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THE *Negro Educational Review*

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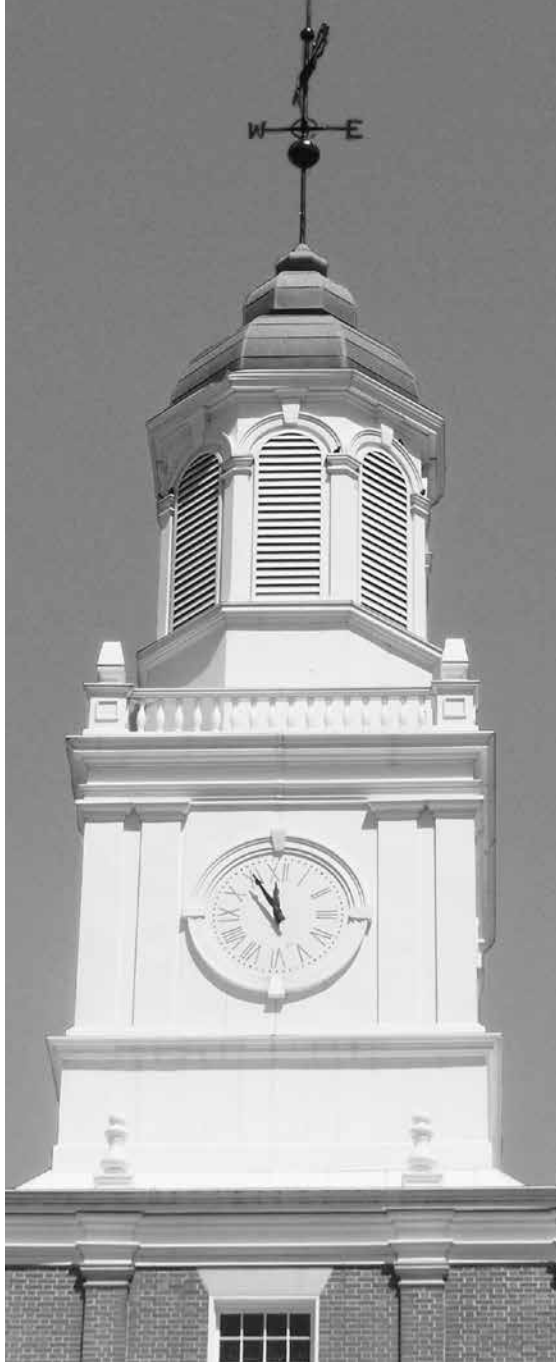
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Defining the Situation: Surviving and Thriving in the Academy

Alice M. Scales¹
Editor-in-Chief

One benchmark of success for students in the United States and other countries is having successfully survived and thrived in higher education institutions. These institutions, often referred to as *the academy*, are for study of special instruction or training through curricula in such fields as education, literature, medicine, engineering, science, technology, business, law, and mathematics on college and university campuses. Additionally, “a group of authorities and leaders in a field of scholarship ... are often permitted to dictate standards, prescribe methods, and criticize ideas” (Dictionary.com, LLC, 2013). These authorities and leaders are positioned as professors, associate professors, assistant professors, instructors, lecturers, and others in the academy. According to data presented by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the total number of faculty for 2011 was 761,619 in U.S. higher education institutions. There were 181,508 professors; 155,200 associate professors; 174,045 assistant professors; 109,054 instructors; 34,477 lecturers; 107,335 were classified as other; and 334,637 of this total were female (Table 291, 2012). Additionally, Altbach, Reisberg, and Pacheco (2013) reported that “there were at least six million postsecondary teachers worldwide in 2007; their numbers are increasing rapidly to keep up with growing enrollments” (p. 91).

Faculty roles in the academy are varied and include teaching, research, and service work. Finkelstein (2012) describes faculty roles as changing in academe. His study, using 2007-08 data, provides a comparison of changing faculties “current conditions of academic work and careers in 19 nations, including 13 developed countries” (p. 64). Generally, faculty roles were compared between views of American faculty with those in predominantly English-speaking systems, Continental Europe, and economically advanced countries (pp. 67-68). By and large the American professors were more diverse in their careers, more focused on teaching in the Arts and Humanities than research, less involved in university governance, and had more female faculty than 7 of the other 13 developed countries. Even with these differences, results of data in Table 282 (2012) for 2010 show that 691,000 foreign students enrolled in colleges in the U.S. Also, their top fields of study were “Business and Management, Engineering, Math and Computer Science, and Social Sciences” (OpenDoors[®], 2012).

Numerous college and university campuses are located in virtually every state in the U.S. For academic year 2008, Table 280 (2012) shows 4,495 higher education institutions in the U.S. with California having the most at 436 and Wyoming having the fewest at 11. But, for academic year 2009-10 Table 1 (2009, Fall) shows 6,742 for 2-year, 4-year, and less than 2-year U.S. institutions. Additionally, the BrainTracks’s database indicates over 7,000 (US Colleges and Universities, 1996-2013) for the U.S. and an overall total of more than 13,000 in 194 countries across continents (Colleges and Universities by Country, 1996-2013). Students are numerous as well. “The most recent UNESCO figures estimate that there are some 150.6 million tertiary [higher] education students globally ... roughly a 53% increase over UNESCO’s 2000 estimate of 98.3 million tertiary students worldwide” (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009, p. 97). Also, the latest United Institute for Statistics (UIS) data show that at least 3.6 million students enrolled in tertiary education abroad in 2010 with the U.S. enrolling more students than other countries (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, n.d.). What’s more, although Table 286 (2011) shows that

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students are earning more degrees in business (358,000), social sciences and history (173,000), health professions and related programs (130,000), and education (101,000); in their article “*Occupational Employment Projections to 2018*,” Lacey and Wright (2010) shows that in the professional category; biomedical engineers, computer-related, and healthcare are the fastest growing occupations. Of concern is that not only are women more likely to study at the tertiary level than men, but data showed that in 62 out of 80 countries, “women are more likely to graduate in the field of Education” (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2010, p. 74). How can the landscape for women be expanded? One scenario could include hiring more women faculty in higher education. However, in Curtis’ (2011) examination of faculty gender equity, he noted very slow progress in hiring women as full-time faculty members thus pointing to a need for more women in higher education.

