

ATTAINING AND RETAINING SENIOR LEADERSHIP POSITIONS: A STUDY ON THE
PERCEPTIONS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN PRESIDENTS, PROVOSTS, AND
VICE-PRESIDENTS OF FOUR-YEAR, PRIVATE HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES
AND UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

The numbers of African American women presidents, provosts, and vice presidents of colleges and universities have increased over the past few decades. However, even with the slight increases, there are still significant disparities in regards to African American women in positions of leadership (American Council on Education, 2018). The intersection of race and gender may potentially cause African American women to experience discrimination and bias based upon either race or gender or both (Davis, 2016). This qualitative study examined the perceptions of African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents of four-year, private Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) as to how they believe they were able to attain and remain in positions of leadership at their current and/or former institutions. The study more specifically examined the roles that race and gender play in the attainment and retention of senior leadership positions. By exploring the experiences of African American women senior administrators, four-year, private HBCUs can create environments that are more inclusive to African-American women and identify the best leaders, regardless of race or gender, to guide the institutions into the future.

This study revealed that the participants attributed their senior leadership position attainment to work ethic, integrity, discipline, education and work experience. The participants also discussed some of the barriers to retention in senior leadership positions including work-life balance, not understanding the politics of an institution, not getting along with the board or stakeholders, not producing positive results, and sexism or gender biases. In relation to racial and gender bias and discrimination, most of the participants stated that at some point in their

career they have experienced some type of bias or discrimination whether it was racial or gender related. For the most part, the racial discrimination was experienced at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) or corporate organizations. Most of the participants, however, stated that they have not experienced racial bias or discrimination at HBCUS. Some of the participants noted that although they had not experienced racial discrimination at HBCUs, they had experienced gender discrimination and biases at HBCUs.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, my mother, Lessie Cunningham, my father, John H. Cunningham, Jr., my brother, Daidrion Cunningham, my grandmother, Daisy Cunningham, and my nephew, Jaylon Cunningham. Thank you for your love and unwavering support.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

HBCUs	Historically Black Colleges and Universities
PWIs	Predominantly White Institutions
MSIs	Minority Serving Institutions
NCES	National Center for Education Statistics

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

African American women have endured marginalization and discrimination in the workplace for many years in the United States (Davis, 2016; Davis & Maldonado, 2015). The field of higher education is no exception. Racial and gender biases have negatively affected the progression of African American women to positions of leadership at colleges and universities (Gamble & Turner, 2015). Even with some advancement towards equality, African American women still report experiencing discrimination and stereotyping in regards to their gender, as well as their race (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). This study explores the perceptions of African American women presidents, provosts, and vice presidents at four-year, private Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) as to how they were able to attain and remain in positions of senior leadership at their current and/or former institutions. More specifically, this study examines whether race and gender have played or are currently playing a role in their careers. African American women senior administrators at four-year, private HBCUs were selected in part for this study because of the institutional challenges currently faced by some private HBCUs and the need for the most qualified, innovative, and effective leadership at these institutions, regardless of race or gender.

Willa B. Player, the first African American woman president of a four-year, accredited private HBCU, once stated that “the Black woman is expected to be a superwoman without acting like one.” Dr. Player was inaugurated as president of Bennett College, a historically Black

women's college in 1955. She had previously served as vice-president of the institution. Dr. Player has been described as feminine in her appearance and soft-spoken, however, she was strong and resolute and one of only a few HBCU presidents who outwardly supported the civil rights movement and her students' participation to the dismay of many (Gasman, 2011). Dr. Player and many other African American women have had to overcome stereotypes in order to achieve or become leaders. Constance Carroll stated that for the African American woman,

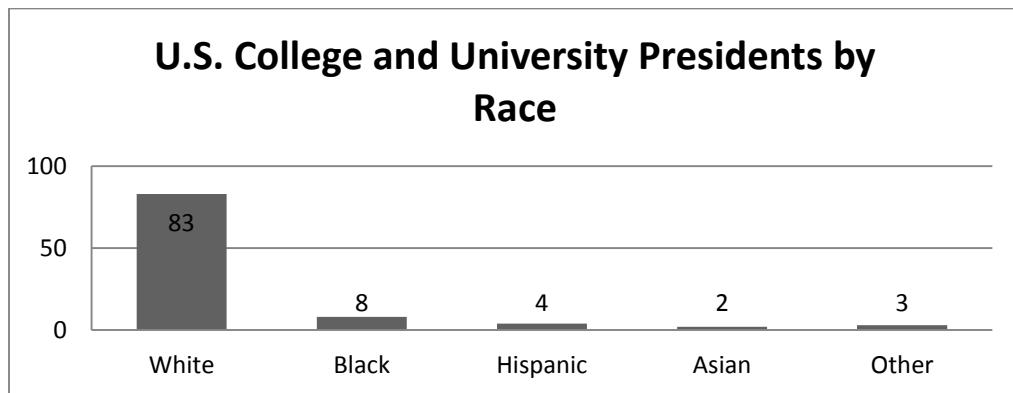
You must be better qualified than men.
You must be more articulate.
You must be more aggressive.
You must have more stamina to face inevitable setbacks.
You must have more patience, since you will advance more slowly.
Above all, you must remain feminine and not appear threatening. (Carroll in Hull, Scott,

& Smith, 1982, p. 124; Huddleston-Mattai, 1995, p. 55-56)

Since Dr. Player's tenure as vice-president and inauguration as president of Bennett College, African American women have continued to attain president, provost, and vice-president positions at colleges and universities, especially HBCUs. Notwithstanding the advancement of African American women in regards to serving in senior administrative positions, the underrepresentation of African American women in higher education leadership, specifically in the role of president, provost, and vice-president, continues to be an issue at many colleges and universities in the United States (Davis, 2009). African American women face many barriers to achieving senior leadership positions. The intersection of both race and gender for African American women sometimes creates unique challenges that White women and African American men do not have to overcome (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). Not only do African American women have to overcome gender and racial biases but they must also address a myriad of issues ranging from family and personal obligations to institutional support (Oikelome, 2017).

Even at HBCUs, the experiences of African American women are different than those of African American men, White men, White women, and men and women of other racial and ethnic groups. Although HBCUs have a higher number of African American women in presidency, provost, and vice-presidency positions when compared to Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs), there are still disparities in the numbers of African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents at HBCUs (American Council on Education, 2018). Despite many obstacles, African American women have made modest strides in achieving senior leadership positions at both HBCUs and PWIs (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). According to the 2017 American Council on Education study on American college presidents, 8% of college and university presidents are African American, with approximately 34% of the 8% being African American women (American Council on Education, 2018). Table 1.1 illustrates the number of college and university presidents by race. The table shows the race of the majority of college and university presidents in the United States as being White.

Table 1.1: U.S. College and University Presidents by Race



Source: (American Council on Education, 2018).

There are several characteristics attributed to African American women who are college and university presidents and senior administrators. It has been documented that African American women leaders tend to be on the average older than their White counterparts when

they first achieve college and university presidencies or senior leadership positions (Gasman, 2013). African American women leaders have been traditionally characterized as being more caring, democratic, and responsive (Fisher & Koch, 1996). Additionally, studies have stated that African American women leaders tend to have a more compassionate and team-oriented style of leadership (Bower & Wolverton, 2009; Wilson, 1998). Also, most of the African American women presidents and senior administrators serve or have served at HBCUs (Davis & Maldonado, 2015).

African American Women President, Provosts, and Vice-Presidents at HBCUs versus PWIs

The number of African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents at HBCUs are higher than the number of African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents at PWIs. For instance, since the 1980s, the number of African American women presidents at HBCUs has risen to between 16% and 20% in any given year (Stewart, 2014). In comparison at PWIs, statistics show that few African American women achieve senior leadership positions (American Council on Education, 2018; Davis & Maldonado, 2015). Even with more African American women serving as presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents at HBCUs than PWIs, extant research suggests that senior administrators at HBCUs still experience both racial and gender discrimination in attaining and serving in leadership positions (Davis & Maldonado, 2015).

The higher number of African American women in senior leadership at HBCUs in comparison to PWIs is understandable considering that HBCUs were colleges and universities established prior to 1964 for the primary mission of educating African Americans, who were prohibited from attending majority institutions. According to the U.S. Department of Education

National Center for Education Statistics in 2017, there were about 102 HBCUs located in 19 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, with the majority of HBCUs being located in southern United States (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2018). Since the 2017 data, Concordia College, a four-year, private HBCU in Alabama, closed in 2018. Depending on the source, the number of HBCUs in recent years has been reported to range from 101 to 107. This discrepancy may be due to some HBCUs no longer being recognized by the U.S. Department of Education because of their loss of accreditation or because of their closure in recent years (The Hundred-Seven, 2020).

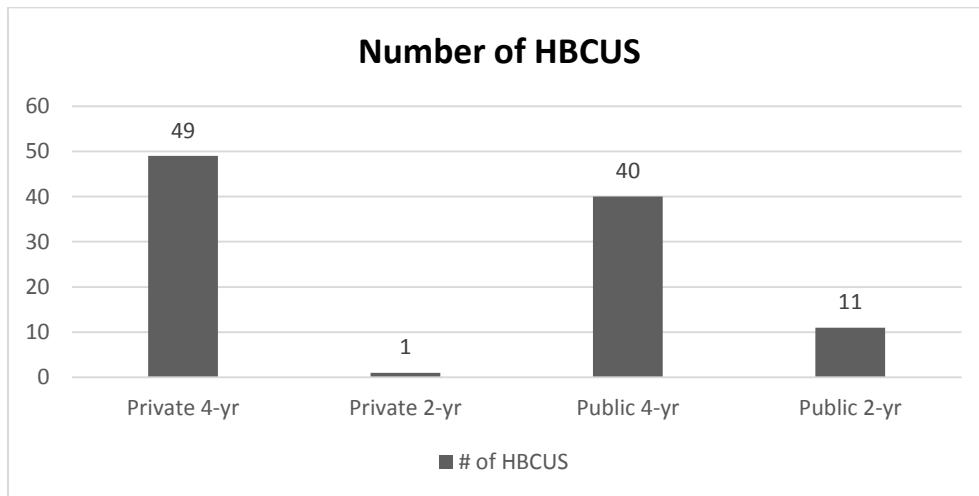
Private HBCUs

This study focuses on African American presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents at four-year, private HBCUS. Private HBCUs are governed by privately elected or appointed officials, with major support from private sources and were established prior to 1964 for the primary mission of educating African Americans (NCES, 2018). Public HBCUs are institutions governed by publicly appointed or elected officials, with major support from public funds and were established prior to 1964 for the primary mission of educating African Americans (NCES, 2018). There are 49 four-year, private HBCUs and 1 two-year, private HBCU compared to 40 four-year, public HBCUs and 11 two-year, public HBCUs that are currently open as of 2020. Some private HBCUs tend to struggle more financially than public HBCUs. Financial issues may be due in part to public HBCUs receiving more money from state governments than their private counterparts. Private HBCUs tend to be more dependent on tuition than public HBCUs, thereby contributing to the financial instability of some private HBCUs. Many private HBCUs need to increase their endowments and alumni giving in order to have more stability and success as an institution (Cantey, Bland, Mack, & Joy-Davis, 2011).

Private HBCUs were selected for this study because of the unique challenges some of the institutions are experiencing in terms of survival and stability. The future survival of many private HBCUs is largely dependent on the leadership of these institutions (Cantey, et al., 2011). Studies have stated that some HBCUS are experiencing difficulties related to finances, accreditation, and leadership (Cantey, et al., 2011, Davis, 2015). Due to a myriad of issues, several private HBCUs have lost their accreditation or closed their doors. Private HBCUs such as Concordia College, Barbara Scotia College, and Saint Paul's College have closed and Knoxville College and Morris Brown College have lost their accreditation (The Hundred-Seven, 2020). Hatton (2011) suggested that lower enrollments since the repeal of segregation laws, the decline of church financial support, and the changing landscape of higher education have contributed to the difficulties experienced by small, private HBCUs like Knoxville College. This dissertation study focused on African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents at private, four-year HBCUS because strong and innovative leadership is needed to ensure the stability and/or forward movement of many private HBCUs. The best leaders are needed for these institutions, regardless of race or gender.

Table 1.2 depicts the HBCUs currently recognized by the United States Department of Education. The number of private and public HBCUs were shown. The number of two-year and four-year HBCUs were also shown.

Table 1.2: HBCUs Currently Recognized by the U.S. Department of Education



Source: (NCES, 2018, The Hundred-Seven, 2020).

Attainment and Retention

The attainment of senior leadership positions by African American women has been an issue for many years and even though the numbers are rising, African American women still fall behind other demographics. Several studies have suggested that some of the factors that contribute to African American women attaining and remaining in senior leadership positions include level of education, work experience, family and institutional support, mentorship, equality, competence, and leadership skills (Davis, 2009; Jackson & Harris, 2005; Oikelome, 2017). Many African American women attribute their success in moving into the ranks of senior leadership to their high education level and preparation, their work ethic, sacrifices, and learning an organization's culture (Cook, 2012).

In addition to the issue of president, provost, and vice-president position attainment among African American women at HBCUs, the retention of African American women in these positions is also a concern. Once African American women attain the position of president, provost, or vice-president, they tend to not remain in the position for long periods of time. Several African American women presidents of HBCUs in recent years have been fired or resigned after relatively short tenures as presidents of institutions (deGregory & Carter, 2016). Several presidents have lost their positions due to conflicts with governing boards, low enrollment and revenues, low graduation rates, and financial difficulties (Stewart, 2014). Davis and Maldonado (2015) stated that “as women ascend to leadership positions, the barriers to assure continuity and retention of top female executive talent become more complex” (p. 50).

Reasons for Increasing the Number of African American Women Senior Administrators

There are several reasons for increasing the numbers of African American women senior administrators at colleges and universities, particularly HBCUs. One reason is because African American women should be given the opportunity to serve as leaders based upon their qualifications. They should not be denied promotions or positions because of stereotypes and discrimination due to their race and/or gender. Institutions should strive to hire the most qualified and capable people regardless of race and gender in order to improve diversity among senior leadership and thereby demonstrate institutional concern for equality and equity (Altbach, Gumpert, & Berdahl, 2011). In the past, stereotypes of African American women have excluded them from what some consider the traditional characteristics of leaders, however, the 21st century requires new perspectives for an increasingly diverse workforce (Parker, 2005). Diversity within an organization creates opportunities for new perspectives and more resources for achieving

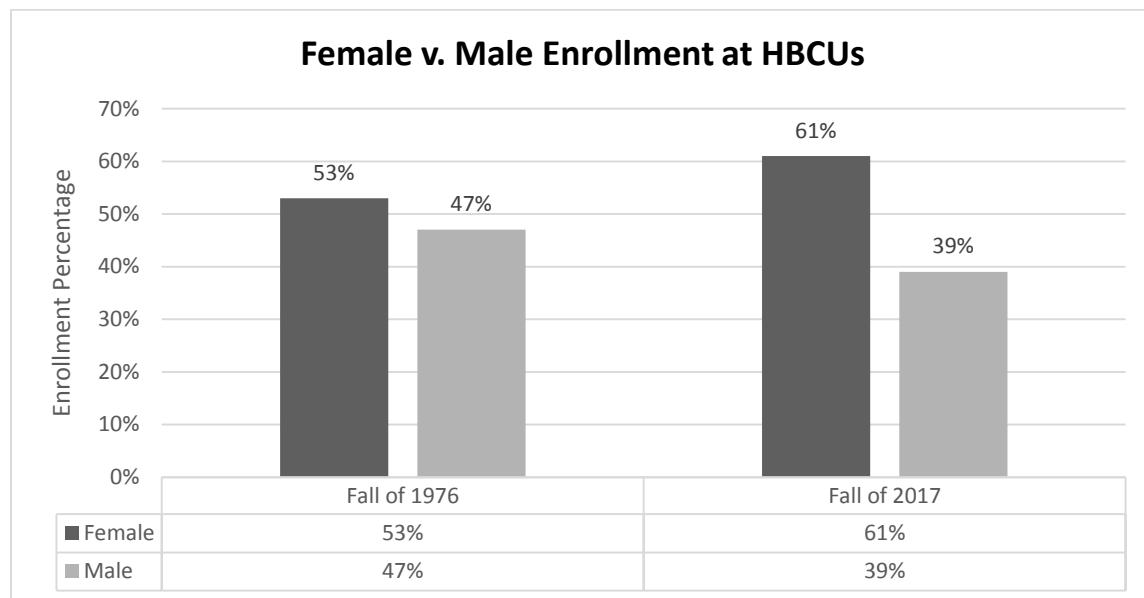
organizational objectives (Parker, 2005). African American women in senior leadership may bring a diversity of ideas and perspectives to an institution.

Another reason is that by increasing the number of African American women in senior leadership, an institution creates an environment that is attractive to the recruitment and retention of more African American women faculty and students (Altbach, et al., 2011). Also, the inclusion of African American women in leadership provides role models for African American students and faculty (Altbach, et al., 2011). By having more African American women leaders, the feelings of isolation and marginalization due to lack of mentors or role models by other African American women can be resolved (Oikelome, 2017). At most HBCUs, African American women make up the majority of the student body, however, African American women only account for less than a fourth of HBCU presidents (NCES, 2017).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics [NCES] (2017), 61% of students enrolled at HBCUs are female with 39% being male. This Fall 2017 statistic reflects an increase in the percentage of female students enrolled at HBCUs in comparison to the percentage of male students since the Fall of 1976 (NCES, 2017). There should be more African American women in senior leadership at HBCUs because there should be equality and equity across all levels of HBCU campuses. By having more African American women in presidencies and in senior leadership positions, female students are provided with role models and mentors that can help motivate, influence, and shape their career paths, especially in higher education administration. “Administrative leaders of a minority, racial, ethnic, or gender group may also provide inspiring role models for students, employees and community residents (Phelps & Taber, 1996, p. 10). Figure 1.3 depicts the percentage of female and male students enrolled at HBCUs. The table shows a comparison of the percentages in 1976 and in 2017 according to the National

Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The table shows an increase in the percentage of female students at HBCUs since 1976.

Table 1.3: Female v. Male Enrollment at HBCUs



Source: (NCES, 2017).

Problem Statement

The problem addressed by this study is how African American women are able to attain and retain presidency, provost, and vice-presidency positions at four-year, private HBCUs.

Addressing this problem is important because while the numbers of African American women in senior leadership have increased over the years, the numbers are still lower than their male counterparts. It is important to understand not only how African American women attain HBCU president, provost, and vice-president positions, but also how and why they are able to remain in these leadership positions. Four-year, private institutions are the focus of this study because private HBCUs face unique challenges and it is important to have strong, qualified leadership at these institutions, regardless of race or gender. Increasing the numbers of African American women HBCU presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents is important because institutions should

demonstrate equality in the hiring or promotion of leaders at their institutions. Also, African American women can contribute to the diversity of ideas and perspectives important to operating organizations that serve increasing numbers of African American women students and more African American women leaders can provide role models and mentors for students of color. Additionally, understanding the roles that both gender and race may play in the experiences of African American women leaders is important to promoting equality and equity at private HBCUs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to better understand how and why African American women are able to attain and remain in the positions of president, provost, or vice-president at four-year, private HBCUs and whether race and gender issues have impacted their careers and their attainment and retention of senior leadership. By exploring the experiences of African American women senior administrators, four-year, private HBCUs can create environments that are more inclusive to African-American women. Inclusion of African American women is important because there is a disparity in the number of African American women administrators compared to African American male administrators at HBCUS, even though many HBCUs have higher numbers of female students than male students (NCES, 2017). This study will provide information to assist four-year, private HBCUs in attracting and retaining African American women in senior leadership positions and also to help African American women attain and retain the positions of president, provost, or vice-president at four-year, private HBCUs.

Significance of the Study

This study will contribute to the limited body of qualitative research related to African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents at four-year, private HBCUs. More

specifically, this study will examine the factors and conditions that contribute to African American women attaining and remaining in senior leadership positions. With more African American women receiving college and advanced degrees today, there is potentially a larger pool of qualified African American women available for senior leadership positions. African American women can contribute to an organization by broadening the ideas and perspectives and by enhancing the organization's relevance in a modern, diverse society. In addition, with the challenges currently faced by many private HBCUs, it is important to have the best leadership possible, regardless of race or gender. This study will contribute to higher education by identifying how four-year, private HBCUs can attract and retain diversity, specifically African American women, at the levels of president, provost, or vice-president. Also, this study examined whether race and gender issues affected African American women as they attained and retained senior leadership positions.

