarities. Three overarching themes emerged: strategy for upward mobility, compensation due to the awareness of African American female biases, and shaped perspectives based on experience. Within the three themes were several sub-themes that encompassed (strategy for upward mobility) experience and skill development, networking and professional development, communication, and professional opportunities; (compensation due to the awareness of African American female biases) overall appearance, and professionalism; and (shaped perspectives based on experience) personal approach/outlook related to professional challenges, personal responsibility, and work ethic.

In addressing the research problem with the emerged themes in mind, recommendations outlined included:

1. Create the "So You Want to Be an Administrator" program customized for African American women that ultimately seeks to increase the presence of African American women in senior-level leadership at FBS institutions. This

program would be supplemented by the maintenance of a database inclusive of African American females' qualifications and certifications for review by hiring agents.

2. Create institutional diversity trainings for university and athletics department administration.

Each of the aforementioned recommendations, with planning and collaborative efforts, may vary in implementation based upon available resources.

Although each of these recommendations may appear practical and feasible, evaluation and assessment techniques will be essential for improvement and sustenance. Utilizing evaluation methods before, during, and after specific programs will be helpful to determine whether objectives are being met, if program topics are applicable and desired, and whether participants and presenters are positively impacted by the overall experience. Additionally, a SWOT analysis may be employed for the purpose of enhancing the overall experience of the participants and presenters while being mindful of budgetary considerations. After analyzing any and all feedback, programmatic modifications should be made as necessary.

Overall, this research continues to enhance the growing topic solely concerning African American women and leadership. Supplementing the continued research efforts by Eagly and Carli (2007), Lapchick and Baker (2016), Lapchick, Baker, et al. (2015), Lapchick, Donovan, et al. (2014), Lapchick, Fox, et al. (2015), Lapchick, Johnson, et al. (2014), Lapchick and Kuhn (2011), Lapchick et al. (2012), and the longitudinal study by Acosta and Carpenter (2014) and the NCAA Demographic Database (2016), this research supports their previous findings. Furthermore, this study provides potential

recommendations with the endeavor of addressing the noticeable deficiency of African

American women in collegiate athletics administration while being mindful of the

research findings.

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Appendix A

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

RECRUITMENT CORRESPONDENCE - FORMAL INVITE

Title: The Journey of African American Women Towards Division I (FBS) Collegiate Athletics Administration: A Phenomenological Study

Dear (name),

I trust this communication finds you well and having a great conclusion to your work week. My name is Joi (Irby) Stanley and I work in Student Athlete Services at James Madison University. Having a career in athletics as a former student-athlete and collegiate coach, and for the past 8 years within student-athlete services, I have always aspired to progress within the field towards senior level administration. Part of that career progression has now led me to the dissertation phase of my doctoral work at Creighton University.

My research interests and passions are centered around the professional advancement of African American women towards senior level leadership at Division I (FBS) institutions. Because of this, I am seeking to conversationally interview **African American women** in **upper level administration** at **FBS institutions** with the **Associate Director title or higher** (e.g. Executive, Sr. Associate, Deputy, etc.) who have attained **sport supervision responsibilities**. I am interested in your advancement experiences which have lead you to your current position in senior level administration. **Your** participation in this study is <u>crucial</u>, as it will add to the growing body of knowledge surrounding African American women in leadership; more specifically collegiate athletics leadership.

Understanding that this is busy time of the year (e.g. fall sports - especially amidst football season, etc.), I am extremely empathetic to your time constraints and demands. Because of this, should you decide to participate, the interview will be conducted at a time and date of **your** choosing and take approximately 45 minutes of your time. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study, you may contact me via phone at <u>804.677.6637</u> or email at <u>joistanley@creighton.edu</u>. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Institutional Review Board at Creighton University via phone at <u>402.280.2126</u> or email at <u>IRB@creighton.edu</u>.

Thank you, in advance, for your consideration and time. If you meet the aforementioned criteria and/or know someone in your department that does who may be interested in participating in this study, please respond to and/or forward this correspondence. I will contact you within the next few weeks, either way, to confirm your participation and/or schedule your interview.