The academy’s profusion of campuses, students, and faculties are subject to a person-in-command (i.e., president or chancellor or chief executive officer) for leadership. In his article Scott (2013) suggests that this person should not only have strong leadership qualities but should also interact well with funding governmental bodies and should communicate well with surrounding communities. Although responsibilities of this person can vary from campus to campus, generally his/her broad administrative duties include effectively managing the institution (e.g., academic affairs, maintenance of facilities, fund raising, enrollment, and residence life).

Primarily, on college and university campuses, faculty, students, and presidents are involved in bringing about a mega portion of the professional workforce. This mixture of their knowledge, skill, and talent is complex and requires examination from several perspectives. Articles in the 2011 & 2012 volume of *The Negro Educational Review (NER)*, addressed faculty, specifically underrepresented “*Women in Academe*.” Articles in this 2013 volume include that focus, but perceptions of college students and college presidents are also examined. Graham in the first article, “*Black Teacher Education Candidates’ Performance on PRAXIS I: What Test Results Do Not Tell Us*,” explores college students’ perceptions of test-taking and particularly how instructional preparation for the Praxis I influenced their views of how tests are used to determine their performance as classroom teachers. Second, Tucker and Winsor in their article, “*Where Extrinsic Meets Intrinsic Motivation: An Investigation of Black Student Persistence in Pre-Health Careers*,” were equally concerned about Black students matriculating in and graduating from professional schools in healthcare. Research supports a need for these professionals as populations tend to search for like-racial health care providers.

The next three articles focus on successes and challenges faced by racially underrepresented women faculty in the academy. In addition to expected roles of these women faculty, for survival, many junior faculty have found a need to establish professional networks for themselves. In this third article, “*Black Female Faculty Success and Early Career Professional Development*,” Jones and Osborne-Lampkin’s address writing and publishing, networking, and mentoring through a bootcamp-like experience. They found that traditional socialization activities fail to prepare these faculty members for entry into a professional network. Griffin in the fourth article, “*Pursuing Tenure and Promotion in the Academy: A Librarian’s Cautionary Tale*,” discusses how being on the tenure track as a Black female academic librarian challenged her to initiate action which forced her inclusion into mainstream faculty associations and connections in academe. Also, she describes her struggles and successes inherent in the culture of her discipline. The fifth article, “*Becoming Academicians: An Ethnographic Analysis of the Figured Worlds of Racially Underrepresented Female Faculty*,” by Chang, Welton, Martinez, and Cortez provides a window into how pre-tenure female faculty understand themselves as academicians. They argue that their figured worlds are where they come to understand themselves and make sense of becoming academicians.

Students and faculty survive and thrive along with college leaders. Although leadership can be found at several levels, the president is top administrator. In the sixth article, “*Demystifying the*

Contributions of Public Land-Grant Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Voices of HBCU Presidents,” Esters and Strayhorn point out that little attention has focused on presidents, especially those at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). Here, they point out that contributions of these institutions to communities, students, and racial uplift are immeasurable. Additionally, these HBCUs have been the educating source for Black students and the establishment of higher education for Black faculty and administrators for more than a century. To advance its services, at this time, one HBCU is transitioning **NER** to its campus.

NER’s Transition

Since its founding in 1950 at Alcorn College (n.d.), the oldest public land-grant HBCU in the U.S., editors of **The Negro Educational Review (NER)** have retained their HBCU linkages. In continuation of those HBCU linkages, Fayetteville State University (2013) has become the new home for **NER**. Proudly, I am not only overjoyed with **NER**’s new home but I am also thankful to God for it. Another change for **NER** is my transitioning from my role as editor-in-chief to president² of the board. Allow me to share a few parting thoughts about my journey with **NER**.

In 2006 I was elected by the editorial board to the **NER** office of editor-in-chief.³ As the fifth person to occupy that office, I felt thankful, humbled, and yes apprehensive about the challenges I would face. These past years with **NER** have been more than I could have professionally imagined. Rewards in the form of feedback about articles have been immense. One phenomenal aspect has been access through online databases. Currently, readers can access **NER** through such databases as EBSCO, ProQuest, Yellowbrix, Bloomberg, Questia, HighBeam, and BNET. Only one source, EBSCO for volume years 1994 to current, provides a quarterly count of the number of times an article is accessed through its database. Information about those numbers, author title, and volume number are reported in past issues of **NER**. For example, the last volume (Usage Report for **NER**, 2011 & 2012, pp. 271-284) shows that a number of articles were accessed from July 2010 to December 2011 between 500 and 1200 times; most were accessed over 100 times through EBSCO.

Another academic feature, with access through the Internet, is that **NER** provides the forum for scholars that founders intended. Also, scholars use their **NER** published articles to not only inform their students but to also showcase their scholarship for faculty evaluations or for promotion and tenure. I believe cofounders, Dr. J. Irving E. Scott and Dr. R. Grann Lloyd, would approve of the academic journey that **NER** has travelled since its first publication in 1950, and that it will continue to travel.

It has been my honor to serve as editor-in-chief and as co-managing editor⁴ for these past years. To a greater extent, I am thankful and I applaud Dr. Shirley A. Biggs for serving as co-managing editor of **NER** since 2005. Her services to **NER** are inestimable. It is impossible to list all of her services to **NER**, however, I feel obliged to list a few. She is an **NER** executive editor who chaired our research and development branch, solicited manuscripts, mentored authors, edited manuscripts, conducted writing workshops, wrote proposals, attended conferences, and participated in numerous **NER** events. She will remain on the **NER** editorial board as consulting editor. As we have talked over the years, I think we both came to realize that it is time for other scholars to take and protect the **NER** torch lit 63 years ago by Dr.