Research Questions

The following research questions drove this study:

1. How do African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents believe they were able to attain their leadership positions at four-year, private HBCUs?
2. What factors/characteristics do African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents believe contribute to them remaining in their positions of leadership?
3. How do African American women presidents, provosts and vice-presidents of four-year, private HBCUs believe race and gender have affected their careers overall?
4. How do African American women presidents, provosts and vice-presidents of four-year, private HBCUs believe private HBCUs can attract and retain African American women in positions of senior leadership?

Assumptions

One assumption of this study is that the data collected is an accurate and honest representation of the experiences of African American women college and university presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents at four-year, private HBCUs. Another assumption is that the data collected in this study will inform and offer recommendations as to how African American women can attain and retain presidency, provost, or vice-presidency positions at four-year, private HBCUs. A third assumption is that the data obtained will inform and assist four-year, private HBCUs in attracting and retaining African American women in senior leadership at their institutions.

Study Limitations

This study is limited by the number of African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents of four-year, private HBCUs available for this study. There are a limited number of African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents of four-year, private HBCUs, thereby, decreasing the population of potential participants. Time and scheduling conflicts and lack of interest in participating in the study also limited the number of participants in this study.

Study Delimitations

This study is delimited by the researcher in several ways. The first delimitation is that participants were selected from only four-year HBCUs and African American women at other institution types (two-year/community colleges) may have different experiences. The second delimitation is that the sample of African American women HBCU presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents were selected from private institutions. This sample may limit the findings in this

study, in that the perceptions and experiences of presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents at public institutions may vary.

Definition of Terms

Black Feminist Theory- a theoretical framework that describes the unique position of African American women separate from White women or African American men (Collins, 2000; Johnson, 2015).

Four-Year (College or University)- institutions offering programs at the bachelor's or higher degree levels (NCES, 2018).

“Glass Ceiling”- are invisible barriers that prevent women from moving up in their careers (Davis, 2009).

Gender Discrimination (Sexism)- prejudice or discrimination based on sex or gender (Parker, 2005).

Historically Black College and University (HBCU)- institutions of higher education established prior to 1964 for the primary mission of educating African Americans, who were prohibited from attending majority institutions (NCES, 2018).

Intersectionality- is used to describe how for African American women, racism and sexism combine and intersect and how the cumulative effect is greater than racism or sexism alone (Crenshaw, 1989).

“Old Boy’s Network”- “an informal system of support and friendship through which men use their positions of influence to help other who went to the same school or college as they did or who share a similar social background” (Dictionary.com, 2019).

Private HBCUs- are governed by privately elected or appointed officials, with major support from private sources established prior to 1964 for the primary mission of educating African Americans (NCES, 2018).

Predominantly White Institution (PWI)- institution of higher education in which Whites generally account for 50% or more of the student enrollment (Brown & Dancy, 2010).

Public HBCUs- are institutions governed by publicly appointed or elected officials, with major support from public funds established prior to 1964 for the primary mission of educating African Americans (NCES, 2018).

Racial Discrimination (Racism)- “The belief that members of a particular race are superior to members of other races” (Parker, 2005, quoting Pila, 2014, p.578).

Organization of Study

This dissertation follows the following format: Chapter One is the introduction. The introductory chapter includes an introduction to the study, a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the research questions, the assumptions, study limitations, and delimitations of the study. Chapter Two includes a review of the literature and a discussion on the gap in the literature. Some topics discussed in the review of the literature include: leadership in higher education, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, women in higher education leadership, African American women in higher education leadership, and the theoretical framework of Black feminist theory and intersectionality. Chapter Three includes the research methodology and discusses the qualitative research design of the study, the research questions, the study population and sample, data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations, validity, reliability, and researcher positionality. Chapter Four reports the findings and data gathered from the interviews and biographical documentation on the study participants. Chapter

Five includes conclusions and recommendations derived from this study. Chapter Five also discusses recommendation for further studies.

Summary

This chapter was an introduction to this qualitative study on the experiences of African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents in attaining and retaining positions of senior leadership and how race and gender may have impacted their careers. The purpose of this study is to better understand how and why African American women are able to ascend to the position of HBCU presidents, provosts, or vice-president and remain in the positions. The problems addressed in this study deal with how African American women are able to attain and retain presidency, provost, and vice-presidency positions at four-year, private HBCUs and the roles that race and gender may play in their careers. This chapter also discussed the significance of the study and the limitations, assumptions, delimitations, definition of terms, and the research questions that drove this study. In the next chapter, a review of the literature relevant to this study will be presented.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter provides a review of the relevant literature related to the experiences of African American women in the attainment and retention of presidency, provost, and vice-presidency at four-year, private HBCUs and whether race and gender have affected their careers. While reviewing the literature related to African American women in senior leadership positions at HBCUs, several subtopics became evident. This literature review will examine some of those subtopics. The subtopics discussed in this literature review include: leadership in higher education, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, women in higher education leadership, African American women in higher education leadership, and the theoretical framework of Black Feminist Theory and intersectionality.

Leadership in Higher Education

The leadership of colleges and universities is important to the overall direction and success of an institution. Leadership at private HBCUs, in today's climate, is extremely important to the survival of some of these institutions. Effective leaders may employ different leadership styles or approaches based upon the mission and the organizational structure of an institution. College and university leaders commonly are classified as transformational, transactional, servant, adaptive, and/or authentic leaders (Northouse, 2016). There is, however, no one type of leadership that best fits all institutions (Altbach, et al., 2011). There are numerous studies related to leadership and leadership approaches. Some of the literature related to African

American women leadership approaches, effective leadership, and HBCU leadership will be reviewed here.

African American Women Leadership Approaches

African American women have described their leadership approaches in many ways. Some of the more noted approaches include transformational, servant, adaptive, and authentic leadership (Bower & Wolverton, 2009; Oikelome, 2017). One of the more commonly referenced approaches to African American women was transformational leadership (Bower & Wolverton, 2009; Oikelome, 2017). Transformational leadership, sometimes referred to as charismatic leadership is when a leader empowers followers to look beyond their self-interest for the good of the organization. In this type of leadership, the leader creates a vision for the organization. Transformational leaders motivate followers and serve as role models. Transformational leaders encourage followers to think positively about themselves and the work of the organization (Northouse, 2016). In addition, Mufeed (2018) found that transformational leadership has a positive impact on the quality of work life of faculty members at institutions. Transactional leadership, in contrast to transformational leadership, focuses more on completing tasks versus creating a vision for an organization and motivating followers. Transactional leaders tend to not focus on the personal needs and wants of followers. They usually provide rewards contingent on performance of jobs or tasks (Northouse, 2016).

Other leadership approaches referenced by African American women as being their style of leadership are servant, authentic, and adaptive (Bower & Wolverton, 2009; Oikelome, 2017). Servant leadership refers to the premise that good leaders also serve. Servant leaders put the needs of their followers first. Servant leaders have several characteristics including, the ability to listen, empathize, the ability to heal or make whole, be aware, persuasive, conceptualize, and

demonstrate foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and a willingness to build the community (Northouse, 2016). Adaptive leadership refers to helping others to do what is needed in order to adapt to changes or challenges. Adaptive leaders are able to identify challenges and provide direction for overcoming the challenges. Adaptive leaders are also able to manage distress and assist followers in remaining focused on tasks at hand (Northouse, 2016).

Authentic leadership is a relatively new approach to leadership that focuses on the authenticity or realness of a leader (Northouse, 2016). According to Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, and Peterson (2008) authentic leadership is defined as

a pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development. (p. 94)

Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber (2009) identified four components of authentic leadership, self-awareness, internal moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency.

Authentic leaders are moral and do good towards their followers and for the community (Northouse, 2016). In Oikelome's (2017) study, all the presidents interviewed whether African American or White stated that they were proponents of authentic and transformative leadership.

Figure 2.1. Leadership Approaches

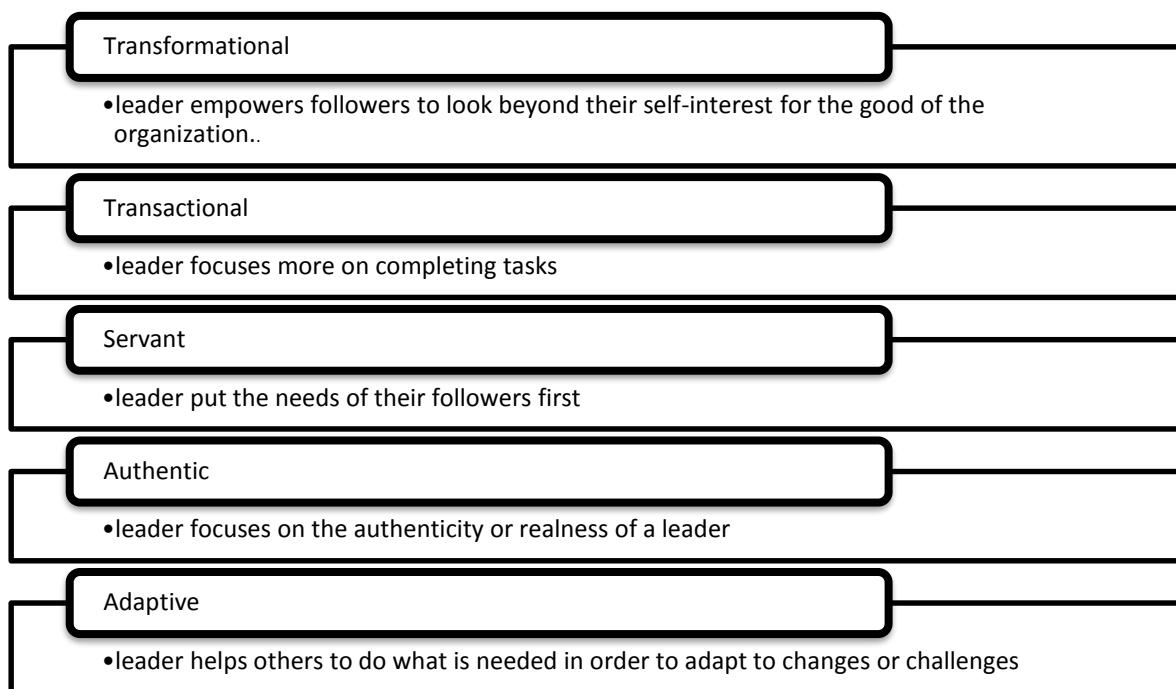


Figure 2.1. Chart displaying the different leadership approaches and descriptions. Adapted from Leadership: Theory and Practice (7th ed) by P. Northouse, 2016. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

In addition to specific leadership approaches, studies have also identified how African American women leaders communicate. In the book by Parker (2005), the leadership communication themes of African American women executives were discussed. The themes included, interactive leadership, empowerment of the employee through the challenge to produce results, openness in communication, participative decision making, and leadership through boundary expanding communication. Interactive leadership involves knowing the business and being able to communicate the knowledge clearly, directly, and consistently and also being accessible and modeling effective behavior. Empowerment of the employee through the challenge to produce results involves expecting high performance and setting goals for high quality results. Openness in communication involves bringing important issues to the open,

having no hidden agenda, and making sure voices are heard. Participative decision making involves collaborative debate, autonomy, and information gathering from different persons. Lastly, leadership through boundary expanding communication involves connecting the organization to the community and articulating the organizations mission and purpose (Parker, 2005).

Effective Leadership

Leaders were once thought to have certain traits that made them better leaders. Under Trait Theory, leaders tend to possess the following characteristics, intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability. However, studies have shown that effective or good leaders are not necessarily born with leadership traits but can develop the skills and attributes necessary in order to lead (Northouse, 2016). It is difficult to define what constitutes an effective leader for all colleges and universities. Since environmental factors and institutions vary, effective leadership is determined by a leader's ability to adapt to the specific challenges (Altbach, et al., 2011).

In Bower and Wolverton (2009), seven African American women in the higher education arena were interviewed. Most of the women interviewed served as a president of a college or university and the others worked in the higher education policy. Bower and Wolverton (2009), based upon existing literature on effective leadership, compiled the following nine tenets of effective leadership,

Effective leaders are passionate about their organizations. They exhibit extraordinary commitment not only to the organization but to its people.

Effective leaders are reflective. They are self-aware, self-disciplined, and self-confident, and self-assured.

Effective leaders are competent. They possess the intelligence and mental capacity to get the job done.

Effective leaders are great communicators. They have their finger on the pulse of the organization.

Effective leaders understand the role that culture plays in shaping the way they lead.

Effective leaders possess the physical and emotional stamina, energy, and resilience needed to preserve in the long run.

Effective leaders are focused yet forward thinking. The building blocks of credibility are trust, integrity, and power.

Effective leaders respect and value individuality

Effective leaders possess credibility. (pg. 150)

Also in Bower and Wolverton (2009), one of the study participants expressed that “If a leader is not enthusiastic about the goals and/or vision of the organization it is virtually impossible to be effective because the people in the organization look to the leader for guidance, support, and motivation, all those things that make people want to follow” (p. 21-22). She further stated that “Effective leaders continually take stock of who they are, where they are going, what they have done, and what kind of vision they want to set for the organization” (p.22).

Additionally, Scott and Hines (2014) identified another form of leadership that may be effective for HBCUs. This form of leadership is referred to as distributed leadership. Scott and Hines (2014) discussed distributed leadership and how it may be applicable to HBCUs.

Distributed leadership refers to including all stakeholders, including students, in the decisions of the institution. Distributed leadership may be useful for HBCUs because it could force presidents to be more inclusive and transparent in decisions related to an institution while also promoting more alignment with the various stakeholders (Scott & Hines, 2014). Walter Kimbrough, President of Dillard University, has stated that “Boards are beginning to realize the need for more progressive, innovative, and truly student oriented leaders in these very challenging times.” (Gasman, 2013).

In summary, there are several leadership approaches employed by leaders of colleges and universities, including HBCUs. Some of the approaches are transformational, transactional, servant, adaptive, authentic, and even distributed leadership. Although there is not one leadership

type that works best at all institutions, many leaders tend to favor authentic and transformational leadership approaches (Oikelome, 2017). African American women, in particular, tend to describe their leadership style as transformational, servant, or authentic (Bower & Wolverton, 2009; Oikelome, 2017). It has been suggested that because of the unique challenges experienced by HBCUs that leadership may need to follow a more distributed approach that is inclusive of all stakeholders of an institution (Scott & Hines, 2014).

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

The History of Historically Black Colleges and Universities

From the early 1600s to the beginning of the 19th century many people of color received some type of academic instruction ranging from basic to advanced. It was illegal in certain states for African Americans to receive instruction in reading, arithmetic and writing, especially in the South. As a result of the laws, formal education among people of color in the South was practically eliminated by 1860 (Holmes, 1934). Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) became important in the education of African-Americans (Cantey, et al., 2011). Originally called Negro Colleges, HBCUs were once the only institutions of higher education for African American students, particularly in the South (Holmes, 1934).

The first HBCUs were founded before the Civil War in the northern states of Pennsylvania and Ohio (Gasman, 2007). Cheyney University was founded in 1837, Lincoln University was founded in 1854, and Wilberforce University in 1856 (Gasman, 2007). After the Civil War, the Freedman's Bureau, missionary organizations, and northern churches began establishing colleges in the South for African American students (Gasman, 2007). The opening of the first HBCUs was quite an accomplishment. Benjamin E. Mays (1960), stated that "the daring faith of Christian men and women brought into existence the Negro colleges" (p. 245).

Unfortunately, some of the missionary organizations and churches had self-serving and/or racist motives behind their interest in founding the schools (Gasman, 2007). Some of the religious organizations wanted to introduce Christianity to newly freed slaves and to “rid the country of the “menace” of uneducated African Americans” (Gasman, 2007, p. 12 citing Egerton, 1994).

While the motives behind some people in supporting the education of African-Americans may have been questionable, the mere existence of the colleges and universities, provided a great service to African-Americans and to society. Still, the colleges had to overcome numerous challenges and obstacles in the early years. The issues of financing, accreditation, liberal arts versus industrial education, and the quality of education were difficult for the colleges to address (Holmes, 1934; Mays, 1960). Also, although some of the early schools were designated as colleges and universities, basic, elementary education was provided to the former slaves that lacked any formal education. Eventually, most of the Negro Colleges (HBCUs) became fairly organized and provided classical collegiate level education (Holmes, 1934).

After 1917 there were many developments among the HBCUs. First, the Phelps-Stokes fund survey was completed in 1917 and provide a critical view of the Negro Colleges. As a result of the survey, the colleges gained support from General Education Board and other philanthropists to improve the conditions and quality of the colleges. Also, state governments in the South gave attention to the development of land-grant colleges due to the Morrill Act of 1890. The Morrill Act of 1890 required the former Confederate states to either show that race was not a criterion for admission to land grant colleges and universities or to designate a separate institution for persons of color. As a result, several public HBCUs were founded as land grant institutions (Rose, 2017).

In the years following the Phelps-Stokes survey, many of the colleges and universities made dramatic improvements. However, there were still questions as to the quality of the education provided at the Negro colleges. The Survey of 1928 demonstrated significant improvements in the colleges. The quality of education at some of the colleges was deemed on par with traditional, majority institutions. The Negro colleges were no longer elementary and high schools disguised as colleges. College level education was being provided at the institutions (Holmes, 1934).

After the Survey of 1928, some of the schools became accredited. Schools such as Talladega College, Morehouse College, Spelman College, Atlanta University, Fisk University, Wiley College, Hampton Institute, Virginia State College, and Johnson C. Smith were the first Negro colleges to receive class “A” ratings by The Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Class “A” meant the schools were fully accredited and met the standards required by The Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. While initially only one college, Talladega College, met the class “A” standards, the numbers increased over the next few years (Holmes, 1934).

Although very few colleges met the class “A” standards in the early years, many more met the class “B” standards. Class “B” basically meant the colleges were acceptable but did not meet all the required standards. Some of the colleges that were initially classified as class “B” were Xavier University, Tougaloo College, and Knoxville College. With accrediting agencies acknowledging and rating the colleges, the institutions were able to receive some form of validation as to the quality of their institutions (Holmes, 1934).

An Overview of the Current State of HBCUs

Although the beginnings of HBCUs were humble and in many instances the schools were

faced with the task of providing basic, elementary education for newly freed slaves, the institutions have persevered (Gasman, 2007). Today, HBCUs are considered very successful in educating African American students (Montgomery & Montgomery, 2012). While HBCUs have been successful in their goals of educating minority students over the years, currently, many HBCUs are experiencing a multitude of challenges. Whereas some HBCUs are successful and have experienced increases in enrollment and funding in recent years, some HBCUs are struggling. Three issues currently faced by many HBCUs are accreditation, leadership and funding (Cantey, et al., 2011).

Today only around 17% of African American college graduates attend HBCUs in comparison to the middle of the twentieth century when over 90% attended HBCUs (Andrews, et al., 2016, Kim & Conrad, 2006). Although the percentage of African American students attending HBCUs has decreased over the years, African American students at HBCUs are more likely than African American students at Historically White Colleges and Universities (HWCUs) to complete their degree, (Kim & Conrad, 2006). According to the NCES (2017), HBCUs awarded around 49,500 degrees in 2017. HBCUs have had a huge impact on the education of minority students. A large number of minority students attend HBCUs, even though these institutions only represent 3% of all colleges and universities (Jacobs, 2015).

HBCUs continue to survive despite many obstacles and with fewer resources than majority institutions (Cantey, et al., 2011). With the many issues faced by the modern day HBCU, it is important to note that HBCUs are still relevant because they educate a large number of African American students and they contribute significantly to the African American community and provide a zone free of racial discrimination (Bracey, 2017). It has been reported that students choose HBCUs because of the welcoming, supportive environment they find upon

enrolling at these institutions (Kim & Conrad, 2006). Also, students choose HBCUs because HBCUs have always been involved in social movements and have championed equality and social justice (Mobley, 2017).