Sincerely,

Joi (Irby) Stanley

Creighton University
Interdisciplinary Leadership
email: joistanley@creighton.edu

RECRUITMENT CORRESPONDENCE – FOLLOW-UP EMAIL

Study Title: The Journey of African American Women Towards Division I (FBS) Collegiate Athletics
               Administration: A Phenomenological Study

Good morning (name),

I hope this correspondence finds you well. You may recall that I touched base with you just over a week ago to solicit your participation in my research study entitled "The Journey of African American Women Towards Division I (FBS) Collegiate Athletics Administration: A Phenomenological Study". I am contacting you to inquire if there are any questions or concerns I may be able to answer and/or respond to that may assist you in your decision to participate. Again, I am seeking to interview **African American women** who work at the **Division I (FBS)** level with the **Associate Director** title or higher (e.g. Senior, Deputy, Executive, etc.), while also having **sport supervision** responsibilities. If you meet the aforementioned criteria and/or know someone in your department that does who may be interested in this study, please respond to and/or forward this communication. I'd sincerely appreciate it and look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience. If I can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me via phone at 804.677.6637 or email at joistanley@creighton.edu.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience. Have a wonderful duration of your day.

Sincerely,

~Joi (Irby) Stanley
Interdisciplinary Leadership, EdDc
Creighton University

RECRUITMENT CONFIRMATION CORRESPONDENCE – MEETING CONFIRMATION

Study Title: The Journey of African American Women Towards Division I (FBS) Collegiate Athletics
                   Administration: A Phenomenological Study

Good morning (name),

My sincerest appreciation to you for agreeing to participate in my doctoral research study entitled "The Journey of African American Women Towards Division I (FBS) Collegiate Athletics Administration: A Phenomenological Study". I am looking forward to speaking with you on {**date}** at {**time}** via the bluecafe web-conference (a link should have been sent to you in separate email).

In the meantime, please find attached a brief interview outline so that you are aware of what topics will be covered during the conversational-style interview. Please remember, you do not have to respond to any questions that you are uncomfortable answering. Moreover, you may conclude the interview at any time. After the interview has been transcribed, you will have an opportunity to review it for its accuracy.

For your convenience and review, I have attached a copy of the Creighton University Institutional Review Board approved consent form. I am available to review the Informed Consent Form with you and answer any questions you may have regarding its contents if necessary. If you would sign and return the consent form at your earliest convenience, I would sincerely appreciate it. Once signed and returned via scan or fax, I will file the document in a secured location in my home office. If mailed, I will make a copy and return it to you via scan to your email.

In closing, please confirm that the above date, time, and location for the interview are still convenient for you. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via phone at 804.677.6637 or email at joistanley@crieghton.edu. In the event you prefer to utilize the fax machine, my fax number is 540.568.6424 (please let me know so that I can wait/look for your document).

Have a wonderful day,

~Joi Stanley

Interdisciplinary Leadership, EdDc
Creighton University

Appendix B

INTERVIEW QUSTIONS

1.) Please provide the alias of your choosing.

2.) What is your current level of education (Bachelors, Masters, Certificates, Doctorate, or pursuit thereof, etc.)?

3.) Without identifying institutional/organizational name, please describe your chronological career path towards senior level leadership/your current position (titles/positions, departments, level of institution, etc.).

4.) How many and which sports do you oversee?

5.) Describe if any, challenges or barriers you have encountered throughout your professional journey towards senior level management (e.g. race, gender, familial obligations, development of social capital/network, etc.). How have those challenges impacted you in your current position and your overall professional experience and what does that mean for your professional future?

6.) Have you ever witnessed, experienced, or been aware of any tensions in the workplace based on race, gender, or both? If so, please describe that experience, how it made you feel, and how that experience has impacted you in your current role?

7.) Describe if any, an incident where race has negatively or positively affected your professional advancement? How did it make you feel and how has that experience impacted your overall professional perspective or your navigation of the profession?

8.) Describe if any, an incident where gender has negatively or positively affected your professional advancement? How did it make you feel and how has that experience impacted your overall professional perspective or your navigation of the profession?