² **NER** Presidents-of-the-Board: Dr. R. Gran Lloyd, 1976-1995; Dr. F.C. Richardson, 1995-2006; and Dr. Mac A. Stewart, 2006-2013.

³ **NER** Editors-in-Chief: Dr. J. Irving E. Scott, 1950-1981; Dr. R. Grann Lloyd, 1981-1995; Dr. William Jemmerson Holloway, 1995-1999; Dr. Mac A. Stewart, 1999-2006; and Dr. Alice M. Scales 2006-2013.

⁴ **NER** Managing Editors: Dr. R. Gran Lloyd, 1950-1995; Dr. Charles U. Smith, 1995-2005; Co-Managing Editors – Dr. Shirley A. Biggs and Dr. Alice M. Scales, 2005-2013.

Scott and Dr. Lloyd. Secondly, I extend my thanks to all editors (i.e., executive, advisory, and guest), supporters, and **NER's** worldwide audience for your past, present, and future consideration of **NER**.

I feel that we have continued to provide a “knowledge base to which all mankind may turn for accurate information regarding the Black experience” (Lloyd, 1975, p. 2). Additionally, we have endeavored to adhere to the standards, allegiances, and moral injunctions⁵ set forth by **NER** executive editors 38 years ago. These features are continuing as we transition from me as editor-in-chief to Dr. LaDelle Olion newly elected editor-in-chief of **NER**.

Currently, Dr. Olion is an executive editor of **NER** and Professor and Dean at Fayetteville State University. His work with **NER** over the last 25 years has resulted in him also serving as an advisory editor, secretary, treasurer, and member of the research and development branch. His experiences and positions as Professor, Dean of the Graduate School and Sponsored Research, Research Associate, and Scholarly endeavors situates him to ensure that **NER** will continue to:

strive to (a) meticulously seek out and publish the truth, (b) responsibly question the status quo when it threatens to endanger or compromise the lives of Blacks throughout the Diaspora, (c) relentlessly examine controversial issues from a range of perspectives to prevent unwarranted slant or bias, and (d) reliably provide opportunities for those who have the intellectual tools and knowledge in specific areas to present their work in **NER** (Scales & Biggs, 2005, p. 239).

In addition to Dr. Olion's move into the office of editor-in-chief, **NER** is relocating from Florida A&M University (*About Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University*, 1887-2013) to his campus, Fayetteville State University, with support from Chancellor James A. Anderson (2013). We, the editors, are excited about **NER's** move to North Carolina's second-oldest public educational institution.

Dr. LaDelle Olion, we **NER** editors welcome you as our newly elected editor-in-chief. We also welcome Dr. Doreen B. Hilton and Dr. Noran L. Moffett (both at Fayetteville State University) as co-managing editors of **NER**. We are confident that **NER's** journey under your leadership will continue as a publication venue that reliably provides opportunities for scholars and consumers of knowledge worldwide.

Conclusion

On behalf of the **NER** board of editors, Co-Managing Editor Dr. Shirley A. Biggs and I are pleased to present this 2013 volume 64, Nos. 1-4 to you. This volume is one of many in a continuous response to Lloyd's (1950) claim that one of **NER's** objectives is to insure the presence of “a scholarly publication for educators in all fields of educational endeavor” (p. 1). More specifically, in the first publication of **NER**, as managing editor, he stated that “Negro educators have not had sufficient media through which to make known the major findings of their research and experiments; their experiences, interpretations, and re-interpretations; their practical needs and the realities of their classrooms” (p. 1).

⁵ In his *Defining the Situation: The Next Quarter Century*, Lloyd (1975, pp. 2-4) presents the list of standards, allegiances, and moral injunctions. They are standards of pessimism or optimism, standards of no bias, and standards of consistency. There are allegiances to justice rather than discrimination, and allegiance to character, ideals, and principles. In terms of moral injunctions, he states that “*The Review* must continue its unflagging struggle for the rights which all persons are due by virtue of their humanity ... [and it must never] become the White man's Black journal” (p. 4).

Sixty-three years later *NER* has gone digital. Manuscripts are considered and accepted from persons without regard to race, ethnicity, gender, nationality, or institutional affiliation. Manuscripts for future issues should be submitted to Dr. LaDelle Olion at NER@uncfsu.edu.

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Black Teacher Education Candidates' Performance on PRAXIS I: What Test Results Do Not Tell Us

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Abstract

This investigation examined the Praxis I perceptions of Black undergraduate Education majors seeking admission into the Teacher Education Program at a historically Black university. Participants were 52 students conveniently selected from an Introduction to Teacher Education course where preparation for the Praxis I is emphasized. Academic identity, stereotype threat, and assessment bias were used as the conceptual framework to investigate how these students perceived standardized tests and the Praxis I examination. Findings showed that students in this study had extensive experience with standardized tests but did not know “how to” take them. Additionally, they did not perceive the Praxis I or other standardized tests as culturally biased but did argue their belief that these measurements do not accurately depict an individual’s “real self.” Furthermore, findings showed that these students suffered from stereotype threat prior to and while taking test even in a non-interracial setting.

Introduction

Goldhaber (2007) noted that education research dating back to the 1966 *Coleman Report* has concluded that teacher quality is the most important school-related factor that positively influences student learning. Yet, educational research has found that teacher quality varies considerably among teachers (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rockoff, 2004). For this reason, legislators have passed educational policies as a means to strengthen the quality of teachers produced through the teacher licensure process throughout the United States. While the teacher licensure process varies from state to state, most have similar employability requirements, which often include possession of a bachelor’s degree, a criminal background check, and some level of coursework or formal preparation in content and content pedagogy often assessed by a traditional test.