Leadership at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

With many HBCUs facing significant challenges, there is a need for effective and innovative leadership. Constantly changing environments require leaders who are visionary and collaborative (Oikelome, 2015). Several studies have examined the types of leadership needed today at HBCUs. Freeman and Gasman (2014) stated that HBCU leaders, specifically presidents, should have distinct characteristics. Some of these attributes include: confidence, risk-taking, negotiation skills, organization skills, and the ability to inspire others (Freeman & Gasman, 2014). Gasman and Freeman (2014) referenced how studies have stated that there is a leadership crisis at HBCUs. The leadership issues possibly stem from the recycling of presidents, top-down leadership, the short tenures of some presidents, lack of fundraising and financial management skills.

Another study emphasized the importance of HBCU leaders having the ability to communicate the importance of HBCUs to the public at large (Freeman, Commodore, Gasman, & Carter, 2016). Furthermore, some studies have suggested that a business background or entrepreneurial skills would be beneficial to an HBCU leader (Andrews, et al., 2016; Freeman, et al., 2016). An interesting note from Freeman and Gasman's 2014 study was that HBCU presidents tend to mentor their successors and that men mentored other men and women mentored other women (Freeman & Gasman, 2014).

In a study by Freeman, et al (2016), presidents, search consultants, and board members affiliated with HBCUs were interviewed as to what skills leaders of HBCUs needed in order to

be effective. The study reported that having vision, the ability to communicate with diverse populations, the ability to fundraise, entrepreneurial disposition, negotiation skills, board management, and collaboration were necessary (Freeman, et al, 2016). Some additional skills also reported as being important included being dedicated to service, having respect for HBCU traditions, data driven decision making, an understanding of accreditation, and respect for students (Freeman, et al, 2016).

Andrew's et al (2016) examined what leadership skills were most needed for HBCUs and which factors are most needed in order to facilitate change in the modern day HBCU. For the study, business deans at HBCUs completed questionnaires as to which academic leadership skills were most important to ushering in change at HBCUs. The study revealed "decision making" to be the highest ranked skill followed by vision, communication skills, interpersonal influence, and the ability to team build (Andrew, et al., 2016).

An earlier study by Nichols (2004) also reported on characteristics and leadership styles necessary for managing a HBCU. The article discussed how leadership for HBCUs was in some ways different from leadership of other institutions of higher education. The article reported that HBCU leadership must envision goals, motivate, affirm the values of HBCUs, manage, and provide unity. Presidents and senior leadership of colleges and universities, especially of HBCUs must be equipped to deal with changes that may take place on their campuses, in higher education, and in society. In today's society, HBCUs are particularly susceptible to changes. HBCU presidents and leadership must adjust their leadership styles in order to accommodate any necessary changes (Nichols, 2004).

In brief, HBCUs have always been and continue to be important to the field of higher education. Although HBCUs are no longer the only option for many African Americans, the

institutions still educate large numbers of African Americans and produce many African American professionals. A large number of African American doctors, lawyers, scientists, and teachers were educated at HBCUs (Thurgood Marshall College Fund [TMCF], 2020). Because of the changing landscape of higher education, HBCUs face many challenges that require strong, capable leadership to ensure their survival for the future.

The inclusion of more African American women in senior leadership of colleges and universities, particularly HBCUs will require many institutions to adopt new ways of selecting leaders. Colleges and universities must change to adapt to current student populations, trends in higher education, social justice, and equality. Traditionally, the literature has suggested that institutions of higher education are resistant to change, while being the agents of many of the changes in society (Clark, 1983). Change, in reference to organizations, refers to the alteration of behaviors and processes within the organization (Zaltman & Duncan, 1977). Changes can be transformational, resulting in dramatic transformations, or incremental, which involves the implementation of more gradual modifications to an organization (Bess & Dee, 2012). Change is sometimes difficult due to lack of integrity of leaders or lack of efficiency (Bakari, Hunjra, & Niazi, 2017).

Women in Higher Education Leadership

As the number of women students attending and graduating from colleges and universities has increased, the percentage of women in higher education leadership has also increased significantly since the 1980's (Altbach, et al., 2011). The percentage of women leaders, however, is not reflective of the percentage of women students at colleges and universities. There is a disparity between the percentage of women leaders and the percentage of women students. It is interesting that women can make up in some instances the majority of

students on many college campuses but there are few or no women in leadership or administration (NCES, 2018; United States Census Bureau, 2018). The issues concerning gender bias and discrimination in the workplace, including higher education, have been documented. Even with the current climate being an improvement from decades past, women, however, are still experiencing inequalities, especially in positions of leadership.

Women first began to hold leadership positions in higher education at Women's colleges. These colleges exclusively educated women and had some women faculty members and administrative leaders (Parker, 2015). As women began to be admitted to institutions that had traditionally excluded women from their student populations, there was a need for supervision of the women students. The first leadership positions held by women at colleges and universities that served both men and women were the Deans of Women (Parker, 2015).

The Underrepresentation of Women in Positions of College and University Leadership

Women make up approximately 50% of the United States population and obtain more than 50% of the college degrees (NCES, 2018; United States Census Bureau, 2018). Despite the impressive accomplishments of women in degree attainment, in 2016, women were reported to account for only about 30% of college and university presidents (American Council on Education, 2018). Overall, the majority of college presidents are White men (American Council on Education, 2018). Having more women in leadership positions, including the position of president, not only benefits society by broadening the pool of potential leaders but also by providing more diversity in perspective, ideas, and opinions that contribute to the success of an organization and by providing role models for the large number of women students at colleges and universities.

White males have primarily been viewed as leaders and serve as the leaders of most organizations, including institutions of higher education in the United States (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016). Diehl & Dzubinski (2016), reported that there are two schools of thoughts in relation to why women are underrepresented in positions of leadership. One is that there are fewer women in positions of leadership because there are fewer women that desire leadership positions or are qualified (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016). The other school of thought is that more women are not in leadership roles because they face challenges concerning gender, race, familial roles, etc. (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016). Parker (2015) stated that for women,

other duties and tasks take precedence over a career, and many women may spend time raising children or supporting a husband who is pursuing education or his way up the professional ladder. Women's responsibilities in childbearing and domestic duties can infringe on or delay the pursuit of a career. (p.5)

The counter argument to these points is that women do want to be in senior leadership and are qualified, but must overcome more challenges than men (Hannum, Muhly, Shockley-Zalabak, & White, 2015). Sometimes women are not thought of as possessing leadership characteristics. Because of these generalizations, women have to overcome prejudices against them as women leaders.

Since women are less commonly thought of as leaders than men, there is a bias against women as leaders (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). Eagly (2005) stated that people doubt that women are competent enough to serve as leaders and that there is resentment toward upsetting the traditional relational roles of the different sexes. Also, it has been stated that women have difficulties adapting to male-dominated organizations because in order to be successful they often have to exhibit male attitudes and characteristics (Carli & Eagly, 2001). Preconceived notions and stereotypes of women create barriers for achieving senior leadership positions (Davis & Maldonado, 2015; Heilman, 2001). Male leaders are often thought of as being assertive,

strategic, and domineering while female leaders are thought of as being more nurturing and compassionate (Davis & Maldonado, 2015; Fisher & Koch, 2001).

Studies have shown that women have been victims of exclusion, marginalization, and devaluation (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016; Hannum, et al., 2015). It has also been reported that women not seeing others of the same gender in leadership roles has a negative effect on the attainment and persistence in leadership (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016). Also, women tend to have fewer mentors and colleagues that are women in leadership positions. Without role models or mentors, women are less likely to ascend to positions of leadership. If women do not receive leadership opportunities early on they tend to not have the necessary leadership experience and qualifications necessary to move to higher level positions. Women also tend to have more responsibilities and heavier workloads on their jobs, while still being heavily responsible for household and parental responsibilities at home. A substantially lower number of women in leadership than men are married and have children (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016).

Mentorship for women who aspire to the college or university president has been shown to be important to career development and ascension (Moore-Brown, 2005). In Moore-Brown's 2006 study on mentorship and female college and university presidents, of the 91 participants, 20.9% reported that their mentors were instrumental in their preparation and consideration of becoming president. Also, 72.5% of the 91 participants stated that they had attended some type of professional development aimed at preparing them to be president of a college or university. About 51% of the participants had a mentor who provided some form of assistance in their careers and about half of the mentors were or had been college or university presidents. As for obtaining mentors, 71.4% stated that their mentors approached them as to being their mentor and 28.6% stated that they had approached their mentors. The study concluded that mentorship

played an important role in women ascending to the position of college or university president (Moore-Brown, 2005).

In summary, the numbers of women in higher education leadership have increased significantly over the years. Although there are more women leaders of colleges and universities than ever, the numbers of women are still lower than the numbers of male leaders. Studies have suggested several reasons for the disparity including, gender biases and discrimination and familial obligations (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016; Davis & Maldonado, 2015). With approximately 50% of college students being women, colleges and universities can benefit from having more women in positions of leadership. Not only can women leaders provide different perspective, ideas, and opinions but they can also provide role models for the large number of women students enrolled at colleges and universities today.

African American Women in Higher Education Leadership

Over the years, some African American women have achieved presidencies and other senior leadership positions, specifically at institutions of higher education. There are several characteristics attributed to African American women college and university presidents and senior administrators. Older studies have stated that African American women leaders have been characterized as being more caring, democratic, and responsive (Fisher & Koch, 1996). And that African American women leaders tend to have a more compassionate and team-oriented style of leadership (Wilson, 1998). It has been documented that African American women presidents tend to be older than their male counterparts when they first achieve college and university presidencies or senior leadership positions (Gasman, 2013; Wilson, 1998). Most of the African American women presidents and senior administrators serve or have served at HBCUs (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). Bower and Wolverton (2009) identified six C's of leaderships based upon

interview with seven African American women in higher education leadership. The six C's included: caring, confidence, competence, communication, credibility, and calling (Bower & Wolverton, 2009).

The Historical Role of African American Women in Higher Education Leadership

There have been several milestones achieved by African American women in terms of higher education leadership. Elizabeth Evelyn Wright was only 23 years old when she founded the school that would eventually become Voorhees College, a four-year, private HBCU in Denmark, South Carolina. During the building of the school, she had to endure threats and arson. Her perseverance led to the school becoming Voorhees School and Junior College in 1947. In 1962 Voorhees School and Junior College was accredited as four-year Voorhees College (Voorhees College, 2019).

Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune was the first African American woman to serve as a president of a college or university. She was the founder of the Daytona Literary and Industrial Training School for Negro Girls which later merged with the Cookman Institute and eventually became known as Bethune-Cookman College. The college was accredited in 1931 as a junior college. Bethune-Cookman University is currently an accredited private HBCU in Daytona Beach, Florida (Bethune-Cookman, 2018).

Another leadership milestone among African American women was achieved by Dr. Willa B. Player when she became the first African American women president of an accredited, four-year institution when she became president of Bennett College (Gasman, 2011). Before becoming president of Bennett, Dr. Player served as vice-president. Dr. Willa Player has been noted by historians as a supporter of the civil rights movement during a time when most other presidents did not want to become involved and were opposed to their students participating. Dr.

Player believed in the civil rights movement and was an active participant in the movement (Gasman, 2011).

Additional milestones among African American women in higher education leadership were achieved by Dr. Ruth Simmons. In 1995, Dr. Ruth Simmons became the first African American women to lead Smith College, the largest women's college in the United States. Prior to leading Smith College, Dr. Simmons served as Assistant provost of Princeton University and as provost of Spelman College. After leaving Smith College, Dr. Simmons became the first African American woman to lead an Ivy League institution when she became president of Brown University in 2001. She is currently president of historically Black Prairie View A&M University (Prairie View A&M University, 2018).

The Underrepresentation of African American Women as College and University Presidents and Vice-Presidents

African American men and women represent a relatively low number of college and university presidents and vice-presidents. According to the American Council on Education (2018), approximately 8% of college and university presidents are African American men and women. For many years, due to racism, the only option in higher education for many African American men and women were HBCUs and even at HBCUs women often encountered sexism in being limited to studies traditionally linked to women, such as teaching and home economics (Benjamin, 1997). In the early years of HBCUs, women were often not included in roles of authority or leadership (Davis & Maldonado, 2015).

African American women are more underrepresented than African American men in higher education positions of senior leadership. African American women account for only about 2.7% of college and university presidents (American Council on Education, 2018). Even though

African American women have made some strides towards obtaining positions of leadership at HBCUs, there are still significant disparities in the number of African American women presidents in comparison to African American men at HBCUs. (American Council on Education, 2018, Davis & Maldonado, 2015).

The issues related to African American women attaining and remaining in the college and university presidencies differ somewhat from those faced by White women and African American men. The intersectionality of being a woman and being African American, places the African American woman in a unique situation (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). African American women are faced with both gender and racial discrimination. The experiences of African American women are often included with discussions on all women. The influence of gender in leadership attainment and persistence has been studied. Additionally, the influence of race in leadership attainment has also been studied. However, African American women and the intersectionality of both race and gender create a different type of discrimination that must be studied further in relation to African American women achieving and remaining in leadership positions (Davis & Maldonado, 2015).

In Oikelome's 2017 study on women college presidents perceived impact of identity structure on their careers, 13 participants were interviewed. The findings of the study revealed that although the participants had experienced some form of bias or discrimination, they felt that their competence in performing their jobs carried more weight in their career successes. Oikelome's study also identified other themes based upon the interviews with the 13 Black and White women college presidents. Other themes included challenges to the presidents' progression to senior leadership and how the presidents were able to progress in leadership positions in organizations (Oikelome, 2017).

According to Oikelome (2017), some of challenges faced by the presidents related to identity and organizational structure. All of the presidents in Oikelome's study reported experiencing some degree of gender bias at some point in their careers. Gender bias affected the time it took for the presidents to progress in their career and affected them emotionally. In addition to gender bias, all of the African American presidents reported experiencing racial bias. African American women reported feelings of marginalization, lack of support, exclusion from internal networks while faculty members. Even with feelings of racial discrimination, about half of the African American women identified as being women first then as Black (Oikelome, 2017).

In relation to attainment of their presidencies, participation in leadership development helped the presidents in their progression. Nine out of the 13 presidents in Oikelome's (2017) study participated in some type of formal leadership development program. Also, the women presidents were encouraged to take on additional opportunities in unfamiliar areas of their institutions and to actively seek opportunities. Institutional fit was also noted as being important. The women presidents described institutional fit as being strategic about their careers. They noted that lack of mentorship or sponsorship, lack of exposure to various areas and opportunities to acquire skills, and the tendency of governing boards to choose candidates that look and act like them.

Having diversity in positions of leadership benefits society. Since women make-up approximately half of the world population, by considering women for leadership, the applicant pool for these positions is broadened (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016). The benefits of having more people of color in leadership are expansion of ideas, backgrounds, and creativity. People of color or people of diverse backgrounds bring different perspectives to an organization (Davis &

Maldonado, 2015). The convergence of both gender and race, as seen in an African American woman, expands the diversity of ideas and backgrounds within an organization.

Research related to African American women college and university leaders is limited in part due to the low numbers in president and vice-president positions. Several factors have contributed to the low numbers of African American women in these leadership positions including “the old boy network,” wage gaps, and racial and gender prejudices (Wilson, 1998). Despite gains in achievement of senior leadership positions by African American women, studies have reported that gender and race do play a role in the selection process for college presidents as well as other executive leadership positions (Fisher & Koch, 1996).

Some of the reasons for the lower numbers of African American women higher education presidencies are similar to the lower numbers of women of color in the executive leadership positions in other fields (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). Carli and Eagly in a 2001 study identified discrimination, lack of education and background, unsupportive environments, and lack of access to informal networks as reasons why women of color do not achieve leadership positions.

Gasman and Abiola (2015) documented how in 2012 when the president of the University of Pennsylvania was questioned as to why the institution lacks diversity among the senior administration; she replied that there was a lack of qualified individuals to fill the positions. Gasman and Abiola (2015) argue that “qualified” has less to do with education and skills but refers more so to “fit and comfort” at a particular institution.

Most of the advances to the presidency and senior leadership at colleges and universities by African American women have occurred at HBCUs. Freeman and Gasman (2014) noted that oftentimes research does not report on the numbers of African Americans that assume senior leadership positions and HBCU presidents are not included in larger research studies because it

is believed that including the number of leaders at HBCUs skews the overall data. At White institutions, racial stereotypes such as inferior intelligence and being affirmative action hires, result in discrimination in promotion (Dade, et al, 2015). African American women have consistently reported that racism is a greater barrier than sexism (Davis & Maldonado, 2015 citing Parker & Ogilvie, 1996).

The way different African American women respond to racial or gender discrimination is unique to the individual (Dade, et al., 2015). In Dade et al.'s (2015) study, the women authors/participants reported responding differently when being presented with discriminatory practices or actions. The four authors/participants served on the faculty of a majority university (Dade, et al., 2015). Of the four authors/participants, one remained at the institution to retirement, one left immediately upon being subject to discrimination for another university, and the other two remained for tenure at the university after being subjected to the discriminatory practices. Of the study participants that remained, the African American women decided to proactive in their responses to a racially discriminatory environment. The women sought out mentors that were culturally aware on campus and acquired mentors outside of the campus. Also, the participants also refused to accept token positions or placements (Dade, et al., 2015).

Dade et al.'s (2015) study was of interest because examining how African American women respond to discriminatory practices is important to understanding why some African American leave institutions. Also, while this study did not focus on presidents or senior administrators, by studying faculty members (the pipeline for presidents and senior leaders), a better understanding of why faculty members stay or leave an institution and how they respond to discriminatory practice can be analyzed. Faculty members are usually the pool from which many presidents and senior administrators are selected at colleges and universities. However, if

faculty members experience racial or gender discrimination, they may leave a particular institution. If the number of African American women faculty members is low, the chances of African American women being selected for senior leadership positions is also diminished.

Another major reason for the lower numbers of African American women presidents are glass ceilings. Glass ceilings are invisible barriers that prevent women from moving up in their careers (Davis, 2009). Covert and overt discrimination in relation to gender and race keep women from achieving leadership positions (Davis, 2009). Glass ceilings can be “costly to an organization not only in terms of lost productivity among women of color who feel stymied in the careers, but also in terms of turnover costs and annual salaries” (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1990).

Factors that Contribute to the Attainment and Retention of African American Women as College and University Presidents, Provosts, and Vice-Presidents

Many believe that there are several factors that contribute to African American women obtain presidencies and senior administration positions at college and universities. Several studies have suggested that some of the factors that contribute to African American women attaining their leadership positions include: education, work experience, family and institutional support, mentorship, equality, competence, and leadership skills (Jackson & Harris, 2005; Davis, 2009; Oikelome, 2017). Oikelome (2017) stated that mentorship, seizing opportunities, leadership development, and understanding institutional fit are important for African American women attempting to attain senior leadership positions.

Women are in many instances expected to be “considerate, cooperative, and accommodative” while men are usually expected to be more “structured, competitive, and authoritative (Davis, 2009). Female stereotypes influence how and if women are considered for certain leadership positions (Davis, 2009). African American women in addition to having to

deal with gender stereotypes and inequities, also have deal with racial inequality. Davis (2009) states, that sometimes African American woman feel that they have to prove themselves because they are many times considered as affirmative action tokens. Although African American women continue to be plagued by both racial and gender bias, studies have shown that they are not deterred from aspiring to their goals of attaining senior leadership positions (Davis & Maldonado, 2015; Oikelome, 2017).

In Waring's 2003 study on African American female college presidents and their self-conception of leadership, 12 presidents were interviewed. The presidents discussed what influenced their conceptions on leadership and what they believed contributed to their success. The study found that African American female leaders tend to be focused on relationship building in terms of being an effective leader (Waring, 2003). It has been documented that African American women presidents tend to be older than their male counterparts when they first achieve college and university presidencies or senior leadership positions (Wilson, 1998; Gasman, 2013). Most of the African American women presidents and senior administrators serve or have served at HBCUs (Davis & Maldonado, 2015).

In Jackson and Harris' 2005 study, 43 African-American female college and university presidents of HBCU and PWI two and four year institutions were surveyed. The presidents were surveyed as to what education and career experiences contributed to their ascension to the presidency. The results of the survey revealed that the average age of the presidents are 58 or older, were married, had doctorate degrees in education, were presidents at junior colleges, and had previously held the position of provost/chief academic officer or some other senior leadership position in education (Jackson & Harris, 2005).