9.) If at all and overall, which one (gender or race) do you feel has had the most impact, positive or negative, on your professional advancement and why? How does that make you feel and how has it affected your professional perspective or your navigation of the profession?

10.) Please discuss/describe your perceptions on minority leadership in upper and lower level management.

  i. In your experience, have you observed any ethnic or gender employment/position appointment differences as it relates to individual's race and gender in upper and/or lower level management? Please give describe/give examples of what you have personally experienced/observed. More race, more gender, or both?

11.) What obstacles, if any, have you experienced as it relates to career opportunity/access? Please describe the experience, explain how it made you feel, and how it has shaped your professional perspective or your navigation of the profession.

12.) Have you ever felt denied opportunities and/or access to power and authority or to positions that were commensurate with your ability, knowledge and skill? If so, please explain that experience/situation, how it made you feel, and how it has shaped your professional perspective or your navigation of the profession.

13.) Have you ever lacked or had complete access to a person(s) who were important to the development of your career (mentor/sponsor, etc.)? If so, please explain the experience/circumstance, how it made you feel, how that experience has shaped your current professional perspective or your navigation of the profession.

14.) If you could pinpoint at least two things (e.g. circumstance-related, philosophy-based, etc.), over the course of your career progression, that are directly responsible for your securing your current leadership position, what would they be and why?

15.) Is there anything else you would like to share about your development and/or professional journey towards your current senior leadership position?

16.) Knowing all that you know now, what do you wish you would have known throughout your professional journey that may or may not have propelled you to your current leadership position?

17.) What advice would you give other African American women who seek comparable leadership positions in collegiate athletics?

Appendix C

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Title of study: The Journey of African American Women Towards Division I (FBS)
Collegiate Athletics
                    Administration: A Phenomenological Study

Investigator: Joi Stanley

Disclaimer: This is a research study used to advance the literature surrounding African
American women's advancement in Division I (FBS) collegiate athletics senior level
leadership. Please **<u>do not</u>** hesitate to ask any questions as you take time in deciding your
participation status in this study.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to investigate common themes that
African American women experience as they advance towards senior level leadership
positions at Division I (FBS) institutions. You are being invited to participate in this
study because you are one of few African American women who hold such position. You
should not participate if you do not and/or no longer hold the position of Associate
Director of Athletics or higher title (inclusive of Senior Associate, Executive Director,
Deputy Director, Director, etc.) with sport supervision.

DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in the study entitled "The Journey of African American
Women Towards Division I (FBS) Collegiate Athletics Administration: A
Phenomenological Study", you will be asked to participate in an interview that will take
approximately 60 minutes. Also, you will be welcomed and encouraged to review the
profession transcript of the interview in addition to the assigned themes for agreement
after the interview is transcribed and analyzed by the researcher.

Interview questions will solicit experiences and reflection surrounding your career path
towards senior level leadership within collegiate athletics at Division I (FBS) institution,
career impediments faced/endured (internally/externally), and your navigation of these
professional challenges.

The interview will be completed at a mutually agreed upon time, place, and method (in
person, conference call, skype, etc.). The interview will be audio recorded so that the
researcher may accurately reflect discussion throughout the research. The recordings will
only be viewed by the researcher and professional transcription company in order to
accurately transcribe the interview. After receiving confirmation of the accuracy of the
transcription, all tape recordings will be destroyed. The coded hard copy transcription
will only be viewable by the interviewee, researcher, and secondary analysis reviewer in

order to confirm accuracy of the transcription and provide objective analysis of common themes.

Your participation will last for approximately 95 minutes including the interview and review of the coded transcript.

RISKS

In receiving Institutional Review Board Approval, it was confirmed that there are no known risks associated with this study.

BENEFITS

In your decision to participate in this study, there will not be any direct benefits to you. However, do know that your invaluable insight advances the limited research of African American women in senior level leadership within collegiate athletics. Furthermore, it is the researcher's hope that your experiences will benefit other African American women and/or marginalized populations who seek the same and like positions within collegiate athletics and/or across professional boundaries.