Although each state has its own testing system for prospective teachers, the most frequently used test among states is the Praxis Series. Earlier Albers (2002) indicated that “the Praxis Series is used now in over 35 states across the nation” (p. 106) to assess teachers’ competencies. Specifically, the Series assesses prospective teacher’s general reading comprehension, grammar and writing skills, and computational ability (Praxis I), discipline-specific content knowledge and content pedagogical skill

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(Praxis II), and classroom performance (Praxis III). These tests are used by states as an indicator to provide evidence that newly licensed teachers are highly qualified and possess the basic competencies required to teach. These tests provide states a counterargument to the assertion that “newly certified teachers are ill-prepared” (Albers, 2002, p. 108).

With an increased focus on teacher testing, the number of ethnic and racial minority teachers has declined sharply. According to the American Association of Colleges for Teaching Education (AACTE), there were nearly 3.5 million public school teachers in the United States in 2010 and only 17% were underrepresented minorities (NCES, 2010). Thus, the teacher workforce is comprised primarily of White teachers while the student population of K-12 public schools grows increasingly more diverse in terms of minority ethnic and racial composition. Wakefield (2003) argued this disparity is created and sustained by teacher testing during the teacher certification process. He asserted that the Praxis Series “guard the door to the teaching profession in many of the nation’s states” (p. 380), especially for ethnic minority candidates. Data from Educational Testing Services (Nettles, Scatton, & Steinberg, 2011) on test taker performance between 2005 and 2009 illustrate an explicit test score gap between Black first-time test takers on the Praxis I and White first-time test takers. According to these data, 40.7% of Black first-time test takers passed the Praxis I Reading subtest compared to 81.5% of White first-time test takers; additionally, 44.2% of Black first-time test takers passed the Praxis I Writing subtest compared to 79.5% of White first-time test takers, and 36.8% of Black first-time test takers passed the Praxis I Mathematics subtest compared to 78.2% of White first-time test takers. Given that a number of Schools and Colleges of Education throughout the United States rely on the Praxis I as an admission criterion into their teacher education programs, these data clearly indicate that fewer Black than White test takers are passing the test. Consequently, Wakefield suggested this test more than any other criterion is single-handedly reducing the number of minorities who enter the teaching profession.

Bennett, McWhorter, and Kuykendall (2006) and Grant (2004) contended the Praxis Series perpetuates a system of institutional discrimination and oppression, or the “established policies and practices that systematically produce inequalities in American society” (Bennett, McWhorter, & Kuykendall, 2006, p. 352). For some minority students, standardized examinations are a source of oppression as they place students into segregated classrooms frequently taught by the least qualified or most novice teachers in the school (National Research Council, 1999). A number of scholars argue this type of oppression is perpetuated by the structure of schools since they typically reward students who possess cultural and social capital and thereby have the resources necessary to navigate various oppressive structures (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Collins, 2009; Contreras, 2005; DiMaggio, 1982). Thus, students without such cultural and social capital and from lower socioeconomic status environments tend to encounter lowered learning expectations and incompatible communication patterns between the sociolinguistic environment of the school and the home (Meece & Kurtz-Costes, 2001; Oakes, 1985; Oakes & Guiton, 1995). Additionally, Steele (1992) argued that students from this population—a minority population—may suffer from stereotype threat in this type of oppressive environment as they may fear that their behaviors and actions may affirm negative stereotypes held by persons from the majority population; consequently, these students may succumb to this form of psychological pressure and disconnect from academics. As a result, these students become locked into a perpetual cycle of subjugation, bias, and discrimination.

Nearly nonexistent in the current research literature are data related to the Praxis I test performance of ethnic and racial minority students, especially Black students, pursuing teaching as a profession at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Many teacher education programs throughout the United States rely on the Praxis examination series as assessment benchmarks for progress toward teacher licensure. As Wakefield (2003) indicated, the Praxis I examination, the standardized test required to enter the teacher education program at many colleges and universities across the nation, has served as a barrier for many minority students. Madkins (2011) wrote:

Between 1994 and 1997, Black candidates had the lowest rate of passing the Praxis I when compared to other subgroups. About 74% of Black candidates passed the test compared to 94% of White candidates. For the 2002-2005 cohort, the rate dropped to 52% to 84% passing for Black and White candidates, respectively (p. 421).

The extant literature provides very little data on how Black teacher education candidates at historically Black colleges and universities are impacted by these tests. Research data do not indicate the extent to which these candidates utilize resources to prepare for the Praxis I nor do they reveal how psychological variables may influence their performance on this test.

Given that historically Black colleges and universities are the largest producers of minority teachers in the United States (Futrell, 1999; Irizarry, 2007), it is imperative more research data come from these institutions regarding their students' experiences with these types of standardized tests, especially given the performance disparity between Black and White prospective teacher education candidates. The variance between their performance perpetuates a gap which the United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan (2010) addressed at the Historically Black Colleges and University (HBCU) Symposium at North Carolina Central University when he stated that,

Every day, [Black] ... teachers are doing extraordinary work in helping to close the achievement gap. Yet we also know that [Black] ... children have too few [Black] ... teachers. Nationwide, more than 35% of public school students are Black or Hispanic, but fewer than 15% of our teachers are Black or Latino.

Duncan's comments point to the need for more ethnic and racial minority teachers. Even so an examination of the extant literature reveals very little research has been conducted on the experiences of teacher education candidates at HBCUs. The number of Black teachers in the United States has decreased, and scholars including Wakefield (2003) have argued it is a direct result of the Praxis I test. Yet, research provides very little insight on the influence social capital has on the test preparation process for Black students in teacher education programs or how social capital has impacted their preparation on previous standardized tests. The literature also provides little information about how Black students in teacher education programs at HBCUs perceive the Praxis I or how stereotype threat may influence these students' test taking experience. It is within this context that I examined their perceptions of and their experiences with the Praxis I since it is an entrance requirement into many teacher education programs in Schools and Colleges of Education across the United States. More specifically, my goal was to explore the extent that social capital has influenced their standardized testing experiences, their perceptions of the Praxis I as predictor of teaching ability, and how stereotype threat impacts their test performance. Further, my aim of this investigation was to examine ways these students utilized resources to prepare for the Praxis I while concurrently exploring the influence psychological factors had on their perception of the test.