In another study by Jackson and Harris (2007), African American female presidents were surveyed as to what they perceived as barriers to achieving the presidency. Some of the top barriers reported were exclusion from informal networks, career development, lack of management experience, and other barriers such as lack of a doctorate, lack of a mentor, and lack of access to multiple levels of management related to professional goals. The presidents were also surveyed as to their experiences in dealing with glass ceilings. Most of the presidents reported that female stereotyping and preconceptions of women as the experiences that they most encountered in relation to glass ceilings. Also, the presidents were asked what strategies they perceived as most important to them becoming president. The presidents listed exceeding job expectations, holding positions of visibility, and leadership skills outside of education as the three top strategies (Jackson & Harris, 2007).

Other factors have also been reported to contribute to career ascension. The perception of competence cannot be overstated in the attainment of senior leadership positions. Competence has also been documented as being one of the foremost reasons behind position attainment. Even when face with racial and gender bias, competence in some instances outweighed the presence of inequalities. Family and institutional support are also important factors in position attainment. In Davis and Maldonado (2015) study, the women interviewed stated that family support and guidance was extremely important and had influenced their careers. Those same women leaders expressed that their childhood had played a role in the development of qualities such as, integrity, confidence, and resilience (Davis & Maldonado, 2015).

Leadership styles also play a role in how African American women are able to attain and persist in leadership positions. Women that are too assertive or too masculine in their leadership style tend to be viewed as not likable or not as great leaders. And women that are too kind or

compassionate are not viewed favorably as leaders either. Basically African American women, and women in general, have a difficult time being their authentic selves and obtaining positions of leadership.

Bartman (2015) discussed some issues faced by African American women in higher education. In addition, strategies that may be employed to overcome the challenges encountered by African American women were also discussed. Some of the challenges stated by Bartman included, multiple marginalized identities, gender gaps, lack of critical mass, and lack of African American women faculty members. Some of the recommendations for addressing these issues include black sororities, mentorship, and contextual counseling (Bartman, 2015).

African American women also face obstacles that intersect between race and gender. While African American women that work at HBCU's may not have issues related to race since the majority of the administration at most HBCU's are African American also, African American women at PWI's have to sometimes deal with issues related to gender as well as race. Bates (2007) stated that in order to increase the numbers of African American women presidents that there must be a focus on professional development, high academic accountability and administrative skills.

African American women while falling into the same groups in relation to race and gender, most likely will not all have the same experiences. Some African American women may have had their careers overtly impacted by racial or gender discrimination and some women may not feel that their careers have been affected at all. However, the way different African American women respond to racial or gender discrimination is unique to the individual. In Dade et al.'s (2015) study, the women authors/participants reported responding differently when being presented with discriminatory practices or actions.

Mentorship

Leadership ascension has been linked to mentorship and networking. Studies have shown that networking is an effective method of breaking through glass ceilings (Gamble & Turner, 2015). Many African American women leaders have attributed their success to mentorship (Gamble & Turner, 2015). Mentoring has been recognized as being important to the careers of African American women. Davis (2009) referenced a study by Bova (2000) that stated that a lack of a mentor can be a barrier for African American women's success.

Mentors are considered essential in providing encouragement, advice, insight, guidance, and sponsorship. Presidents were mentored by both men and women. African American women were mentored by men, more so by White men. Diversity of mentorship increased visibility and access to resources but also enhanced psychosocial, career, and personal development needs. Having benefitted from mentoring, each president reported actively mentoring others (Oikelome, 2017). Not only is mentoring linked to position attainment in all demographics but has also been noted as a means of retaining employees (Davis, 2009). Mentorship and sponsorship provide connections to career opportunities and may offer counsel, assistance, or cover when difficulties arise. Interestingly, many African American women had mentors or sponsors who were White males (Davis & Maldonado, 2015).

In reviewing literature on mentorship for African American women, several barriers to mentorship were revealed. Davis (2009) stated that glass ceilings, sociopolitical factors such as race and gender, dualism of race and gender, and absence of a mentor were barriers to effective mentorship. However, in the same study, it was also reported that there were several benefits to mentorship. Those benefits included leadership development, empowerment of the mentee, support, encouragement and advice (Davis, 2009).

Summarily, African American women leaders are underrepresented at colleges and universities (American Council on Education. (2018). Even though the numbers are African American women leaders are higher at HBCUs than at PWIs, the number of African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents is lower than the number of African American male presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents at HBCUs, even with a majority of HBCU students being female. African American women have to overcome possible racial and gender discrimination, or the intersection of both. Mentorship is one way African American women have been able to ascend to leadership positions. Mentors provide support, advice, and sponsorship for African American women in their career ambitions (Davis & Maldonado, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

This study examines the perceptions of African American women leaders at four-year, private HBCUs as to how they were able to attain and retain senior leadership positions and how they believe race and gender have affected their careers. Because of the racial and gender aspects associated with this study, the theoretical framework of Black Feminist Theory and intersectionality was selected. Black Feminist Theory and intersectionality was chosen as a framework for this study due to how it is used to understand how race and gender intersect and shape African American women experiences and perspectives. Issues experienced by African American women can be compounded due to belonging to two marginalized groups.

Black Feminist Theory and Intersectionality

Some African American women have had to deal with racial inequality and oppression based upon gender, sexual orientation, religion, etc. Black Feminist Theory (Black Feminist Thought) and intersectionality intertwine in terms of describing the perspectives of African American women. Black Feminist Theory is a framework that describes the unique position of African American women separate from White women or African American men (Collins, 2000;

Johnson, 2015). Black Feminist Theory developed as a result of the experiences of African American or Black women not being respected by the feminist or civil rights movements Collins, 2000; Johnson, 2015) “Many Black women did not feel valued in either group. Within the feminist movement, White women had internalized the racist beliefs of White males and discriminated against Black women. Similarly, the leadership of Black women active in the civil rights movement was overlooked, suppressed, and tested. Black women were viewed as inferior to men and subjected to trivial roles” (Johnson, 2015, p.231). Black Feminist Theory has been utilized as a theoretical framework for research conducted on or for African American women (Johnson, 2015).

Crenshaw (1989) explained how the term “intersectionality” is used to describe how for African American women, racism and sexism combine and intersect and how the cumulative effect is greater than racism or sexism alone. Intersectionality, as it relates to African American women, is most commonly experienced when race and gender intersect (Crenshaw, 1991) however the term has been broadened to include other classifications. African American women are usually represented in at least two marginalized groups, women and African Americans. African American women experience increased levels of stress due to the problems associated with the intersection of race and gender Not only do they sometimes feel marginalized and discriminated against due to their gender, but they also sometimes experience racism on college and university campuses (Shahid, Evans, & Cardemil, 2017).

Intersectionality as a theoretical framework describes the experiences of many African American women professionals (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). According to Alexander-Floyd (2012), intersectionality is both an ideograph and idea. As an ideograph, intersectionality serves as a catch-all word that stands in for the broad body of scholarship that has sought to examine

and redress the oppressive forces that have constrained the lives of black women in particular and women of color more generally. As an idea or an analytically distinct concept, intersectionality is a moniker, identified with Crenshaw (1989), meant to describe the "intersecting" or co-determinative forces of racism, sexism, and classism in the lives of black women. (Alexander-Floyd, 2012, p. 4)

By analyzing the experiences of African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents through the lens of intersectionality, a better understanding of what problems persist in regards to race and gender can be achieved (Walkington, 2017). In Davis & Maldonado's (2015) study on the leadership development of African American women in higher education the results of the study supported the notion that both race and gender affect their careers in higher education. The documented experiences of several African American women have been described as facing "double barriers" (Davis & Maldonado, 2015).

The number of women in presidencies and senior leadership positions at colleges and universities has increased significantly over the past 30 years (Oikelome, 2017). However, the number of African American women in these positions make up a relatively small percentage of the approximately 30% of women in these positions (Oikelome, 2017). Both White and African-American women report that they experience discrimination based upon their gender (Oikelome, 2017). However White women tend to be the recipients of more efforts towards equality than African American women (Oikelome, 2017). By understanding how the intersectionality of how race and gender impact the careers of African American women, institutions and future leaders may benefit from efforts to improve equality.

Gap in the Literature

There have been limited qualitative studies that examine the reasons why African American women attain and remain in the positions of president, provost, and vice-president at

four-year, private HBCUs and whether race and gender have affected their career ascension and retention. Several studies have examined why and how African American women attain their positions or the obstacles to attaining leadership positions but do not examine the phenomenon of why some African American women are not able to remain in these positions. With the turnover rate of African American women in senior leadership at HBCUs in recent years, it is important to understand what factors may be affecting the attainment and retention of African American women leaders at HBCUs.

Summary

In conclusion, this literature review examined several themes including: leadership approaches of African American women, the underrepresentation of African American women as college and university presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents; Black Feminist Theory and intersectionality; and factors that contribute to position attainment. Some challenges that African American women face are discrimination, lack education and background, unsupportive environments, and lack of access to informal networks (Carli & Eagly, 2001). Mentorship, seizing opportunities, leadership development, and understanding institutional fit contribute to African American women attain positions of leadership at colleges and universities (Oikelome, 2017).

Black Feminist Theory and intersectionality play a role in both position attainment and retention. Black Feminist Theory describes the unique position of African American women separate from White women or African American men (Johnson, 2015). Intersectionality is when different forms of discrimination combine, overlap, or intersect (Crenshaw, 1989). Black Feminist Theory and intersectionality were the framework upon which this study was analyzed

due to this study examining the experiences of African American women. African American women are many times discriminated against based on their gender and/or race.

In the next chapter, the research methodology will be discussed. Chapter three will include a detailed discussion of the qualitative research design and why a qualitative design was chosen for this study. A discussion on how data will be collected will be presented. Also how the data will be analyzed will also be discussed. The primary method of data collection will be semi-structured interviews and the interviews will be transcribed and analyzed by hand and using NVivo 12 software.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study examined African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents of four-year, private HBCUs and their perceptions on attaining and retaining positions of senior leadership and if and how race and gender have played a role in their career attainment and retention. Understanding how and why African American women are able to attain and remain in senior leadership positions and the roles that both gender and race play in the experiences of African American women leaders is important to further promoting racial and gender equality at four-year, private HBCUs. Additionally, increasing the numbers of African American women HBCU presidents and vice-presidents can contribute to the diversity of ideas and perspectives and provide role models for African-American students, faculty, and the community. This methodology chapter will cover the qualitative research design of the study, the research questions, the study population and sample, data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations, validity, reliability, and researcher positionality.

Qualitative Research Design

A qualitative research design was used for this study in order to gain insight into how and why African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents were able to attain and remain in senior leadership positions. Further, by studying the experiences and perceptions of several current or former African American women HBCU presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents, a better understanding of whether race and gender played a role in their career

attainment and retention was gained. This qualitative study also provided suggestions on how colleges and universities can attract and retain African American women in leadership positions and how African American women can attain and remain in senior leadership.

According to Creswell (2013), a qualitative study is one in which a researcher analyses words or pictures to discuss a phenomenon. Data for this study was in the form of words collected from interviews and biographical documentation. Words instead of numbers are best used to describe experiences and feeling and perceptions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The words, ideas, and opinions of the HBCU presidents and vice-presidents were better analyzed through a qualitative study. Qualitative research explores people's experiences and how they interpret or derive meaning from those experiences. Most researchers have identified four main characteristics to describe or understand qualitative research. The four characteristics include: "the focus is on process, understanding, and meaning; the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis; the process is inductive; and the product is richly descriptive" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 15).

Qualitative studies focus on understanding how people interpret their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This study focused on how HBCU African-American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents explain and understand how race and gender have affected their careers. In this study, as with all qualitative studies, the researcher was the primary instrument of data collection. The researcher selected the participant sample, drafted the interview questions, conducted the interviews, interpreted and analyzed the data collected in the interviews, and reported the data and findings. The process was inductive in order to collect data that was arranged into themes Those themes provided the basis to form a concept or theory. The

product was richly descriptive meaning that the words of the interviewees and documents provided details as to context, the interviewees, and the experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Research Questions

The following research questions drove this study:

1. How do African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents believe they were able to attain their leadership positions at four-year, private HBCUs?
2. What factors/characteristics do African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents believe contribute to them remaining in their positions of leadership?
3. How do African American women presidents, provosts and vice-presidents of four-year, private HBCUs believe race and gender have affected their careers overall?
4. How do African American women presidents, provosts and vice-presidents of four-year, private HBCUs believe private HBCUs can attract and retain African American women in positions of senior leadership?

Study Population and Sample

The data for this study was collected from a population of four-year, private HBCU, former and current, African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents. There are currently about 101 HBCUs recognized by the United States Department of Education since the 2018 closure of Concordia College, of which 51 are public institutions and 50 are private institutions (NCES, 2018, The Hundred-Seven, 2020). For this study, only presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents at four-year, private HBCUs were interviewed. A population of 38 African American women who met the criteria for this study were identified and contacted for participation in this study. Of the 38 women contacted, nine former and current African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents of four-year, private HBCUs agreed

to participate in the study. Seven four-year, private HBCUs were represented by the nine participants in the study. The participants represented the following positions: President, Provost, Vice-President of Academic Affairs, Vice-President of Institutional Advancement; Vice-President of Research, and Vice-President of Financial Affairs.

For this study, a non-probabilistic sampling strategy was used. Non-probabilistic sampling is when the samples are selected for a specific purpose and based upon certain criteria. Non-probabilistic instead of probabilistic sampling was used because probabilistic sampling makes generalizations based upon the sample selected. Purposeful sampling, which is a form of non-probabilistic sampling, was used. Purposeful sampling was applied because the goal of this study is not to make generalizations but to learn from each participant in the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The goal of this study was not to have the participants represent an average of the population from which the participants were selected but to learn from and understand the perspectives of the participants.

There are several types of purposeful sampling including, typical, unique, maximum variation, convenience, and snowball. Typical sampling refers to selecting participants that represent the average person. Unique sampling refers to participants selected because of unique qualities or characteristics. Maximum variation sampling refers to identifying participants that exhibit wide variation in characteristics. Convenience sampling refers to a sample selected due to convenience of time, location, availability, etc. And snowball sampling refers to selection of additional participants based upon referrals from the initial sample (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Of the types of purposeful sampling, unique sampling was used in this study. The characteristics of being an African-American woman president, provost, or vice-president of a HBCU are unique among HBCU presidents. In addition to unique sampling, some degree of

convenience sampling was also used. Factors such as availability and location provided barriers to participation in this study. As a result, the sample consisted of individuals who were available and able to participate in the study.

For this study, the number of participants in the sample was based in part on the number of African American women HBCU presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents available for the study, and/or when the information being gathered became redundant. In purposeful sampling the sample is considered to be sufficient when there is redundancy (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The study participants had no specifications as to the length of time in president, provost, or vice-president positions, the length of time working at an HBCU, or how many different positions the participants had worked in higher education. The sample participants were selected based upon recommendations from professional contacts and from current and former presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents that were accessible.

Data Collection

This study collected data through interviews and biographical document analysis. Semi-structured one-on-one interviews with former and current African American women four-year, private HBCU presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents and biographical documentation were the primary sources of data for this study. The interviews provided an in-depth view of the former and current HBCU administrators' experiences and how they attained their senior leadership positions and whether race and gender played a role in their career ascension. Also, if and how the former and current presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents were able to remain in their leadership positions were explored and whether race and gender played a role in them being able to remain in their positions.

Interviews

The primary source of data collection in this study was through semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews have specific characteristics. These types of interviews contain a combination of structured and less structured questions. Also semi-structured interviews are more flexible than highly structured interviews and the questions are not necessarily in a predetermined order. Specific information is sought from all sample participants and the majority of the interview is based upon a set of questions, issues and topics (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The majority of interview questions were open-ended (*See Appendix D: Interview Protocol*). The interviews included a combination of hypothetical, devil's advocate, ideal position, and interpretive questions. A variety of question types helped to provide a better understanding of the participants' perspectives and more data in relation to answering the research questions of this study. Hypothetical questions are used to gain information on how a participant may respond or act in a particular situation. Devil's advocate questions are used to solicit opinions on controversial topics. Ideal position questions are used to collect information and the opinions of the participants. And Interpretive questions provide an opportunity for clarity by the interviewer on the interviewees' responses to interview questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The interviews were conducted in person, via telephone, and one interview via Skype. Due to the participants being located in various states, it was more convenient for some of the interviews to be conducted via telephone and Skype. Before the start of the interview the participants were asked to review and sign an informed consent form. The in person interviews were conducted in the offices of the participants. Eight out of the nine participants granted

permission for the interviews to be audio recorded. Appendix D: Interview Protocol outlined the questions asked during the interviews. After the interviews, the audio recordings were transcribed and reviewed for accuracy. The transcriptions were then coded and analyzed.

Biographical Documents

In addition to interviews, some biographical documents were also obtained. Documents refer to a “wide range of written, visual, digital, and physical materials relevant to a study” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p 162). The following types of biographical documents were reviewed for this study: public records, institutional websites and curriculum vitae. The biographical documents were used to enhance the description of the participants. The biographical documents provided the participants educational and work backgrounds. The biographical documents also provided information related to their leadership styles and their goals and ambitions.

Data Analysis

The data collected for this study was in the form of interview transcripts and biographical documentation. The data were analyzed using the 3-cycle approach. Data were first prepared and organized. Second the data were coded in order to organize the data into themes for classification and interpretation. Third, the data were represented on graphs, tables and through discussion in this dissertation document (Creswell, 2013). This study involved a qualitative analysis process. “The qualitative analysis process is an inductive process in which dimensions emerge from the data without ascertaining what they are in advance” (Henning & Roberts, 2016, citing Patton, 2015, p.159).

This qualitative study lends itself to different interpretations of the data depending on the researcher or person interpreting the data (Creswell, 2012). The interpretation of the data made

by the researcher may be different than someone with a different background and perspective. Creswell stated that “the interpretation that you make of a transcript, for example, differs from the interpretation that someone else makes. This does not mean that your interpretation is better or more accurate; it simply means that you bring your own perspective to your interpretation” (2012, p. 238).

The analysis process began once the interviews were performed and the biographical documentation was collected. After the interviews were performed, the recordings of the interviews were transcribed. The interview transcriptions were then coded in order to organize the data into themes for classification and interpretation (Creswell, 2012). Codes used for analyzing the data included key terms from previous studies conducted in relation to African American women in higher education (Davis & Maldonado, 2015; Jackson & Harris, 2007; Oikelome, 2017; Parker, 2005). Some of the codes included: attainment, retention, intersectionality, race, gender, leadership, etc. The data were then represented on figures and tables detailing the themes and sub-themes and through the discussion in this document. The coding process “is to make sense out of text data, divide it into text or image segments, label the segments with codes, examine codes for overlap and redundancy, and collapse these codes into broad themes” (Creswell, 2012, p. 243).

The transcribed data were coded by hand and using the computer program NVivo 12. Both methods were used for different reasons. The researcher chose to code the data by hand in order to have a more personal connection with the data and ultimately provide a better analysis. Due to the volume of the data, computer programming was necessary for a quicker and more efficient transcription, storage, organization, assignment of codes, searching of the data, and the location of specific words or phrases (Creswell, 2012). After the data were coded, the data were

analyzed in order to answer the research questions. Analyzing the data to answer the research question involves developing descriptions and themes. “Describing and developing themes from the data consists of answering the major research questions and forming an in-depth understanding of the central phenomenon through description and thematic development.” (Creswell, 2012 p. 247)

After describing and developing themes, the data were then interpreted. Interpretation included the following:

- A review of the major findings and how the research questions were answered
- Personal reflections of the researcher about the meaning of the data
- Personal views compared or contrasted with the literature
- Limitations of the study
- Suggestions for future research. (Creswell, 2012, p. 257)

All of the points listed above were applied in order to interpret the data.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of Black Feminist Theory and intersectionality provided the framing around which this study was analyzed. Black Feminist Theory and intersectionality has been utilized as a theoretical framework for research conducted on or for African American women (Johnson, 2015). Theoretical frameworks are defined as underlying theories or concepts that provide the structure or frame of a study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In examining the perceptions of African-American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents at four-year, private HBCUs on how they were able to attain and remain in their positions and whether race and gender impacted their careers, Black Feminist Theory and intersectionality provided the framework for analyzing the perspectives of African American women involved in this study.