COST AND COMPENSATION

There is no cost or compensation for your participation in this research study.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS

Please understand that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to continue your participation and/or leave this study at any time. If you decide to no longer participate or depart the study prior to its conclusion, there will be no penalty or loss of benefit to which you are entitled. Furthermore, in continuing your participation, you have the option of foregoing any questions you wish to not answer.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any records or documents identifying participants will be kept completely confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publically available. However, federal government, regulatory agencies, auditing departments of the state of Nebraska, and/or the Institutional Review Board may inspect and/or copy research records for quality assurance and data analysis purposes. These records may contain private information. Furthermore, it may be possible for individual identities to be discerned if institutional and/or professional backgrounds are noted. The researcher, however, will do their best to protect the confidentiality of each participant.

In an effort to ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be followed:

- The researcher will not use your name. The participant will assign their own personal alias prior to the start of the interview.
- The researcher will use a fictitious institutional names throughout research and data reporting.
- Only the researcher (all), interviewee (some), and secondary data analysis reviewer (some) will have access to some or all of the data.
- All audio tapes, transcripts, codebook, and any other research materials will be stored in a locked file in the researcher's home office until it is destroyed.
- The researcher will apply a "strong" password on the computer where data and research are stored.
- After the audio tape(s) are transcribed, the audio tape(s) will be destroyed.
- If any results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

You are encouraged to ask any questions or affirm any concerns at any time during this study.

For further information regarding the study, please feel free to contact my dissertation committee chair, Dr. Leah Georges via phone at 402.280.3414 or email at leahgeorges@creighton.edu.

****

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research, that the study was explained to you, that you have been given time to read the document, and that your questions have been adequately answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent document prior to your participation in the study.

Participant's Name (printed)
_____

Participant's Signature_____   Date
_____

Appendix D

BRIEF INTERVIEW QUESTION OUTLINE

In an effort to prepare for your interview, please allow the following information to serve as a brief outline of questions you will be asked during the official interview. This is meant to ignite reflection about your personal and professional experiences as you have navigated your way to senior level leadership at your Division I FBS institution.

You will be asked a series of questions that fall under four different categories:
1.) **Introduction and background**: Please think of an alias of your choosing. This will be how you are referenced to in the research study.
2.) **Access to opportunity**: Reflect upon your career opportunities from your first appointment to your latest appointment.
3.) **Race & Gender**: Think about how race and gender may or may not have influenced your career direction and/or position appointments.
4.) **Professional Reflection/Navigation**: Think about your overall professional experience (e.g. challenges, successes, learning/growth opportunities, navigation, etc.)

Appendix E

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

Creighton UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board
2500 California Plaza • Omaha, Nebraska
68178 phone: 402.280.2126 • fax:
402.280.4766 • email: irb@creighton.edu

DATE:	August 16, 2016
TO:	Joi Stanley
FROM:	Creighton University IRB-02 Social Behavioral
PROJECT TITLE:	[760264-2] The Journey of African American Women Towards Division I
	(FBS) Collegiate Athletics Administration: A Phenomenological Study
SUBMISSION TYPE:	Amendment/Modification
ACTION:	APPROVED
EFFECTIVE DATE:	August 12, 2016
EXPIRATION DATE:	August 11, 2017
TYPE OF REVIEW:	Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of the response materials for this project. The following items were reviewed in this submission:

- Application Form - Response to IRB Request (UPDATED: 08/15/2016)
- Consent Form - Consent without Highlights (UPDATED: 08/15/2016)
- Consent Form - Consent Modification with Highlights (UPDATED: 08/15/2016)

The changes to the consent satisfy the concerns of the Board as expressed in the IRB letter dated August 12, 2016. Therefore, this project is fully approved. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

The consent document submitted is stamped dated August 16, 2016. Only copies of these stamped dated documents may be used when enrolling subjects in this project.

1. Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed

consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

2. Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

3. All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others (UPIRSOs) and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

4. All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

5. This project has been determined to be a minimal risk project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis.

If you have any questions, please contact Christine Scheuring at 402-280-3364 or christinescheuring@creighton.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Creighton University IRB-02 Social Behavioral's records.