Conceptual Framework

The three areas of literature that provided a framework for this investigation were: social capital theory, assessment bias, and stereotype threat with focused interest in precollegiate standardized test preparation, perceptions of standardized test, and experiences with standardized tests. By delving into the research literature on these concepts and ideas, I was able to examine the issue of Praxis I and Black students at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in greater depth.

Social Capital Theory

Social capital originated in the areas of sociology, political science, public health, and housing (Horvat, Weininger, & Lareau, 2003). Bourdieu (1986) operationalized social capital as:

The aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of the durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group—which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively owned capital, a “credential” which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word (p. 247).

According to Bourdieu, individuals have relationships with people who have access to resources. As a byproduct of this network, these individuals also have access to those resources if utilized. Lin (1999) contended that the concept of social capital “is rather simple and straightforward: investments in social relations with expected returns” (p. 30). Examples of social capital include individuals who are able to obtain or acquire information or goods based solely on their family name, the school they attend, or the social organization to which they belong (Bourdieu, 1986). The extent to which one’s social capital significantly impacts one’s life is primarily determined by socioeconomic factors. Contreras (2005) stated that “access becomes somewhat limited for economically depressed groups because those that occupy a particular social standing or status are likely to reproduce their status, resulting in inevitable inequality within the educational system” (p. 207).

For more than two decades, scholars have examined the extent to which social capital impacts student academic achievement in public schools. Neisser (1986) posited that structural, organizational, and financial domains influence the variance between students’ social capital and their academic achievement. Similarly, Collins (2009) identified structural, disciplinary, cultural, and interpersonal as four domains-of-power within schools that impact student academic success. These scholars asserted these domains, which are inclusive of the socioeconomic and demographic composition of the students, the qualifications of educators within the schools, and the resource base of the schools, dictate the extent to which students have access to resources. Conley (1999) found significant effects of social capital on educational attainment (high school graduation and college completion), suspension rates, and retention rates. Other scholars (Coleman et al., 1966; Kupersmidt, Griesler, DeRosier, Patterson & Davis, 1995; Stockard & Mayberry, 1992) have asserted those students who attend schools where resources are readily available are more likely to realize higher academic achievement than those students who do not. According to Stockard and Mayberry (1992), these students are more likely to establish friendships with individuals having solid academic habits and high educational aspirations and to interact more with positive adult role models.

With respect to social capital and its impact on students’ performance on standardized tests, the research literature is inconclusive. Zwick (2004) found significant evidence that suggested income and parental education levels influenced student exposure to additional resources that positively impacted their educational achievement. Contreras (2003) conducted an investigation on underrepresented students who applied to three collegiate institutions in California. Of these students, Contreras found that the Black students whose families had higher income levels scored higher on the SAT I mathematics test; additionally, there was a significant positive correlation between their income levels and their SAT II scores. These findings align with Contreras’ (2005) assertion that “access becomes somewhat limited for economically depressed groups because those that occupy a particular social standing or status are likely to reproduce their status, resulting in inevitable inequality within the educational system.

Assessment Bias

Assessment bias “refers to qualities of an assessment instrument that offend or unfairly penalize a group of students because of students’ gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, or other such group-defining characteristics” (Popham, 2002, p. 73). Some educators argue assessment bias is at the center of the discrepancies between students’ performance on standardized tests. There has been a growing discrepancy between the testing performance of Black and Hispanic students, and their White counterparts. Horn (2003, p. 31) in her article recognized Hedges and Nowell’s (1998) comments which implied that Black students “have been greatly underrepresented among the highest test scorers on standardized tests, and that underrepresentation has not diminished over time.” Further, she cited comments from Madaus and Clarke’s (2001) article which “document that, based on 1996 National Assessment and Educational Progress (NAEP) scores, the average proficiency for White 13-year-olds was about the same level achieved by 17-year-old [Blacks]” (p. 31). Moreover, the College Board reported in 2006 that Black students scored an average cumulative score of 863 on the combined mathematics and verbal portions of the SAT compared to an average cumulative score of 1063 for White students (A Large Black-White Scoring Gap Persists on the SAT, 2006).

Jencks (1998) indicated that (a) content bias, (b) selection system bias, (c) prediction bias, (d) methodological bias, and (e) labeling bias are forms of assessment bias, but he concludes that only labeling bias and selection system bias² are major factors that impact the performance of Black students on standardized tests. One could argue the Praxis I test suffers from selection system bias as many Schools and Colleges of Education rely on it to select which individuals enter their teacher education programs; this test is used to predict future performance of teacher education candidates as K-12 classroom teachers. This form of bias supports research conducted since the mid-1980s that asserts there is “a link between the introduction of teacher education admissions tests and declines in the numbers of [minority students] who enter teacher education and eventually obtain licensure” (Bennett, McWhorter, & Kuykendall, 2006, p. 541).

The Assessment Director of the Assessment Development Division at Educational Testing Services (ETS) confirmed testing bias on the Praxis examination series during an HBCU-ETS meeting in the spring of 2006 in central North Carolina. During her presentation on fairness principles and how these ideals guide the development, construction, and analysis of test questions on the Praxis series of examinations, she explained in great detail how questions were extracted from the tests on which White male students performed poorly (Roland, 2006). However, on questions where other subgroups performed poorly but White males performed well, these questions remained on the tests for future use. This admission supports the findings of Nicklos and Brown (1989) that identified several studies that indicated standardized tests used for teacher education certification were culturally biased.

Stereotype Threat

Steele (1997) suggested that stereotype threat³ affects those students who care most about academic achievement, or those who have formed an academic identity (see Meece & Kurtz-Costes, 2001). The crux of Steele’s theory is that any individual who identifies with a “minority group” in a given context may feel anxiety, pressure, or stress when in the presence of individuals from the “majority group” because he or she feels their behaviors may affirm negative stereotypes held by the majority. For

² Selection system bias “arises when a test is used to predict performance” (p. 77); moreover, it “exists when Blacks and Whites who would perform equally well if they got a job have different chances of getting it” (p. 77).