Black feminist theory is a framework that describes the unique position of African American women separate from White women or African American men (Collins, 2000;

Johnson, 2015). Intersectionality describes how for African American women, racism and sexism combine and intersect and how the cumulative effect is greater than racism or sexism alone (Crenshaw, 1989). Black Feminist Theory and intersectionality are appropriate frameworks through which to examine the roles of race and gender on the careers of African American women presidents and vice-presidents. The intersection of race and gender for African American women in many instances distinguishes their experiences from those of other groups (Crenshaw, 1991). African American women are sometimes marginalized in relation to their race, their gender, and due to the combination of being both African American and women. By studying the experiences of the presidents and vice-presidents, a better understanding of how the intersection of both race and gender can affect the career of an African American women in higher education leadership can be gained. In addition, by understanding how race and gender may impact African American women leaders, equality can be further promoted on HBCU campuses.

Ethical Considerations

All interviews began with reviewing an interview consent form which included a confidentiality statement and an “opt-out” clause. The opt-out clause allowed the participants to not answer any questions they felt uncomfortable answering and provided the opportunity to end the interview at any time. The confidentiality and opt-out clause enabled the participants to feel comfortable discussing their experiences more freely and not answering questions which made them feel uncomfortable. The confidentiality statement also ensured the participants’ anonymity and discussed how information gathered during the interviews would be used, stored and ultimately destroyed.

Henning and Roberts (2016) emphasized that anonymity and confidentiality should be considered during the interviews. Anonymity refers to the identity of the participant being kept

secret. Although anonymity from the researcher is impossible to maintain in this context, the researcher will not share the identifying information with anyone else. Confidentiality refers to participants' responses not being able to be connected to a specific participant. Based upon Creswell (2012), the participants were assigned pseudonyms or numbers to replace their names.

Validity

Validity relates to accuracy and credibility. In order to insure the validity of this study, there will be triangulation of the data. Triangulation is when the data from the different sources is compared (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Triangulation aids in increasing the validity of a study by not depending on just one source of data but by having multiple sources of data to support the findings. For this study, the data from the multiple interviews, documents and artifacts were compared in order to support the findings.

Reliability

Reliability refers to dependability. The results of the study should be dependable and be able to be replicated. In order to ensure reliability of this study, the interviews of the participants were recorded and transcribed both electronically and by hand. Multiple interviews were conducted in order to determine if the participants provided similar answers to the interview questions and to increase the level reliability on the findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Researcher Positionality

I am the researcher in this study. I am an African American woman who currently serves on the faculty of a four-year, private HBCU. This study focuses on the perceptions of African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents at four-year, private HBCUs and how they were able to attain and retain their leadership positions and whether race and gender have impacted their careers. As an African American woman, I may have some bias in terms of my own experiences related to race and gender biases in higher education. In order to remove bias in

this study, I first acknowledged my bias and tried to refrain from inserting my own opinions and beliefs into the analysis of the data. I also tried to eliminate bias in the research and interview questions.

Summary

This chapter discussed the qualitative research design of the study, the research questions, the study population and sample, data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations, validity, reliability, and Researcher positionality. The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents of four-year, private HBCUs and their perceptions on how they were able to attain and remain in positions of senior leadership and whether race and gender have played a role in their career ascension. In this study, a qualitative research design was chosen in order to best gain personal insight into the HBCU presidents', provosts', and vice-presidents' perceptions and thoughts regarding their careers through their own words. The next chapter will state the findings (data) obtained through the participants' interviews.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The aim of this qualitative research study was to understand the issues related to the attainment and retention of African American women at four-year, private HBCUs in the senior leadership positions of president, provost, and vice-president. More specifically, the issues of race and gender were also examined in relation to whether they affected the administrators' attainment and retention in positions of senior leadership. This study explored the perceptions of nine current and/or former African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents of four-year, private HBCUs. The perspectives of these senior administrators will potentially advance the hiring of qualified, effective leadership and promote equality and equity on private HBCU campuses. In addition, the inclusion of African American women in the administration of four-year, private HBCUs can possibly contribute to the advancement of new and innovative ideas that can help ensure the vitality and existence of these institutions.

Participants

There were nine African American women who participated in this study. The nine participants were selected from a population of current or former senior administrators at four-year, private HBCUs. The participants represented the following positions: president, provost, vice-president of academic affairs, vice-president of institutional advancement; vice-president of research, and vice-president of financial affairs. The following pseudonyms were assigned to the participants in order to ensure their anonymity: Participant 1- Mrs. Atkins, Participant 2- Dr. Brown, Participant 3-Dr. Camp, Participant 4-Dr. Daniels, Participant 5- Mrs. Evans, Participant

6- Dr. Fields, Participant 7- Dr. Gray, Participant 8-Mrs. Harris, and Participant 9-Mrs. Ifill. Six of the nine participants have doctoral degrees, two have master's degrees, and one has a bachelor's degree. The participants have from 20 to over 40 years of experience in higher education. Several of the participants have worked at both PWIs and HBCUs. Three of the participants worked in retail, corporate, and non-profit organizations prior to working in higher education. Table 4.1 provides a description of the participants in this study. Table 4.1 lists the participants by pseudonym. Table 4.1 also includes information related to the participants in the following categories: highest degree earned, current or former positions, number of years in higher education, number of year at a private HBCU, and number of years in current position.

Table 4.1 Description of Participants

Participant	Highest degree earned	Current/ former position(s)	# of years in higher education	# of years at a private HBCU	# of years in current Position
1. Mrs. Atkins	Bachelor's	VP of Institutional Advancement and Development	25+ years	25+ years	2+ years
2. Dr. Brown	Doctorate	VP of Academic Affairs	25+ years	20+ years	1+ years
3. Dr. Camp	Doctorate.	VP of Academic Affairs	40+ years	30+ years	2+ years
4. Dr. Daniels	Doctorate	President	40+ years	5+ years	Less than 1 year
5. Dr. Evans	Doctorate	VP of Institutional Advancement and Development	20+ years	20+ years	2+ years
6. Dr. Fields	Doctorate	Provost/ President	35+ years	35+ years	6+ years
7. Dr. Gray	Doctorate	VP of Research	20+ years	20+ years	4+ years
8. Mrs. Harris	Master's	VP of Institutional Advancement	25+ years	25+ years	2+ years
9. Mrs. Ifill	Master's	VP of Financial Affairs	30+ years	30+ years	20+ years

The participants in this study were identified by pseudonyms. Biographical information was gathered on each of the participants from the interviews and other biographical documentation. From the information, biographical sketches could be developed. Biographical sketches of each of the participants are listed below.

Mrs. Atkins

Mrs. Atkins has been employed in higher education for over 25 years. She has spent her entire career in higher education at a private HBCU. She has ascended the career ladder over the years and currently serves as vice-president for institutional advancement. She has held her current position for two and a half years. Before working in higher education, Mrs. Atkins held positions in retail management. Her highest degree is a bachelor's degree.

Dr. Brown

Dr. Brown has been employed in higher education for over 25 years. She has spent most of her career in higher education at a private HBCU. She has held several positions including faculty member, division chair, and dean before attaining her current position. She currently serves as vice-president for academic affairs at a private HBCU. She has held her current position for one and a half years. Before working in higher education, Dr. Brown and her husband owned several businesses. Her highest degree is a doctorate degree.

Dr. Camp

Dr. Camp has been employed in higher education for over 40 years. She has worked at both PWIs and an HBCU. The majority of career has been spent at a private HBCU. Over the years she has held positions in academic affairs, academic advising, and academic records. She has held her current position for about two years. Her highest degree earned is a doctorate degree.

Dr. Daniels

Dr. Daniels has been employed in higher education for over 40 years. She has worked at both PWIs and HBCUs. Her most recent position has been president of a private HBCU. Her educational background at HBCUs influenced her desire to work at an HBCU. She has held her most recent position for a few months. She has served in a variety of positions in higher education from faculty member to chief financial officer to president. Her highest degree earned is a doctorate degree.

Dr. Evans

Dr. Evans has been employed in higher education for over 20 years. Before working at a private HBCU, she worked at a non-profit organization and at a corporation. She has worked in several positions in higher education at both PWIs and HBCUs. She currently serves as vice-president for institutional advancement and development. She has held this position for about three years. She holds a doctorate degree.

Dr. Fields

Dr. Fields has been employed in higher education for over 35 years. She has held several positions at several private HBCUs including president, provost, faculty member, etc. She was formerly a president of a private HBCU. She currently serves as provost at another private HBCU and has held this position for over six years. She holds a doctorate degree as her highest degree earned.

Dr. Gray

Dr. Gray has been employed in higher education over 20 years. She has worked at a private HBCU for many years. She has ascended the career ladder over the years and currently

serves as vice-president for research. She has held this position for over four years. She holds a doctorate degree as her highest degree earned.

Mrs. Harris

Mrs. Harris has been employed in higher education for about 25 years. She has spent her entire career in higher education at a private HBCU. She has served in several positions at her current HBCU and currently serves as vice-president for institutional advancement. She has held her current position for about two and a half years. Before working in higher education, Mrs. Atkins held positions in a corporate environment. Her highest degree earned is a master's degree.

Mrs. Ifill

Mrs. Ifill has been employed in higher education for over 30 years. She has spent her entire career in higher education at a private HBCU. She chose to work at an HBCU because she attended an HBCU as an undergraduate student. Her highest degree earned is a master's degree. She has held several positions related to financial affairs before becoming vice-president of financial affairs. She has held her current position or its equivalent for over 20 years.

Major Themes

Several themes arose from the participants' interview data. The major themes were attainment, retention, gender/racial discrimination, leadership styles, and the future of private four-year HBCUs. Within the major themes there were also several sub-themes. In this section the findings were grouped under the major themes and sub-themes. Interview data from the participants is presented under the appropriate theme or sub-theme. Figure 4.1 list the major themes derived from the interview data.

Figure 4.1. Major Themes

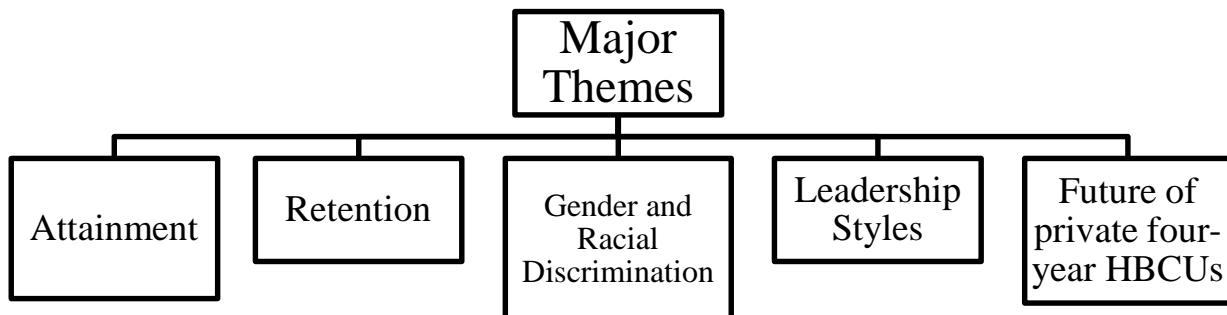


Figure 4.1. Diagram listing the major themes from the interview data.

Theme One: Attainment

One of the major themes that arose from the interviews was attainment. The participants discussed several characteristics that they believe contributed to their attainment of senior leadership positions, how their upbringing and backgrounds helped prepare them to be leaders, and the importance of networking and mentorship. The interviews revealed several commonalities among the study participants in relation to career attainment. Characteristics such as work ethic, integrity, discipline, education and work experience were stated by the participants as contributing to their senior leadership position attainment. Most of the participants emphasized that their parents played a major role in shaping them into who they have become. The influence of the church and both formal and informal mentors also helped the participants develop leadership skills and encouraged them to strive for leadership positions. A few of the participants also discussed their experiences at PWIs and in corporate environments as contributing to them being successful at their current or former HBCUs. Figure 4.2 lists the sub-themes under the attainment major theme. The attainment sub-themes include: characteristics attributed to attainment, upbringing/background, and networking/mentorship.

Figure 4.2. Attainment Sub-Themes

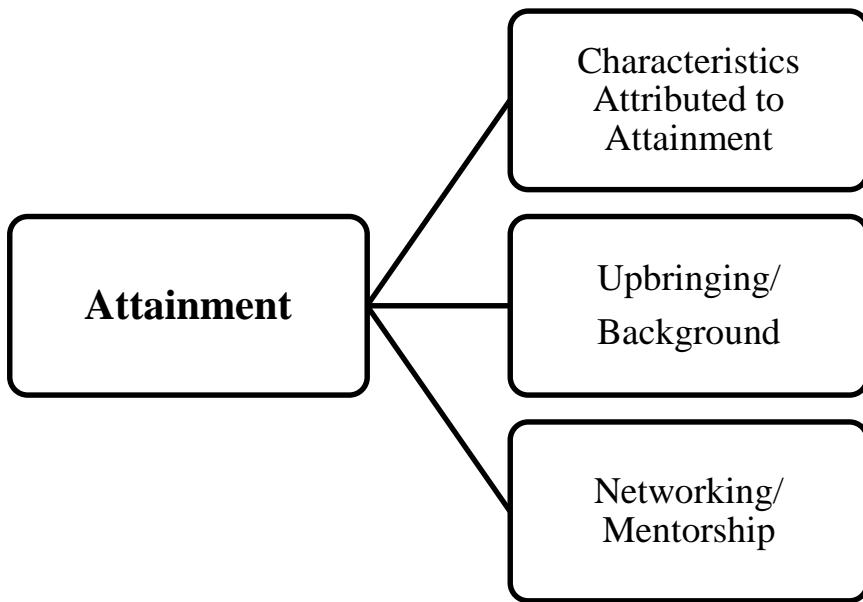


Figure 4.2. Diagram listing the sub-themes of attainment as found in the interview data.

Characteristics attributed to attainment. The participants reported that characteristics such as discipline, strong work ethic, business work backgrounds, self-confidence, integrity, believability, dependability, and being able to navigate both majority and minority institutions and environments contributed to their attainment of senior leadership positions. Dr. Daniels stated that some of the characteristics that contributed to her being able to attain her leadership positions were discipline and work ethic. She discussed how discipline and work ethic were instilled in her and her siblings while growing up on a farm. They had chores and responsibilities to attend to on the farm and if they did not complete them, they were disciplined. Dr. Daniels also pointed out that a Christian ethic and the importance of getting an education were ingrained in them and they did not take anything for granted. She further stated that her parents instilled in all of them self- confidence, knowing who you are and that you are somebody. She emphasized that they did not do it by preaching but by how they lived and how they were treated.

Mrs. Atkins discussed how her previous work experience in business/retail helped her be able to move into leadership in higher education. “I think with my background being in retail...I was used to watching the bottom line. I was used to deadlines. I was used to having goals that I had to meet.” Mrs. Harris attributed her ascension to senior leadership to her ability to adapt to both majority White and majority Black environments. “I think growing up in a predominantly Black city, graduating from a high school that's predominantly Black, then moving away from that and attending a predominantly White university kind of helped me to understand both sides of the coin and really to be able to navigate through different, diverse audiences.”

Dr. Camp stated, “I bring integrity to what I do. I bring detail. I like for stuff to be accurate and correct... if you work in higher education, you're supposed to represent the highest level of accuracy.” Mrs. Atkins stated, “I believe that your work speaks for you. I take it very personally when my name is on anything or I'm associated with things, I believe in excellence.” Dr. Gray listed work ethic, comradery, kindness, job effectiveness, and religious faith as characteristics or attributes that have contributed to her attainment of her vice presidency.

Upbringing and background. Each participant emphasized how their upbringing and backgrounds were instrumental in shaping who they are today and helping them ascend to senior leadership. Most of the participants emphasized that their parents were strong proponents of education. Dr. Daniels recalled that “when we were growing up, [my father] most often he didn't have a car and when he did, it was a raggedy car that couldn't go very far. But I remember him paying a neighbor \$2 to take him and mother to the PTA meeting. That's how important education was. They encouraged us to go to college when they had no money to send us.”

Dr. Harris explained that her mother being an educator contributed to her desire to be educated: “I would think that by her being an educator and instilling in me that [education] is

very important and that's your path also influenced my views on education." Dr. Evans stated, "When I went to college it wasn't a question of if I was going to college, it was where I was going to college." Dr. Gray was influenced by her parents who were also educators. Her parents emphasized the importance of education and demonstrated a strong work ethic and the importance of treating everyone fairly. Mrs. Atkins explained that her family, her mother in particular, emphasized the need for a good education and how she was required to be a good student. Dr. Fields stated that her parents were her first role models and mentors and remembered how her dad taught her self- esteem. Mrs. Atkins explained how her mother had wanted a college education but did not have the opportunity. So she felt as if she had to fulfill her dream as well as her mother's.

Several of the participants also explained how they believe that their parents and grandparents not attending college intensified their push for their children and grandchildren to go to college and receive a good education. Dr. Brown recalled since her family was from a foreign country how her grandfather used to tell them how much he had wanted her father to acquire a Western education. Her father did ultimately acquire a Western education and so did Dr. Brown and her siblings. Dr. Camp stated,

My mom basically did not work other than doing light work in people's homes and what have you. And I think that that's where she probably gained a sense of wanting more for us in terms of education...So I think my interest to learn, my work ethic, all of that probably came from her.

Most of the participants stated that the church, their teachers, and their communities also played a significant role in shaping them. Dr. Daniels in reflecting on her upbringing stated that "in that black community of small land owners, we had a very strong Christian ethic and the church was really the center of the community...It was a kind of place where you hear people write about and talk about if you misbehaved, anybody could discipline you." Mrs. Atkins

reflected on how she grew up as a “Baby Boomer” and how most of her childhood was in the last glory days of the black community at the end of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. She went to church and school in her neighborhood and had both Black and White teachers. She believed that the community helped raise her and there were always adults around to correct and discipline her and report back to her parents. She was expected by all the adults in her life to produce excellence.

Dr. Evans stated that many of her mother's friends were educators, so they influenced her desire to obtain a good education. Her fifth grade teacher, in particular, was one of her role models. Her fifth grade teacher was an African American woman and was very stern. Dr. Evans thought of her teacher as the quintessential lady. Dr. Evans described her as always wearing a dress, always having her hair done and her fingernails done. She was very structured and ordered in her classroom. She did not influence her to go into education as much as she influenced how she should be as a lady.

Dr. Camp’s high school economics teacher was very influential in her life. She recalled being a part of the racial integration of her university in the 1960s and having feelings of loneliness and not belonging and wanting to drop out of college. She reflected on how during her sophomore year in college she attempted to drop out. When she went home the weekend after dropping out, she met with her high school home economics teacher. Her teacher had been very influential in her life and had taken Dr. Camp under her wing while she was in high school. Dr. Camp’s teacher had even co-signed for her first car when her mother was not able.

Dr. Camp recalled how she asked her high school teacher to help her find a job because she had dropped out of college. Her high school teacher asked her what was going on at the school and Dr. Camp had given her a sad story about why she needed to drop out. Dr. Camp did

not know that her high school teacher had gone in the back of her office and called the college to inquire as to the procedure for getting reinstated back into the college. Her high school teacher after finding out how to get Dr. Camp reinstated, told Dr. Camp to get some rest that weekend because they were going back to the college on Monday. Dr. Camp attributes her not dropping out of college to her high school economics teacher/mentor.

Networking and mentorship. Mentorship and networking were discussed by several of the participants. Several participants reflected on their relationships with their mentors and emphasized the need for mentorship. Dr. Gray stressed the importance of having mentors (formal and/or informal) and advised women to seek out mentors who are not necessarily women or have a similar background. A few of the participants, however, stated that they did not have mentors. The participants also discussed the importance of networking, especially within the small HBCU arena. One participant commented that you should meet and stay in contact with people at HBCUs because you never know who might be in a position to help you in your career.

Mrs. Harris explained that the president of her institution could easily be her mentor because he pushes her and others. She said that he challenges you and he takes you out of your comfort zone and that's what she believes you need in a mentor. "You need someone who's going to take you out of your comfort zone. Just give it to you, you know, just straight forward, be straight forward with you. You don't need a mentor who's just going to tell you what you want to hear."

In relation to mentorship, Dr. Daniels, after one of her supervisors attempted to assign her a mentor, came to the conclusion that, "I personally do not believe that you can successfully assign mentors. Mentorship happens as a result of establishing relationship. Now you can introduce people, you can provide opportunities for people to get to know folks, to meet people."

She further stated however that “one thing that is extremely important for women in leadership is to have had the opportunity to be mentored and knowing what you are going into and what it takes to move through it.”