³ Stereotype threat is “the social-psychological threat that arises when one is in a situation or doing something for which a negative stereotype about one’s group applies” (Steele, 1997, p. 614).

example, a young girl in a mathematics class may feel pressured or anxious in a class filled with boys, because she may believe her actions may confirm the stereotype that girls do not perform well in mathematics courses.

To test this assertion, Steele and Aronson (1998) conducted an investigation on the campus of Stanford University with 114 undergraduate students. The students were randomly assigned to three experimental conditions to complete a 30 minute Graduate Record Examination (GRE) verbal test. The three conditions to which they were assigned were: (a) a diagnostic condition where participants are informed the verbal test they are given is a genuine assessment of their verbal ability; (b) a nondiagnostic condition where participants are informed the verbal test they are given is simply a problem solving task not designed to assess their verbal ability; (c) a nondiagnostic challenge condition where participants are instructed to view the verbal test as a challenge but not a diagnostic of their verbal reasoning skills. Additionally, participants were asked to hypothesize how many questions they answered correctly on the verbal test once they completed it. After conducting this trial, Steele and Aronson found Black participants in the diagnostic condition performed slightly worse than their Black and White counterparts in the nondiagnostic or challenge condition. Moreover, they found Black participants in the diagnostic condition predicted they answered a significantly lower number of questions correctly compared to their counterparts in the nondiagnostic and challenge conditions.

Method

A concurrent triangulation mixed methods case study research design was used in this investigation to collect quantitative and qualitative data. This design focuses “on the convergence of the information resulting from each method, giving equal priority to each” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 397). In this study, data were merged using quantitative and qualitative data analysis, and then interpreted to provide a better understanding of the use and perceptions of the Praxis I test.

Participants

Fifty-two undergraduate students at a historically Black university were selected to participate in this investigation. Participants were conveniently selected from two sections of a CUIIN 102 Introduction to Teacher Education course.⁴ This course was required of all teacher education candidates in the freshman year of their curricula regardless of the discipline-specific academic major. Two sections of the same course were used to establish a comparative design, allowing for the examination of stereotype threat. Students in both sections were invited to participate in the investigation, and all students consented to participate. Criteria for student participation in the investigation were they (a) had to be undergraduates, (b) not admitted into the teacher education program, (c) formally classified as an “education” major rather than an “Undecided” or “Undeclared” major, and (d) identified as Black in the University’s BANNER system.

Using these criteria, all 27 students enrolled in the Tuesday/Thursday 9:00 a.m. section of the course comprised Cohort I. In this cohort, 22 students were women and 5 were men. Ninety-six percent of the class was first-time first-semester freshmen (see Appendix A). As a comparison group, all 25 students enrolled in the Tuesday/Thursday 10:00 a.m. section of the course comprised Cohort II. Twenty two students were women and three were men (see Appendix B). Eighty-eight percent of the classes were first-time first-semester freshmen. Both cohort groups were taught by the same instructor during the 16-week semester, a male Black instructor with an undergraduate and master’s degree in English Education.

⁴ A class that focuses primarily on preparing students for the Praxis I test while examining critical issues new teachers experience during the first year of employment.

The participant pool was very diverse in terms of their geographic region, age, and academic majors. The majority of the students were Black women and first semester freshmen. Participants hailed from rural counties throughout the state of North Carolina as well as from large urban cities including Washington, DC, Atlanta, GA, and New York City. The educational backgrounds of the participants' parents were diverse as well. Nineteen of the participants self-reported they were first generation college students, meaning no one in their immediate family (i.e., mother, father, and siblings) had attended college. Fifteen of the students self-reported their parents attended a historically Black college or university. The remaining 18 participants indicated their parents attended a trade school, a community college, a predominantly White institution, enlisted in the military, or had no formal college education. In terms of academic major, 24 of the students were Elementary Education majors, 19 of the students were Secondary Education majors, and 9 of the students were Early Childhood majors.

Procedure

This investigation was conducted during the fall semester (i.e., August to December) at a historically Black university. The investigation focused on 52 freshmen teacher education students enrolled in a Praxis I preparatory course. Twenty-seven students were enrolled in one section of the course that met for 50 minutes on Tuesday and 50 minutes on Thursday, and 25 students were enrolled in the second section of the course that met for 50 minutes on Tuesday and 50 minutes on Thursday. The course met over a 16-week span, totaling 24 sessions. Of the 24 sessions, 18 class sessions were specifically dedicated to providing instruction on the Praxis I assessment. These instructional sessions focused on reading comprehension strategies, grammar rules and editing, and mathematical computations. The major intent of these instructional sessions was to familiarize teacher candidates with the concepts on which the Praxis I would assess. A three-phase data collection approach was used.

Phase I

In Phase I a database of participants prior to the first day of class was created by using the University's BANNER database to document information about each student (e.g., high school attended, high school grade point average, high school class rank, SAT scores). On the first day of class during the fall semester, the course instructor disseminated an informal *Student Information Inventory* (Appendix C), which asked students to provide background information on their parents' educational level, their long-term goals, and their prior experience with standardized tests. Additionally, this inventory presented students with questions regarding their perceived comfort level taking standardized assessments. These data were added to the database to create a collective profile of the students enrolled in the course.

Phase II

In Phase II, issues related to stereotype threat were examined by replicating the research process utilized by Steele and Aronson (1995); they gave their participants a 30-minute verbal test extracted from GRE study guides to examine the effects of stereotype threat on undergraduate students' test performance at Stanford University. Replicating this approach, students in this investigation were given a 40 item multiple-choice reading test extracted from the *PPST Pre-Professional Skills Tests: Reading, Writing, and Mathematics Study Guide*⁵ (Educational Testing Service, 2003) on the second day of class. This test was timed for 45 minutes and the testing conditions mirrored those of a real PRAXIS I administration

⁵ According to Educational Testing Service, this reading test was once administered during the early 2000s but pulled from its active rotation of tests and placed in the study guide to assist test takers with their preparation process.