Dr. Evans advised,

I would say make sure you make contact with people as much as possible. You know, networking, keep in contact because the HBCU arena is fairly small. Once you're in it, people know you. So try and have as positive and as successful record as you can. Make contact with people because it's so weird... you just never know who you're going to meet again. Let people know your aspirations and if you have the ability. I know mentorship is important, but find someone who is really willing to help you professionally as far as opening doors for you. To say, hey, you know what, there's a position that I think you might want to apply for, or there's a position that I think that you would be good for. So just staying as connected as you possibly can.

Theme Two: Retention

A second major theme that was present in the interview data were retention. Several of the participants reported that there is an issue related to retention of African American women in higher education administration leadership. The participants revealed during their interviews that there are barriers to retention and that there are retention issues at PWIs and HBCUs. The participants also offered advice for the retention of African American women in senior leadership positions. Some of the barriers to retention expressed by some of the participants include work-life balance, not understanding the politics of an institution, not getting along with the board of trustees or stakeholders, not producing positive results, and sexism or gender biases. Figure 4.3 lists the retention sub-themes derived from the interview data. The retention sub-themes include: barriers to retention, PWI's versus HBCUs, and recommendations for retaining positions of senior leadership.

Figure 4.3. Retention Sub-Themes

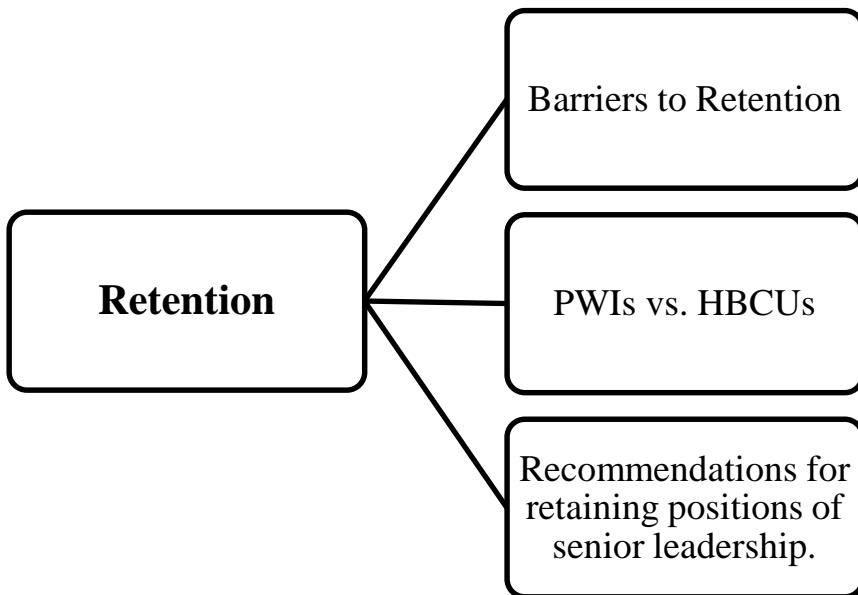


Figure 4.3. Diagram listing the sub-themes of retention as found in the interview data.

Barriers to retention. The interview data revealed several barriers to the retention of African American women in positions of senior leadership. Some barriers include work-life balance, disputes with the board of trustees, and sexism/gender bias/discrimination. In relation to work-life balance, Mrs. Atkins stated,

So we got to somehow make it worth it or enticing because women feel in the 21st century that as equal as we are, are not equal at home in that most of the professional women I know regardless of what their husbands do...they still take on the majority of the housework and the child rearing. That has not changed much.

Board disputes and disputes with colleagues or stakeholders can be a barrier to retention. Mrs. Atkins shared the belief that HBCUs can be political. Sometimes no matter how great you are, politics can come into play. She further stated,

Rarely are the schools really strong and on a growth trajectory, do they name a female president. Yes, we've got to change the perception, if that is not true. We have to at least change the perception because that is the perception...I think you've got to show that you deem them worthy of the investment to let them lead institutions when they are strong not

just when they are quote unquote failing. And once they have righted the ship or got them on some sort of growth pattern, now that female president is dispensable.

Dr. Daniels expressed, “I believe that a lot of times you get competent women who move into roles that they very well are capable to implement decisions and do things like that, but they don’t understand the politics of it and therefore not successful.”

PWIs vs. HBCUs. Most of the participants that worked at both PWIs and HBCUs reported that the environments are different in how African American women are treated. One participant reported that although some leaders come through training at PWIs, they rarely ascend to presidencies or senior leadership levels at PWIs. As a result of not attaining these positions at PWIs, African American women tend to leave and compete for positions at HBCUs. She further stated that African American women come to HBCUs having an understanding of leadership but do not realize that PWI strategies do not necessarily work in the politics of HBCUs. Dr. Daniels stated,

I think a lot of times women are tapped because they have shown that they are smart, that they are capable, but we don’t always know how the game is played...When leaders don’t understand the politics of HBCUs, they are not successful and do not last longer than two or three years...So to be a member of the club, you have to be embraced by the membership. You got to be perceived by the membership as being a part of them. So just because we opened the door and let you walk through it doesn’t mean you are part of us. And some of us get hurt and disappointed because we haven’t understood that.

Recommendations for retaining positions of senior leadership. When asked what advice would you give to an African American woman in attaining or retaining positions of senior leadership at a private HBCU, the participants offered varied guidance. Dr. Gray advised to have mentors (formal and informal), listen, pay attention to what is said and what is unsaid, do not sell your soul, be authentic, take advantage of leadership training, and learn how to negotiate.

Dr. Camp recommended that African American women aspiring to leadership not fall into some of the pitfalls that she has. She stated that women need to come to a job with all of the

energy and excitement that they have but at the same time always be cautious and objective and know you do not always have to speak. She stressed that sometimes silence speaks volumes.

I know a lot of times people feel like they got to say something about every issue that's put on the table and you don't always have to speak to every issue...But then also if you don't ever speak up, people assume that you don't have a voice. And so looking for a balance on how much to speak and not speak.

Dr. Camp also recommended African American women should always keep their credentials sharp and in place. She advised women to align themselves with people that are trying to move up and not get sidelined by people that do not have goals and are satisfied with where they are. She also added that African American women should believe in themselves and let people know what their goals and ambitions are. Although she was never a big self-promoter, she regrets not being more vocal about her career ambitions early on.

Mrs. Harris stated that African American women should establish early what they want to do and set their career paths towards that goal. Although she stumbled into education, she stated that there are women that know exactly where they want their careers to go and plan their careers accordingly. For example, as a member of the faculty they know that at some point they want to be a department chair, then a division chair, then vice president of academic affairs and then president. Dr. Fields also offered advice to African American women saying for them not to wait too long to pursue senior leadership positions. She explained that you do not have to do every job at an institution in order to move to the helm of an institution. She further stated that women have to believe that they are ready and that they can do the job.

Theme Three: Gender and Racial Discrimination

A third major theme that arose from the interview data were gender and racial discrimination. Most of the participants stated that at some point in their career they have experienced some type of bias or discrimination whether it is racial or gender related. For the

most part, the racial discrimination was experienced at PWIs or corporate organizations. Most of the participants, however, stated that they have not experienced racial bias or discrimination at HBCUs. Some of the participants reported experiencing gender discrimination at PWIs and HBCUs. Dr. Evans stated,

My salary...was not comparable to my Caucasian male counterparts. And I of course didn't know that until I was two or three years into it. And many times you don't want to play the race card, but you look at it like, wait a minute, my credentials, here I am with an undergrad, a master's and a PhD or almost a PhD. Been in development for let's say 10 years, then you have another Caucasian who has an undergrad, a bachelor's degree, been in development for five years but makes \$10,000 to \$15,000 more than you. You're like, wait, how do you justify that?

Dr. Daniels, in reflecting on her experience with both racial and gender discrimination at a PWI, stated that African American males may feel and experience many of the same things as African American women in terms of racial discrimination but then African American women also experience discrimination that is gender related. She believes that African American women experience both racial and gender discrimination. Dr. Daniels explained that Caucasian women in leadership experience some gender discrimination that African American women experience as well, but then Caucasian women may subject African American women to racial discrimination. So, in her experience, African American women encounter both racial and gender discrimination at PWIs.

Dr. Fields stated that racial and gender discrimination depends on where a woman is, where she is working, or the level at which she works. "Depending on where they are and their role and where they're located, there are some, I going to call it down parts of the country where you're likely to encounter more prejudice of racism or discrimination than in other parts. I think we have some institutions you may be likely to encounter more than other institutions. So it

depends on where you are in your career and where you are working in a part of the country and type of institution.”

Dr. Evans stated that she was not able to distinguish whether the discrimination she experienced was based upon race or gender at the PWI that she worked for previously. Dr. Evans reported that she could not separate the discrimination she experienced as being due to being an African American or a woman. She believes that the discrimination is lumped together and she has never been able to differentiate between the two. She stated that discrimination is discrimination whether it is racism or sexism.

The participants mainly reported that they do not experience racial discrimination at HBCUs but they have experienced discrimination or bias related to their gender. Dr. Evans, reflecting on her tenure at her HBCU, said that she feels that she gets the respect she deserves at her institution. She, however, further explained that some of her sisters at other institutions are not treated the same. She stated that a president she knows battles with the board of trustees that consists of mainly African American males. She believes sexism come into play when African American women have to prove themselves more than males and when African American males are not in favor or reporting to a female. As African American women in leadership “you're still a female, so you still have the soft side to you. But as a leader, you still have to many times put your foot down and be stern. So when we're stern, are we looked at as just being a stern leader and that's what's necessary to be a successful leader? Or is she just being the B word?”

Figure 4.4 lists the sub-themes derived from the interview data associated with the major theme of gender and racial discrimination. The sub-themes include: gender discrimination, racial discrimination, and other types of bias or discrimination.

Figure 4.4. Gender and Racial Discrimination Sub-Themes

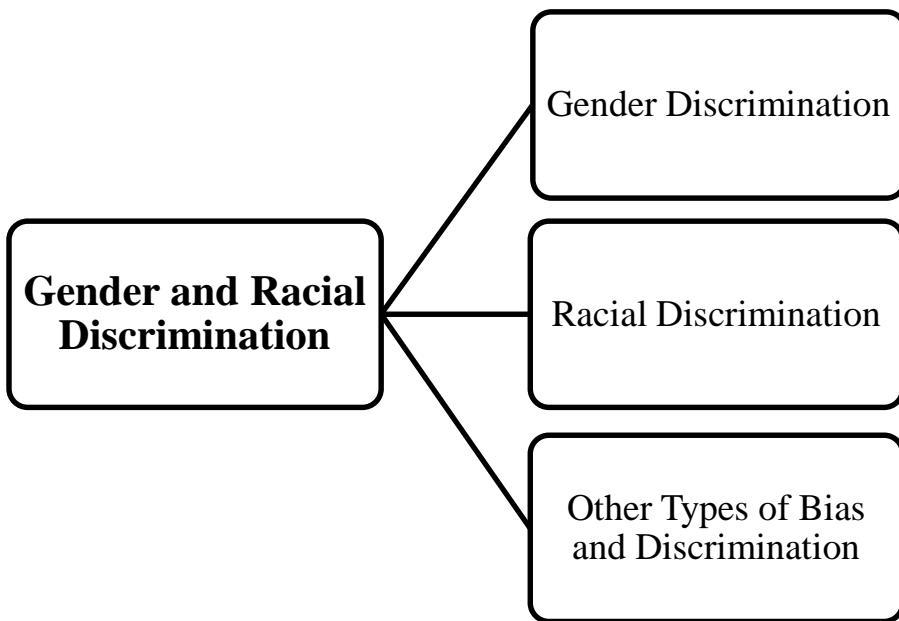


Figure 4.4. Diagram listing the sub-themes of gender and racial discrimination as found in the interview data.

Gender discrimination. Some of the participants responded during their interviews that they have encountered gender discrimination at colleges and universities where they have been employed. While some participants expressed that they have not experienced gender discrimination at their HBCUs, other participants noted that at some HBCUs there are problems involving gender bias/discrimination. More specifically, the participants reported that they have experienced more discrimination or bias based upon their gender rather than their race. Mrs. Atkins stated, “Gender bias is prevalent in the Black community...And some people, particularly men in authority don’t particularly care for women regardless of color being forthright and self-assured.”

You do find men predominantly running the institution and you can find yourself in roles at those institutions that may be outside of the female dominated fields. Well you get the feeling that there is a good old boy and good old boys network and you may be in the room, but the good old boys may be running the show. So yeah, I feel that there are gender issues at HBCUs.

Mrs. Atkins further explained how she has been in rooms where she was the only female and her male peers wanted to make her the secretary. She did not understand why her being the lone female in the room automatically made her the person taking the notes. “Why am I taking notes for everybody? I’m taking my own notes. No. I will not take notes for the group and type them up. Call your assistant in or I will call mine in. And if we don’t have one, then everybody can take their own notes.”

Dr. Harris stated,

I have found that being not just necessarily African American woman, but just a woman in general, that you really have to, sometimes you have to speak louder than everyone else. I mean, when I say louder, yeah I mean voice inflection, but you have to say it over and over again to be heard. And even when you say it the first time you’re ignored, when it comes out of the mouth of a male and it was heard the first time and you’re like, I just said that. So being an African American woman you really have to lean in, especially when you’re in a board meeting. Well, not necessarily a board meeting but when you are a member of the cabinet, you have to really lean in and you have to be engaged in the conversation and sometimes that can be challenging because I think naturally we are more respectful.

Racial discrimination. Some of the participants reported that they have experienced racial discrimination at different times throughout their careers, although not necessarily at HBCUs. Several of the participants stated that they have experienced racial discrimination or bias prior to working at HBCUs and they believe that those experiences have impacted their careers. Some participants explained that they came to work at a HBCU because of the experiences with racism at majority institutions. Dr. Evans explained that she wanted to come back to an HBCU after years of experiencing discrimination at majority institutions. She explained how people tried to dissuade her from going back to an HBCU by mentioning all the issues at HBCUs. She would respond that, even with the issues at HBCUs, she believed that her skillset and her education would be more appreciated at a HBCU. She said that maybe not to the extent that it should be, but not because she is a black female.

One example of racial discrimination noted by Dr. Daniels was when she worked at a PWI as a faculty member. She had been assigned an average of six to eight hours more teaching than her colleagues and she had to explain to the dean that she felt she had not been given an equal opportunity for success. She said that she was particularly angry at the department head, a White woman, because she had always acted like she was trying to help her. So in response to the discrimination, Dr. Daniels put together her documents and a table showing her teaching loads per quarter and those of her colleagues. As a result of the document, the Dean intervened and asked Dr. Daniels what she needed to be successful there.

Other forms of bias and discrimination. Dr. Camp discussed during her interview other forms of bias or discrimination that sometimes prevented the attainment and/or retention of senior leadership positions. She stated that she had witnessed favoritism in terms of people being promoted or demoted to certain positions based upon who leaders liked or had friendships with outside of work. She felt that at times people who were qualified were overlooked for leadership positions despite being more qualified than another person simply because one person was liked more than another. She further stated that in her own career she felt she had been overlooked for positions or promotions despite having the qualifications and experience because she was not necessarily friends with the person making the decision related to promotion. She believes that sometimes institutions may be hiring people based on other reasons other than qualifications.

Theme Four: Leadership Styles

The fourth major theme was leadership styles. All the participants were asked during their interviews to describe their leadership style. Most of the participants believe that their leadership style has enabled them to be able to attain and retain their leadership positions. Most of the participants listed either participatory, transformative, servant, and adaptive as their

leadership styles. In addition to describing their leadership styles, the participants elaborated on how they lead at their institutions.

Dr. Daniels described her leadership style by comparing it to a jazz band. In using a jazz band as a metaphor, Dr. Daniels explained that in a jazz band there are a group of artists who specialize in an instrument and they come together with the goal of making beautiful music. But in order to do that, there is always a leader who must set the tone. She stated that in jazz, the bass is the instrument that sets the beat and the pace. Everybody in the band must learn the melody regardless of the instrument they play, but the beat is determined by the bass. While the bass is generally not considered a beautiful instrument, it is important because if the bass is off, everybody is off.

Dr. Daniels further explained that the goal then as a leader is to see to it that everybody understands the melody. The melody is the mission and the goals. The job of the leader is to play the bass and to establish the beat. And when everybody understands and become experts in their own individual area, beautiful music can be made because the leader keeps the beat. So the job as a leader is to establish the beat. The leader's job is to make sure everybody understands the mission and where they are going and to make sure that it is all blended together so that the goal can be accomplished.

Dr. Daniels further noted that in a jazz band, before the night is over, everybody has a solo, even the bass. She stated that with everyone having a solo, the leader was going to allow every person to be their best self and for others to see how good they are. She further stated that the group accomplishes all of the goals together, but at the same time, individual achievements are recognized. Dr. Daniel concluded her metaphor by stating that the leader's goal is to facilitate each person's success and in so doing, each individual's success can contribute to the whole.

Dr. Camp explained her leadership style by emphasizing that she likes for employees to understand how they fit in the organizational chart overall. She wants them to know what their job is and how their job affects the overall organization. She thinks of herself as more of a transformational leader because her style is to train and help a person to understand what it is that they need to do, provide the resources to get it done, and then just let them go and get it done. She likes for people to basically work independently and only engage her when they need her assistance. But at the same time, she likes for people to come in with energy and to be innovative, creative, and constantly looking for ways to make things easier and better. She likes to see growth and she wants people to grow. She stated that she does not have the patience to micromanage because she is constantly moving from one project to the next. “I think people grow when you give them wings to kind of do their own thing.”

Dr. Brown described her leadership style as collaborative. She believes in being hands on. She stated that as a leader you have to understand what you are leading. Before she asks others to do a task, she prefers to do the task first so that she understand what the task entails. So she believes in not asking others to do something she would not or could not do herself. Dr. Brown said that although there are times when collaboration is appropriate, there are other times when the policy of the institution dictates what needs to be done. She also believes in transformational leadership to some extent but describes herself as more of a collaborative leader.

Some other participants described their leadership styles as servant and participatory. Dr. Gray stated that she exhibits servant leadership. She believes that she is ego-less, inclusive, transparent, and collaborative. Dr. Fields stated that her leadership style is “participatory. I believe that there is a team leader, but there must always be recognition that it is a team.” Almost

all of the participants stated that they did not like to micromanage and that uplifting their team members was important to them as leaders.

Theme Five: Future of four-year, private HBCUs

The fifth major theme that arose from the interview data was related to the future of four-year, private HBCUs. Private HBCUs have challenges related to leadership, accreditation, financial stability, etc. (Cantey, et al., 2011). The participants discussed during their interviews what type of leadership they believe is needed for the future of private HBCUs. The participants also discussed how HBCUs can attract and retain African American women. They also discussed the need for succession planning. Figure 4.5 list sub-themes under the major theme of the future of four-year, private HBCUs. The sub-themes were derived from the interview data. The sub-themes include: leadership, attracting and retaining African American women, and succession planning.

Figure 4.5. Future of four-year, private HBCUs Sub-Themes

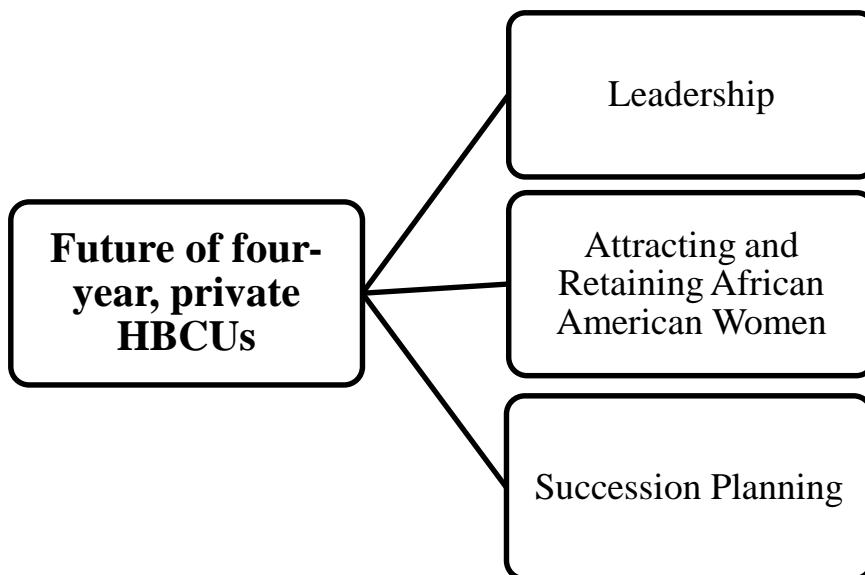


Figure 4.5. Diagram listing the sub-themes under the future of four-year, private HBCUs as found in the interview data

Leadership. The leadership at four-year, private HBCUs is important to the future of the institutions. Dr. Camp had strong opinions about the leadership at HBCUs.

I think the leadership at HBCUs is what's killing them. Somehow the presidents come in with this over preconception of what their role is. I don't understand why they can't come in and just make a normal salary and go home. But somehow some of them are caught up into issues at their schools that cause them to have to be dismissed, that bothers me. I mean, apparently something must change you. I don't understand how a good person changes into a person that has to leave and that I'm seeing a lot of that at our HBCUs and so they're not being managed well, then it's causing a lot of the schools to suffer and close.

Dr. Brown stated that leadership is important to the survival of HBCUs. She stated that leaders at HBCUs have to learn how to manage the institutions and learn how to market the institutions. She said that leaders need to learn how to budget. She also stated how it was important for leaders to understand the political climate because the political climate has a lot to do with obtaining funding. And she also offered that leaders must understand all the stakeholders.

Attracting and retaining African American women. When the participants were asked for advice for HBCUs for attracting and retaining African American women leaders, they offered several suggestions. Dr. Evans stated “the advice that I would give is to offer as much of a work life balance as possible.” Dr. Camp also had an idea of how to attract and retain African American women in leadership positions. She stated that schools have to have an image that is attractive to African American women wanting to come and work there. She also feels that institutions have to be honest about where they are. If an institution’s image is not good they should be working to rebuild it. Dr. Harris and Dr. Brown emphasized the importance of professional development for retaining African American women. Dr. Gray stated that in order to attract and retain African American women leaders, HBCUs have to realize the leaders’ worth

and pay them their worth. They also have to be more open-minded with job flexibility, embrace differences, and honor different skill sets.

Dr. Atkins stated,

Rarely are the schools really strong and on a growth trajectory, do they name a female president. Yes, we've got to change the perception. If it is not true, we have to at least change the perception because that is the perception. So they want to attract female talent. I think you've got to show that you deem them worthy of the investment to let them lead institutions when they are strong not just when they are failing...And quit recycling the same people in the club.

Dr. Brown offered that HBCUs need to train younger women for leadership. She further stated that the leaders shouldn't just assume that they will have their position for life. She suggested that women on campuses need to get together and discuss their positions and obstacles they encounter. She believes that African American women need to encourage each other and lift each other up.

Succession planning. Many of the participants stressed the need for succession planning and developing upcoming leaders at their institutions in order to secure the future. Dr. Fields said that at her institution they believe in developing and growing their own. They will bring people in but they hire people with promise. At her institution, people must demonstrate their worth through results. She discussed how sometimes, as a leader, people are on her radar screen because they are doing what they are expected to do and that they may need experience in a particular area. When she notices someone, she tries to make sure they get the experience in an area by appointing them to a committee or sending them to a conference. She believes in engaging people with potential in all the aspects of the university and that they know what makes the institution run. She further explained that it is what people do within the university that makes the institution run. For example, serving on committees such as the strategic planning committee, long range planning committee, instruction and program committee or program

review committee helps someone learn the working governance of the institution. She recommends that more HBCUs identify talented individuals and groom them.

Mrs. Atkins also recommended that more HBCUs identify talent and have succession plans for the leadership of the institutions. She stated that “our colleges don’t have succession plans. If a president moves on we are kind of caught, especially if one passes unexpectedly. We don’t have a contingency plan… if one person goes missing, we are out of luck. That is not how you run things. So we got to do better.” Mrs. Atkins and some of the other participants recognized that in order for an institution to maintain stability or to grow there must be plans in place to prepare the next leaders to assume the responsibilities of running an institution.

Theoretical Framework

This study utilized Black Feminist Theory and intersectionality as the theoretical framework. Black Feminist Theory and intersectionality provide a framework to understand the experiences of the African American women who participated in this study. The African American women who participated in this study are included in two marginalized groups, women and African Americans. Being included in two marginalized groups compounds the discrimination or bias experienced by African American women. Black Feminist Theory is a theoretical framework that describes the unique position of African American women separate from White women or African American men (Collins, 2000; Johnson, 2015). Collins (2000) notes how Black women ideas and experiences were excluded from the mainstream by either being placed in feminist thought which was based upon White women or Black social and political theories, which were based upon Black men. “The assumptions on which full group membership are based—Whiteness for feminist thought, maleness for Black social and political thought, and the combination for mainstream scholarship—all negate Black women’s realities”

(Collins, 2000, p. 12). Black Feminist Theory recognizes that African American women are still subject to oppression and injustices related to their race and their gender. However not “all African American women are oppressed in the same way, nor that some U.S. Black women do not suppress others (Collins, 2000, p.9). “Intersectionality refers to the idea that people have multiple identities and that people experience and perform/live within multiple, intersecting, and concurrent positions of privileges and oppressions” (Davis, 2010). As a result of the African American women experience not being adequately represented by their gender or racial groupings, another group was necessary to reflect the perspectives of African American women with the intersection of race and gender (Crenshaw, 1989). Figure 4.6. depicts intersectionality by the overlapping of race and gender.

Figure 4.6. Intersection of Race and Gender (Intersectionality)

Intersection of Race (African American) and Gender (Female)

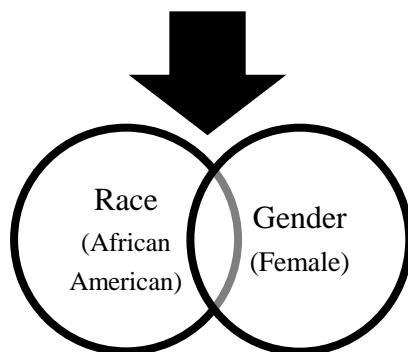


Figure 4.6. Figure depicting intersectionality by the overlapping of race and gender. Adapted from The Intersectional Fifth Black Woman by D. Carbado and M. Gulati, 2013, *W.E.B. DuBois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, 10(2), p. 527-540.

The major themes revealed in this study included, attainment, retention, gender/racial discrimination, leadership styles, and the future of private four-year HBCUs. In analyzing the major themes of this study through the lens of Black Feminist Theory and intersectionality,

several points were uncovered. One major point related to attainment, retention and gender/racial discrimination, emphasized in the interview data, was that African American women still experience discrimination or bias related to their race and gender in higher education. Racial and gender discrimination affects the attainment and retention of leadership positions by African American women at colleges and universities. The intersection of being both African American and a woman compounds the issues related to discrimination (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989).

One of the participants in this study stated that although she had experienced discrimination, she was unable to distinguish whether she was being discriminated against because of her race or because of her gender or both. The participant explained that she was not able to separate her being a woman and being African American because she is both. Her experiences are consistent with ideas associated with Black Feminist Theory and intersectionality in that she, as an African American woman, was not able to distinguish whether she was subjected to racial or gender discrimination or both and her experiences are different than those of African American men and White women (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989; Johnson, 2015). African American men may experience racial discrimination at some point in their careers and White women may experience gender discrimination but neither group experiences both.

While the interview data revealed that some of the participants who previously worked at PWIs had experienced both racial and gender discrimination, most of the participants reported that they had not experienced any discrimination related to their race at HBCUs but some had experienced gender discrimination or bias. Although the interview data in this study did not show a problem with racial discrimination at the participants' HBCUs, racial discrimination does still affect the overall careers of some African American women in higher education because of

the racial discrimination experienced at PWIs or majority institutions or in society as a whole. Some of the previously mentioned examples of discrimination shared by participants in this study included being subjected to discrimination by not being paid the same as White men that had less work experience and not as much education. One participant also shared how her work load at PWI was greater than her White colleagues. In many instances, African American women are not able to determine whether the discrimination is due to their race or gender or both, a phenomenon examined in Black Feminist Theory and intersectionality (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989; Johnson, 2015).

The interview data also revealed that gender biases are more prevalent on HBCU campuses than racial biases. Although HBCUs tend to be safe spaces in terms of racial discrimination against African Americans, some of the participants in this study disclosed that there is a gender discrimination problem on some HBCU campuses. The Black Feminist Theory and intersectionality framework provides a way to understand how African American women have different experiences at HBCUs than African American men (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989; Johnson, 2015). Also, how in an environment relatively free of racial discrimination or bias against African Americans, African American women still experience gender discrimination or biases. Gender discrimination or biases may prevent the best leaders from being selected or promoted.

Leadership and the future of private HBCUs are interrelated. Leadership styles/approaches exhibited by the participants were consistent with literature that identifies some African American women leaders as transformational, servant, and/ or authentic leaders (Bower & Wolverton, 2009; Oikelome, 2017). While these leadership styles/approaches are not unique to African American women, their leadership style/approach may determine how

effective a leader they are. The future of private HBCUs may be largely dependent upon the leadership of the institution. Strong, capable leadership is needed in order to guide the institutions. Black Feminist Theory and intersectionality provide a means of acknowledging and understanding the oppression and marginalization that African American women endure and how the discrimination and injustices they experience can be addressed (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989; Johnson, 2015).

The experiences of the participants at HBCUs did not include racial discrimination or biases. However, some of the participants did state that they had experienced racial discrimination in their careers, mainly at PWIs or in corporate environments. The nuances of Black Feminist Theory and intersectionality may not be traditionally related to the experiences of African American women leaders at HBCUs since there were no examples of racism on the HBCU campuses, however the framework is still useful in understanding African American women leaders at HBCUs because the participants shared some examples of sexism on the some HBCU campuses, thereby making their experiences different than those of African American men. Black Feminist Theory and intersectionality is applicable to the careers of the participants overall, where both racism and sexism were experienced by some of the participants, because African American women career experiences are unique and separate from those of White women or African American men (Collins, 2000; Johnson, 2015).

Summary

In summary, this chapter detailed the findings from the participants' interviews. This study explored the perceptions of nine current and former African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents of four-year private HBCUs. Several major themes were revealed within the interview data. The major themes included: attainment, retention, gender/racial

discrimination, leadership styles, and the future of private four-year HBCUs. The data obtained from the perspectives of the senior administrators who participated in this study will contribute to the promotion of equality and equity on private HBCU campuses and to hopefully an increase in the hiring of qualified, effective leaders needed for the future survival of private HBCUs.

Attainment was one of the major themes that arose from the interviews. The participants attributed their senior leadership position attainment to work ethic, integrity, discipline, education and work experience were stated by the participants as contributing to their senior leadership position attainment. Most of the participants emphasized that their parents, the church, and both formal and informal mentors played a major role in shaping them into who they have become today. A few of the participants also discussed their experiences at PWIs and in corporate environments as contributing to them being successful at their current or former HBCUs.

Retention was another major theme that was present in the interview data. Retention of African American women in senior leadership is an issue at some HBCUs. The participants revealed during their interviews that there are barriers to retention and that there are retention issues at PWIs and HBCUs. The participants also offered advice for the retention of African American women in senior leadership positions. Some of the barriers to retention expressed by some of the participants include work/life balance, not understanding the politics of an institution, not getting along with the board or stakeholders, not producing positive results and sexism or gender biases.

The third major theme that arose from the interview data were gender and racial discrimination. Most of the participants stated that at some point in their career they have experienced some type of bias or discrimination whether it is racial or gender related. For the

most part, the racial discrimination was experienced at PWI or corporate organizations. Most of the participants, however, stated that they have not experienced racial bias or discrimination at HBCUS. The fourth major theme was leadership. Most of the participants listed either participatory, transformative, servant, and adaptive as their leadership styles. Lastly, the fifth major theme that discussed here was related to the future of four-year, private HBCUs. The participants discussed during their interviews what type of leadership they believe is needed for the future of these institutions. The participants also discussed how HBCUs can attract and retain African American women and the need for succession planning. The next chapter will discuss conclusions and recommendations derived from this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to better understand how and why African American women are able to attain and remain in the positions of president, provost, or vice-president at four-year, private HBCUs and whether race and gender issues have impacted their careers and their ascension to and retention in senior leadership positions. This study focused on four-year, private HBCUs because of the challenges being faced by some of these institutions and the need for the best leadership, irrespective of race or gender. This study provided information to assist four-year, private HBCUs in attracting and retaining African American women in senior leadership positions and to help African American women attain and retain the positions of president, provost, or vice-president at four-year, private HBCUs.

The research questions for this study were tailored to provide insight and direction in relation to African American women attaining and retaining senior leadership positions at four-year, private HBCUs. The following research questions drove this study:

1. How do African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents believe they were able to attain their leadership positions at four-year, private HBCUs?

2. What factors/characteristics do African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents believe contribute to them remaining in their positions of leadership?
3. How do African American women presidents, provosts and vice-presidents of four-year, private HBCUs believe race and gender have affected their careers overall?
4. How do African American women presidents, provosts and vice-presidents of four-year, private HBCUs believe private HBCUs can attract and retain African American women in positions of senior leadership?

The participants in this study included nine African American women who have previously served or are currently serving as president, provost, or vice-president at four-year, private HBCUs. Some of the participants have worked at both PWIs and HBCUs. The participants represented the following positions: president, provost, vice-president of academic affairs, vice-president of institutional advancement; vice-president of research, and vice-president of financial affairs. They have worked in higher education from 20 to over 40 years. The participants represent seven four-year, private HBCUs.

Study Limitations

This study is limited by the number of African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents of four-year, private HBCUs available for this study. There are a limited number of African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents of four-year, private HBCUs, thereby, decreasing the population of potential participants. Time and scheduling conflicts and disinterest in participating in the study also limited the number of participants in this study.

Study Delimitations

This study is delimited by the researcher in several ways. The first delimitation is that

participants were selected from only four-year HBCUs and African American women at other institution types (two-year/community colleges) may have different experiences. The second delimitation is that the sample of African American women HBCU presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents were selected from private institutions. This sample may limit the findings in this study, in that the perceptions and experiences of presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents at public institutions may vary.

Conclusions

Research Question One: How do African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents believe they were able to attain their leadership positions at four-year, private HBCUs?

The goal of Research Question One was to identify what the participants believed led to their attainment of presidency, provost, and vice-presidency positions. Even though the number of African American women in senior leadership at four-year, private HBCUs has increased in recent years, there are still fewer African American women that attain senior leadership positions when compared with African American men. Understanding how African American women attain senior leadership positions can further promote equality on HBCU campuses. The participants in this study attributed the attainment of senior leadership positions to several factors and characteristics including their upbringing and parental influence, mentorship and networking, education, and work experience. The perspectives of the study participants were similar to the findings of other studies related to the attainment of presidency and other senior leadership positions by African American women. In previous studies, several characteristics and factors were noted as contributing to African American women attaining their leadership positions. Some of those characteristics and factors included: education, work experience, family

and institutional support, mentorship, equality, competence, and leadership skills (Jackson & Harris, 2005, Davis, 2009, Oikelome, 2017).

While education and work experience played important roles in position attainment, other factors such as parental influence and upbringing also helped develop traits such as a strong work ethic, self-confidence, integrity, and determination. All of these characteristics or traits are important qualities that leaders tend to possess. Northouse (2016) noted that leaders tend to possess intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability. By possessing or obtaining traits that are characteristic of leaders, the attainment of leadership positions is less difficult, however, even with having leadership characteristics, there are other barriers to attaining leadership positions. Gender discrimination, lack of mentorship or networking, and favoritism or other biases can prevent African American women from reaching or attaining senior leadership positions at private HBCUs (Davis & Maldonado, 2015; Oikelome, 2017).

Mentorship and networking were also discussed by several participants as contributing to their attainment of leadership positions. A few participants stated that their mentors whether formal or informal helped shape their careers by offering advice and encouraging them to strive for leadership positions. One participant suggested that African American women should not necessarily seek mentors that are of the same race or are women but be open to mentorship from men or people of other races. Networking is also important to leadership position attainment. By making contact and keeping contact with people at HBCUs, it was suggested that there may be people that can help open doors or remember you when positions become available.

Research Question Two: What factors/characteristics do African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents believe contribute to them remaining in their positions of leadership?

The goal of Research Question Two was to identify the factors or characteristics that contribute to the retention of senior leadership by African American women according to the thoughts or perceptions of the study participants. Attaining a senior leadership positions is one feat but retaining the position is yet another. Some of the same qualities that contribute to attainment of senior leadership position are also important in the retention of the positions. Some of those qualities or characteristics include: work ethic, integrity, leadership skills, etc. At the same time, some barriers to retention have been reported as work-life balance issues, gender discrimination/bias, and disputes with boards and colleagues.

The findings of this study aligned with some previously reported data related to retention of senior administrators (Stewart, 2014, Davis & Maldonado, 2015). The data from this study suggests that there are several barriers to retention. Some of the barriers are work-life balance issues, disputes with boards, and sexism/ gender bias/discrimination. Work-life balance issues tend to stem from managing the responsibilities of working in a demanding, time consuming leadership position while also managing the responsibilities of being a parent and/or spouse and taking care of household duties.

In addition, disputes with boards and gender discrimination issues can also create barriers to retention. Not knowing the politics of an institution or not understanding how decisions are made at the particular institution, may lead to leaders not being successful and ultimately not being able to retain their leadership position. Gender discrimination or bias can be present in many forms. For example, men being paid more than women for the same job, women being stereotyped as not being strong and authoritative, or the existence of “old boy networks” within organizations.

Research Question Three: How do African American women presidents, provosts and vice-presidents of four-year, private HBCUs believe that race and gender have affected their careers overall?

The goal of Research Question Three was to determine, based upon the perceptions of the participants, if and how race and gender have affected their careers. While most of the participant believe that they have experienced racial or gender bias or discrimination at some point in their career, especially if they previously worked at a PWI or in corporate America, most deny experiencing racial discrimination at their HBCU. The main issue related to marginalization or discrimination at HBCUs appears to be gender based or sexism. It is interesting that at HBCUs, which have traditionally been known for promoting racial equality and equity, women sometimes experience unequal treatment due to their gender. Gender discrimination/bias has been shown to be a factor in both the attainment and retention of African American women in position of senior leadership at HBCUs.

Research Question Four: How do African American women presidents, provosts and vice-presidents of four-year, private HBCUs believe that private HBCUs can attract and retain African American women in positions of senior leadership?

The goal of Research Question Four was to provide perspective as to how four-year, private HBCUs can attract and retain African American women in senior leadership. With the issues facing some private HBCUs, it is important to have the best leaders in place in order to guide these institutions into the future. The leaders should be chosen based on qualifications and experience rather than based upon race, gender, or any other biases or stereotypes. If an administrator has demonstrated that they are a strong and effective leader, they should be afforded a fair and equal opportunity to be placed in or remain in presidency, provost, or vice-

presidency positions. It is unfortunate that African American women are still reporting discrimination and external obstacles based upon stereotypes of them as leaders.

The interview data in this study has noted that four-year private HBCUs can possibly attract and retain African American women leaders by addressing work-life balance issues, eliminating discrimination and bias, paying leaders what they are worth, and by providing professional development. While some of these suggestions do not apply only to African American women, some of the barriers to attainment and retention are heightened for African American women simply because they are a woman and are African American. HBCUs must promote equality between men and women these institutions.

Recommendations

Recommendations for four-year, private HBCUs to attract and retain African American women senior administrators

The participants' interviews helped provide recommendations for four-year, private HBCUs as to how they can create environments that are more inclusive to African-American women and how they can attract and retain African American women in senior leadership positions. Some of the recommendations for HBCUs include:

1. **To provide work-life balance.** Work-life balance for women is a major consideration when accepting and/or remaining at particular institutions. Child-rearing and other familial obligations can sometimes affect the time that can be devoted to job responsibilities. Women sometimes have to sacrifice career ambitions in order to prioritize their family life. Also, long, stressful hours at work can have a negative impact on the physical and emotional health of a person.

2. To pay African American women what they are worth. Women, of course, should be paid what they are worth and should receive equal compensation to males that perform the same job. Some participants in this study recommended paying African American women leaders what they are worth. People in leadership have demanding, stressful jobs that sometimes require long hours. By paying leaders competitively, private HBCUs may be able to attract and retain qualified and capable administrators.