(e.g., no talking, no resources allowed, no questions permitted, use of a No. 2 pencil to bubble a scantron sheet).

Prior to completing the test, the test administrator read directions to Cohort I that explained their scores were not an indication of their intelligence or reading ability, and their results would be used simply as a baseline indicator for the instructor to plan targeted instruction to improve their knowledge and skills in their reading comprehension (i.e., a nondiagnostic condition). Contrariwise, the same test administrator read directions to Cohort II prior to testing that explained their reading test was a measure of intelligence, and their scores would provide the School of Education faculty with an accurate indication of their ability to read and comprehend textual material (i.e., a diagnostic condition).

Once students answered questions on the reading test, they completed a *Post-Reading Assessment Inventory* (Steele & Aronson, 1998) (Appendix D), which gauged their perceived performance on the pre-assessment. This instrument required students to reflect on their perceptions of the test and the thoughts and feelings they had while completing it. Additionally, participants predicted the number of questions they answered correctly on the verbal test; this number was used to compare with their actual number of questions answered correctly. Also, the total number of questions each participant answered and those left unanswered were counted.

On the third day of class, participants in both cohort groups wrote an essay during a 30-minute timed session. Using an answer sheet taken from the ETS Study Guide, the test administrator asked students in both cohort groups to hand write an essay response to the following prompt: To address the growing teacher shortage in the United States public schools, teacher education programs at institutions of higher learning should eliminate the requirement that candidates must pass standardized tests that assess basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills in order to become a licensed teacher. All essay responses were collected and typed verbatim into Microsoft Word 6.0 for further analysis.

Phase III

In Phase III, participants' perceptions toward the Praxis I examination were examined throughout the semester as they prepared for the paper-based test in November. Three separate 30-minute focus group interview sessions in each section of the course during the semester were conducted. Also, one separate small focus group session with randomly-selected students from both sections after the November administration of the Praxis I test was conducted. Seven students were randomly selected from Cohort I and seven students were selected from Cohort II for this one-hour focus group debrief session. These 14 students were approximately one-third of the population and provided a manageable conversation group with the researcher. During the final one-hour focus group session, six questions that were modified from the work of Bennett et al. (2006) in their investigation on Praxis performance were used (Appendix E). Interviews from all focus group sessions were audiotaped and later transcribed in type format for analysis.

Instrumentation

Student Information Inventory. Participants were asked to provide demographic data on the informally created *Student Information Inventory*, which requested background information on their parents' educational level, their long-term goals, and their prior experience with standardized tests. Additionally, this inventory presented participants with six open-ended dichotomous lead-in questions (e.g., "How do you feel about standardized tests?", "You cannot become a teacher in North Carolina without passing the Praxis I examination. How do you feel about this requirement?") as defined by Patton (1990). These questions allowed participants to write reflective, introspective responses. Participants were

also asked to respond to one Likert-type statement by circling a number from 1 (Extremely Uncomfortable) to 9 (Extremely Comfortable) as a means to address their comfort level taking standardized tests. These data were added to the database to create a collective profile of the students enrolled in the course.

Praxis I Reading Sample Test. Participants were asked to complete a 40-question constructed response Praxis I reading test extracted from the *PPST Pre-Professional Skills Tests: Reading, Writing, and Mathematics Study Guide* (Educational Testing Service, 2003) (see Appendix F for sample items). This test was selected for its explicit relationship to the active Praxis I Reading test administered throughout the nation by ETS. This particular test included the 12 types of reading questions commonly assessed on standardized reading tests. The test presented test takers with 12 different types of reading questions, including main idea, inference, attitude, prediction, vocabulary, and evaluation questions. The reading test consisted of long passages of approximately 200 words, short passages of approximately 100 words, and brief statements between 50 and 100 words. These passages were drawn from print and electronic media and were expository and persuasive prose. The questions for each passage had five possible answer responses listed alphabetically from choice (A) to choice (E).

Post-Reading Test Inventory. As has been commonly used in test anxiety research (Sarason, 1972), participants completed a 12-item self report measure of cognitive interference immediately after they finished the 40-question reading test. The purpose of this measure was to examine the frequency of distracting thoughts that participants experienced during the testing period. Participants were asked to respond to seven Likert-type statements by circling a number from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) as a means to reflect on their perceptions of the test and the thoughts and feelings they had while completing it. Participants were also asked to respond to one Likert-type statement by circling a number from 1 (Not Biased) to 5 (Extremely Biased) that captured the extent to which they perceived the test as biased. Finally, participants evaluated their performance on the reading test by identifying the number of problems they correctly answered; this number was used to compare their actual number of questions answered correctly. The number of questions each participant answered and those left unanswered totaled.

Data Analysis

At the onset of the investigation, a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet was created using participants' verbal and mathematics scores from the Standardized Assessment Test (SAT) and high school grade point average. Using these data, mean scores were calculated for each cohort to create a comparative profile. Added to the spreadsheet at the end of the semester were the participants' official Praxis I scores as well as information about the educational levels of the participants' parents, and their current academic major and future aspirations.

To analyze the 40-question reading test from the *Educational Testing Service Study Guide* text, students' scantron forms were scored electronically using the QuickScore Statistical Assessment software package. The mean score of the questions answered correctly was extracted from the data analysis software program for each cohort group and was then converted to a final three-digit score using the ETS Reading Conversion table located in the study guide for comparative analysis. The mean score in each cohort was calculated for the number of questions participants predicted they answered correctly. This mean score was converted to a three-digit score using the ETS Reading Conversion Table for comparative purposes. Finally, the total number of questions answered in each cohort was tallied and mean scores were calculated.