3. To change the perception that African American women are not worthy of leading successful institutions. Some participants in this study suggested that there is a perception that African American women are not worthy of leading institutions, especially when the institutions are successful. By hiring qualified African American women to lead private HBCUs that are not struggling, the perception that African American women aren't worthy of leading successful institutions can be changed.

4. To dismantle the “old boys network.” The “old boys network” refers to an informal system of support and friendship through which men use their positions of influence to help other who went to the same school or college as they did or who share a similar social background” (Dictionary.com, 2019). In this study on HBCUs, the old boys network refers to African American men. Hiring of senior administrators through the “old boys network” excludes qualified applicants from consideration for senior leadership positions. By eliminating the “old boys network,” the best leaders have an opportunity to attain leadership positions.

5. To eliminate gender bias and discrimination. African American women leaders at private HBCUs have reported experiencing gender discrimination/bias at their institutions. By eliminating gender discrimination and biases, equality and equity among senior administrators is promoted. Gender discrimination in hiring could possibly be eliminated by having hiring

committees made up of both male and female members to determine who is hired or promoted to senior leadership.

Recommendations for African American women to attain and retain senior administrative positions

The interview data also provided insight and recommendations as to how the participants believe African American women can attain and retain positions of senior leadership at four-year private HBCUs. Some of the recommendations include:

1. To have excellent educational and work credentials. The interview data revealed the importance of having good education and work credentials. Most of the participants (6 out of 9) in this study have earned doctoral degrees. Two had master's degrees and one earned a bachelor's degree as her highest degree. Work experience varied among the participants, but the participants all worked in higher education for over 20 years.

2. To maintain integrity and credibility. Several of the participants emphasized how important maintaining integrity and credibility were in both attaining and retaining leadership positions. Previous studies also identified integrity and credibility as characteristics of effective leaders (Bower & Wolverton, 2009; Northouse, 2016;). Maintaining integrity and credibility will enable others to believe in a leader and be more willing to support the leader.

3. To have mentors (formal and/or informal). Mentorship was also noted by many of the study participants as important in attaining and retaining leadership positions. Although not all of the participants stated that they had formal mentors, most of the participants discussed that they had at some point had a mentor whether they were parents or former teachers. The interview data revealed that participants valued mentors who push them and were truthful with their mentees

and did not just tell them what they wanted to hear. Previous studies also discussed how having mentors is beneficial to the mentee (Moore-Brown, 2005).

4. To pick your battles. Some of the study participants stated that it is necessary to pick your battles. While disputes and disagreement may arise within an institution, it is not necessary to become overly involved in every situation. One participant in this study stated that there is not a need to speak on every issue brought to the table. Knowing when to speak and when not to speak is important.

5. To understand the politics of an institution. Every institution has its own politics and bureaucracy. Leaders have to understand the inner workings of their institution. Even when a person is capable and qualified to lead, they may fail at their job by not knowing how to navigate the political climate of an institution. One participant in this study discussed how by not understanding the politics, you may put yourself in position where you may have to leave an institution.

Recommendations for Future Studies

This study revealed some possible future studies that may contribute to the discussion on African American women in leadership at colleges and universities. Some recommendations for future studies include examining the perceptions of African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents at public versus private four-year HBCUs, to examine the experiences of African American women who began their careers at PWIs and eventually attained positions at HBCUs, and to examine the perceptions of African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents at two-year HBCUs. By examining the experiences of African American women leaders at public versus private HBCUs, a comparison may be able to be made as to whether there are differences in the treatment of African American women in

senior leadership. Attainment and retention at public HBCUs can be examined to determine whether there are similarities or differences in how African American women attain and retain senior leadership at these institutions.

Another recommendation for further study is to examine the experiences of African American women who began their careers at PWIs and eventually attained positions at HBCUs. In this study, the participants that previously worked at PWIs discussed how their experiences were different at majority institutions than at HBCUs. Some of the participants in this study revealed that while they experienced gender discrimination at HBCUs, they experienced both racial and gender discrimination at PWIs. Thereby suggesting that there may be differences in how African American women attain and retain senior leadership positions at PWIs in comparison to HBCUs. Further study into how African American women who made the transition from PWIs to HBCUS can provide insight into whether working at a PWI enabled the women leaders to be more effective at a HBCU.

Also, examining the perceptions of African American women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents at two-year HBCUs may be another study worth exploring. The environments at two-year HBCUs may differ from those of four-year HBCUs. Those differences may impact the experiences of African American women at two-year institutions. Also, the governance of two-year HBCUs may affect whether African American women are able to attain and retain positions of leadership at these colleges.

Summary

In summary, this study revealed several characteristics of the leaders that contributed to their senior leadership position attainment. Some of those characteristics were work ethic, integrity, discipline, education, work experience and upbringing. The participants also discussed some of

the barriers to retention of the senior leadership positions including, work/life balance, not understanding the politics of an institution, not getting along with the board or stakeholders, not producing positive results and sexism or gender biases.

In relation to racial and gender bias and discrimination, most of the participants stated that at some point in their career they have experienced some type of bias or discrimination whether it is racial or gender related. For the most part, the racial discrimination was experienced at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) or corporate organizations. Most of the participants, however, stated that they have not experienced racial bias or discrimination at HBCUS.

The ability of HBCUs to attract and retain African American women in positions of leadership is dependent on many factors. This study and previous studies recommend HBCUs provide work-life balance, pay African American women what they are worth change the perception that African American women are not worthy of leading successful institutions, dismantle the “old boys network, and to eliminate gender bias and discrimination. In order to encourage more women to strive for presidency or senior leadership positions at private HBCUs, institutions must make equity and equality a major priority.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: IRB LETTER



August 1, 2019

Felecia Cunningham
College of Education
Department of ELPTS
Box 870302

Re: IRB # EX-19-CM-175: "A Qualitative Study on the Perceptions of African American Women Presidents and Vice-Presidents of Historically Black Colleges and Universities on How Race and Gender Have Impacted their Careers"

Dear Ms. Cunningham,

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your proposed research. Your application has been given exempt approval according to 45 CFR part 46. Approval has been given under exempt review category 2 as outlined below:

(2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if: (iii) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

The approval for your application will lapse on July 31, 2020. If your research will continue beyond this date, please submit the annual report to the IRB as required by University policy before the lapse. Please note, any modifications made in research design, methodology, or procedures must be submitted to and approved by the IRB before implementation. Please submit a final report form when the study is complete.

Please use reproductions of the IRB-approved informed consent form to obtain consent from your participants.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature is written over a small, faint printed name.

APPENDIX B: EMAIL SCRIPT

My name is Felecia Cunningham and I am currently a doctoral student in the Executive Ed. D program at the University of Alabama. I am currently working on my dissertation and my topic is related to African American women presidents and vice-presidents of HBCUs and their perceptions on the roles race and gender have played in their careers. I would like to request an interview with you in relation to perception and experiences as an African American woman in higher education. The interview will be confidential and neither your name, institution or other identifying information will be included in any publication or presentation. The interview will last 1-2 hours. I am willing to meet with you at the place and time of your choosing. I have attached an information sheet providing the background and purpose of the study.

Please contact me as soon as possible if you would like to assist me in my study. Thank you in advance for the consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Felecia Cunningham
Doctoral Student in Higher Education Administration
The University of Alabama
Fdcunningham@crimson.ua.edu
(205) 902-3758

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

A Qualitative Study on the Perceptions of African American Women Presidents and Vice-Presidents of Historically Black Colleges and Universities on How Race and Gender Have Impacted Their Careers

Informed Consent

Please read this informed consent carefully before you decide to participate in the study.

Consent Form Key Information:

- The interview will take approximately one-two hours.
- The interview will be audio recorded and a transcript will be produced.
- You will be sent the transcript and given the opportunity to correct any factual errors.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of the study is to examine African American women presidents and vice-presidents of HBCUs and their perceptions on the roles race and gender have played in their careers. This topic is important because while the numbers of African American women in senior leadership have increased over the years, the numbers are still lower than their male counterparts. It is important to understand not only how African American women attain college and university president and vice-president positions, but also how and why they are able to remain in these leadership positions long-term.

What you will do in the study: You will be interviewed by me to obtain your perceptions and thoughts related to how race and gender have impacted your career. For this study, I will interview you face to face, for approximately 1-2 hours at the location and time of your choosing. Audio recording of the interview will be required but proper procedures will be taken to keep the audio recording confidential and private. You may be contacted post-interview to clarify responses or information, if necessary, via letter and phone call. Also, you will be provided the interview transcript to review and may contact me to clarify any of your responses. You may skip any question that makes you uncomfortable and you can stop the interview at any time.

Time required: The study will require about 1-2 hours of your time.

Risks: There is minimum risk involved in this study. Since the interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed there is a potential risk of breach of confidentiality. However, I will take all necessary precautions to protect your data.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research study. The study may help you to understand the importance of equality and inclusion of African American women in the field of higher education administration.

Confidentiality: The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. The audio recordings of your interview will be transcribed and your information will be assigned a code number. All audio recordings of your interview will be destroyed within one month of transcription. The interview transcription and the list connecting your name to the code number will be kept in a locked file. The interview transcription and the list connecting your name to the code number will be destroyed after 6 years. Your name will not be used in any report.

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IRB
CONSENT FORM APPROVED: 8/1/2019
EXPIRATION DATE: 7/31/2020

Voluntary participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. All audio tapes of interviews will be destroyed if you decide to withdraw from the study. If you would like to withdraw from the study after the interview is completed, please contact me.

How to withdraw from the study: You have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the study at any time. If you want to withdraw from the study during the interview, tell the researcher to stop the interview. Or if you would like to withdraw from the study after the interview is completed, contact the researcher via email or letter.

Compensation/Reimbursement: You will receive no payment for participating in the study.

If you have questions about the study or need to report a study related issue please contact, contact:

Felecia Cunningham
Doctoral Student
Executive Ed.D in Higher Education Administration Program
(205)902-3758
fdcunningham@crimson.ua.edu

Dr. Karri Holley
Faculty Advisor
Higher Education Program
(205) 348-7825
kholley@ua.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research study, would like to make suggestions or file complaints and concerns about the research study, please contact:
Ms. Tanta Myles, the University of Alabama Research Compliance Officer at (205)-348-8461 or toll-free at 1-877-820-3066. You may also ask questions, make suggestions, or file complaints and concerns through the IRB Outreach Website at <http://ovpred.ua.edu/research-compliance/prco/>. You may email the Office for Research Compliance at rscompliance@research.ua.edu.

Agreement:

- I agree to participate in the research study described above.
- I do not agree to participate in the research study described above.
- I agree to audio recording in the research study described above.
- I do not agree to audio recording in the research study described above.

Signature of Research Participant

Date

Print Name of Research Participant

Signature of Investigator or other Person Obtaining Consent

Date

Print Name of Investigator or other Person Obtaining Consent

Page 3 of 3

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IRB
CONSENT FORM APPROVED: 8/1/2019
EXPIRATION DATE: 7/31/2020

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

- A. Introductions/ Informed Consent
- B. I am a doctoral student at the University of Alabama. For my dissertation, I am exploring the perceptions of African American women presidents and vice-presidents on how they feel race and gender have impacted their careers.
- C. All of your personal identifying information will remain confidential and I will use numerical codes for your name and institution. The interview will last about an hour. Do I have your permission to record our conversation today?
- D. Background Information
 - 1. What is your current position?
 - 2. How many years have you been in your current position?
 - 3. What was your position prior to your current position?
 - 4. What is your educational background?
 - 5. What is your professional work experience?
- E. Life Experiences
 - 1. Tell me about your childhood. What was the composition of your family? Where were you in the birth order?
 - 2. Tell me about your mother and father. What were their roles in the family? What were their occupations? What were their educational backgrounds?
 - 3. How do you think your parents shaped who you are today?
 - 4. Were there other persons that influenced who you are today?
 - 5. Were there specific life experiences growing up or in college that you think had an impact on who you are today?
- F. Experiences in Higher Education
 - 1. Why did you decide to work at an HBCU?
 - 2. How do you think you were able to attain your current position?
 - 3. What characteristics or qualifications do you feel were most important in the attainment of your current position?
 - 4. What are your current job responsibilities?
 - 5. Tell me about a typical day at work?
 - 6. What do you feel is your leadership style?
 - 7. What are some of the challenges you face being an African American woman?
 - 8. How do you handle these challenges?
 - 9. How do you think you have been able to remain in your current position?
 - 10. In your career have you experienced any discrimination related to your gender?

11. If so, please explain?
12. Do you think you have been denied assignments or positions because you are a woman?
13. In your career have you experienced any discrimination related to your race?
14. If so, please explain?
15. Do you think you have been denied assignments or positions because of your race?
16. If applicable, do you feel more discriminated against as a woman or because of your race or both equally?
17. If applicable, how have your experiences at an HBCU differed from your experiences at majority institutions?
18. How do you feel African American women are treated in leadership positions at your institution?
19. Do you feel that you are treated differently than other demographics on your campus?
20. Do you feel that you have been treated differently than other demographics throughout your career?
21. What advice would you give to another African American woman aspiring to senior leadership at an HBCU?
22. What advice would you give to HBCUs in relation to attracting and keeping African American women leaders on their campuses?
23. Is there anything else that you would like to say or add?

APPENDIX E: LIST OF HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

School	City	State/Territory	Founded	Type	2 or 4 year
Alabama A&M University	Normal	Alabama	1875	Public	4
Alabama State University	Montgomery	Alabama	1867	Public	4
Albany State University	Albany	Georgia	1903	Public	4
Alcorn State University	Lorman	Mississippi	1871	Public	4
Allen University	Columbia	South Carolina	1870	Private	4
American Baptist College	Nashville	Tennessee	1924	Private	4
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff	Pine Bluff	Arkansas	1873	Public	4
Arkansas Baptist College	Little Rock	Arkansas	1884	Private	4
Barber-Scotia College**	Concord	North Carolina	1867	Private	4
Benedict College	Columbia	South Carolina	1870	Private	4
Bennett College	Greensboro	North Carolina	1873	Private	4
Bethune-Cookman University	Daytona Beach	Florida	1904	Private	4
Bishop State Community College	Mobile	Alabama	1927	Public	2
Bluefield State College	Bluefield	West Virginia	1895	Public	4
Bowie State University	Bowie	Maryland	1865	Public	4
Central State University	Wilberforce	Ohio	1887	Public	4
Cheyney University of Pennsylvania	Cheyney	Pennsylvania	1837	Public	4
Claflin University	Orangeburg	South Carolina	1869	Private	4
Clark Atlanta University	Atlanta	Georgia	1865	Private	4
Clinton College	Rock Hill	South Carolina	1894	Private	2

Coahoma Community College	Coahoma County	Mississippi	1924	Public	2
Coppin State University	Baltimore	Maryland	1900	Public	4
Delaware State University	Dover	Delaware	1891	Public	4
Denmark Technical College	Denmark	South Carolina	1947	Public	2
Dillard University	New Orleans	Louisiana	1869	Private	4
University of the District of Columbia	Washington	District of Columbia	1851	Public	4
Edward Waters College	Jacksonville	Florida	1866	Private	4
Elizabeth City State University	Elizabeth City	North Carolina	1891	Public	4
Fayetteville State University	Fayetteville	North Carolina	1867	Public	4
Fisk University	Nashville	Tennessee	1866	Private	4
Florida A&M University	Tallahassee	Florida	1887	Public	4
Florida Memorial University	Miami Gardens	Florida	1879	Private	4
Fort Valley State University	Fort Valley	Georgia	1895	Public	4
Gadsden State Community College	Gadsden	Alabama	1925	Public	2
Grambling State University	Grambling	Louisiana	1901	Public	4
Hampton University	Hampton	Virginia	1868	Private	4
Harris-Stowe State University	St. Louis	Missouri	1857	Public	4
Hinds Community College at Utica	Utica	Mississippi	1903	Public	2
Howard University	Washington	District of Columbia	1867	Private	4

Huston-Tillotson University	Austin	Texas	1875	Private	4
Interdenominational Theological Center	Atlanta	Georgia	1958	Private	4
J. F. Drake State Technical College	Huntsville	Alabama	1961	Public	2
Jackson State University	Jackson	Mississippi	1877	Public	4
Jarvis Christian College	Hawkins	Texas	1912	Private	4
Johnson C. Smith University	Charlotte	North Carolina	1867	Private	4
Kentucky State University	Frankfort	Kentucky	1886	Public	4
Knoxville College**	Knoxville (Mechanicsville)	Tennessee	1875	Private	4
Lane College	Jackson	Tennessee	1882	Private	4
Langston University	Langston	Oklahoma	1897	Public	4
Lawson State Community College	Bessemer	Alabama	1949	Public	2
LeMoyne-Owen College	Memphis	Tennessee	1862	Private	4
Lincoln University	Chester County	Pennsylvania	1854	Public	4
Lincoln University of Missouri	Jefferson City	Missouri	1866	Public	4
Livingstone College	Salisbury	North Carolina	1879	Private	4
University of Maryland Eastern Shore	Princess Anne	Maryland	1886	Public	4
Meharry Medical College	Nashville	Tennessee	1876	Private	4
Miles College	Fairfield	Alabama	1905	Private	4
Mississippi Valley State University	Itta Bena	Mississippi	1950	Public	4
Morehouse College	Atlanta	Georgia	1867	Private	4

Morehouse School of Medicine	Atlanta	Georgia	1975	Private	4
Morgan State University	Baltimore	Maryland	1867	Public	4
Morris Brown College**	Atlanta	Georgia	1881	Private	4
Morris College	Sumter	South Carolina	1908	Private	4
Norfolk State University	Norfolk	Virginia	1935	Public	4
North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University	Greensboro	North Carolina	1891	Public	2
North Carolina Central University	Durham	North Carolina	1910	Public	4
Oakwood University	Huntsville	Alabama	1896	Private	4
Paine College	Augusta	Georgia	1882	Private	4
Paul Quinn College	Dallas	Texas	1872	Private	4
Payne Theological Seminary*	Wilberforce	Ohio	1856	Private	4
Philander Smith College	Little Rock	Arkansas	1877	Private	4
Prairie View A&M University	Prairie View	Texas	1876	Public	4
Rust College	Holly Springs	Mississippi	1866	Private	4
Savannah State University	Savannah	Georgia	1890	Public	4
Selma University	Selma	Alabama	1878	Private	4
Shaw University	Raleigh	North Carolina	1865	Private	4
Shorter College	Little Rock	Arkansas	1886	Private	4
Shelton State Community College	Tuscaloosa	Alabama	1952	Public	2
Simmons College	Louisville	Kentucky	1869	Private	4

South Carolina State University	Orangeburg	South Carolina	1896	Public	2
Southern University at New Orleans	New Orleans	Louisiana	1959	Public	4
Southern University at Shreveport	Shreveport	Louisiana	1967	Public	4
Southern University and A&M College	Baton Rouge	Louisiana	1880	Public	4
Southwestern Christian College	Terrell	Texas	1948	Private	4
Spelman College	Atlanta	Georgia	1881	Private	4
St. Augustine's University	Raleigh	North Carolina	1867	Private	4
St. Philip's College	San Antonio	Texas	1898	Public	4
Stillman College	Tuscaloosa	Alabama	1876	Private	4
Talladega College	Talladega County	Alabama	1867	Private	4
Tennessee State University	Nashville	Tennessee	1912	Public	4
Texas College	Tyler	Texas	1894	Private	4
Texas Southern University	Houston	Texas	1927	Public	4
Tougaloo College	Hinds County	Mississippi	1869	Private	4
Trenholm State Technical College	Montgomery	Alabama	1947	Public	4
Tuskegee University	Tuskegee	Alabama	1881	Private	4
University of the Virgin Islands	St. Croix & St. Thomas	United States Virgin Islands	1962	Public	4
Virginia State University	Petersburg	Virginia	1882	Public	4
Virginia Union University	Richmond	Virginia	1865	Private	4
Virginia University of Lynchburg	Lynchburg	Virginia	1886	Private	4

Voorhees College	Denmark	South Carolina	1897	Private	4
West Virginia State University	Institute	West Virginia	1891	Public	4
Wilberforce University	Wilberforce	Ohio	1856	Private	4
Wiley College	Marshall	Texas	1873	Private	4
Winston-Salem State University	Winston-Salem	North Carolina	1892	Public	4
Xavier University of Louisiana	New Orleans	Louisiana	1915	Private	4

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Source: (NCES, 2018; The Hundred-Seven, 2020).