Because of the nature of the *Post-Reading Assessment Survey*, standard descriptive statistics (i.e., frequencies, means, percentages, and standard deviations) were used. To analyze these data, each variable was given a point value. For questions 1 through 5, the following values were assigned: (a) Strongly Disagree = 1, (b) Disagree = 2, (c) Not Sure = 3, (d) Agree = 4, (e) Strongly Agree = 5. Question 6 used a similar value assignment with Extremely Easy = 1, Easy = 2, Not Sure = 3, Difficult = 4, and Extremely Difficult = 5. For Question 7, the value categories were similar with Not Biased=1, Somewhat Biased=2, Not Sure = 3, Biased=4, Extremely Biased=5.

To analyze the qualitative data, an inductive analysis procedure was employed. Individual interviews were transcribed and field notes taken during observations were inputted into 2×2 tables in Microsoft Word. During this stage, a member check was performed by meeting with participants to share the transcripts with them to ensure their remarks were accurately represented. After participants indicated errors, misquotes, or inaccuracies, keywords and phrases were identified in the transcriptions that appeared repeatedly after going through the data in the tables line by line (Strauss, 1987). As these keywords appeared, each was counted and tested against the research questions to determine their applicability to this investigation. Keywords were then used to discern patterns across the data sources. For example, if a student identified “test anxiety” as a problematic area in test taking, this concept was examined across other data sources to perceive the number of times it occurred. If these keywords emerged as patterns across numerous data sources, the phrase or keyword was labeled as a pattern. All patterns that emerged throughout the analysis and generated broad categories were renamed as themes. Subsequently, three themes emerged: (a) Your Resources Can Have a Lot to Do with Performance, (b) The Test Results do not Tell You about Me, and (c) Affirmation of Stereotypes.

Findings

Resources and Performance

Results of data collected during the focus group interviews and from the *Student Information Inventory*, revealed that many of the participants preparing for the Praxis I examination were familiar with standardized tests. Data from the inventory indicated 47% of the participants felt “moderately comfortable” taking standardized tests and 38% of participants felt “extremely comfortable.” Only 13% of the participants felt “moderately uncomfortable” and 2% felt “extremely uncomfortable” taking standardized tests. Further analysis revealed students had extensive experience with standardized tests throughout their lifetimes as all of them (100%) indicated they took some form of standardized test while in high school (i.e., SAT, ACT, PSAT, ASVAB) as well as various forms of standardized tests throughout elementary and middle school (i.e., state End of Grade examinations, state End of Course examinations, state Competency Tests).

Although participants expressed a fairly moderate level of comfort with standardized tests, most revealed they did not know “how to” prepare for standardized tests. Tanya (Cohort I), a middle-aged mother of three adolescent children who decided to come to college after years of working in industry, explained, “I don’t really study for standardized tests [be]cause I don’t know how to. I’m a believer that either you know it or you don’t.” Her philosophy was not unique as many of her peers adopted a similar philosophy at some point during their educational experience. Johnnie (Cohort I), a first-semester freshman from rural eastern North Carolina, shared,

[When I took the] SAT, I was just like: I’m just gonna try and figure it out ... Teachers don’t tell you what to look for; they just teach you, and then they’re like, “Good luck.”

Melony (Cohort II), a first-semester freshman majoring in Secondary Mathematics Education, shared a similar approach. She explained,

I didn't study [for the SAT]. I just went—I didn't really know what to study. It's such a broad test. I was like: I'm not going to sit here and worry about what to study. I just went in there and took the test.

Tynicia's method (Cohort II) of preparation mirrored her colleagues, and she shared the end results were consistent with her level of effort. She stated, "Well for the SAT, for me I prepared none at all. I didn't know how to. However, my scores were not good either." Joseph (Cohort I) revealed that he did not know how to prepare for the examination either. He divulged, "I actually didn't know SAT books existed until I got to college."

Repeatedly, participants disclosed their unfamiliarity with "how to" study for standardized tests. They expressed beliefs that those students in their high schools who performed exceptionally well on standardized tests could afford to pay for additional assistance outside school hours, could remain after school, or could participate in weekend or summer preparation camps. Gerald (Cohort II), a first-semester freshman, explained,

I took an SAT prep class, it was at Sylvan; I had to pay for it. I don't know it was like for a month on Saturday from like 8a.m. to 1p.m. or something like that. They give you these binders with practice stuff in them. It was called SAT camp.

Tanya (Cohort I) shared:

I went to a predominantly White school and some people paid \$500 for this [SAT preparation] class. That's a lot of money so some people were at a disadvantage. Your resources can have a lot to do with the performance. I know a lot of the majority Black schools in [this urban city in North Carolina] are being shut down and it's not because everybody is stupid. I think it's because they have a lack of resources. A lot of people don't feel like they should pay attention to people who aren't doing as well like you're rewarded when your school has high test scores. You're rewarded when your school has a good basketball team, but if your school is not doing as well [on tests] you're not going to get attention except negative attention—that you need to be shut down instead of how we can help.

Samantha (Cohort II), a first-semester freshman, added:

I took the SAT and, my school, we weren't required to take a SAT prep class. But I decided since it was being offered it probably would help me. And ... umm, when I took the class we got (inaudible) books and pamphlets that would help with taking the SAT with strategies and stuff like that I think it helped because I knew what kind of questions were going to be on the test and some of the things that they were going to ask and ... umm ... we were required to go on the Internet and actually take the online courses I mean online questions like on the day of the SAT. And then we took a lot of online essays and just different questions.

Toni (Cohort I), a first-semester junior, shared:

Prep classes weren't required. You had to be a junior, and it was an elective. I just took it because I needed to fill up space in my schedule, honestly. That's how they get "us"

[Black students]; they offer things as electives rather than requiring it, and you know how “we” [Black students] are. We’re only going to take classes that are required.

Pia (Cohort II), a junior who had avoided taking the Praxis I for two years, explained how her resources benefited her once she learned she had them. She shared,

Being at a predominantly White [high] school, I did not have a teacher that was like, okay, this is what you do ... get this book—recommending things to me. That’s when I thought about my aunt and I’m telling you, if it wasn’t for my aunt, who is at a Black college, I would’ve really messed up that test. My aunt was like: Black people don’t pass this test because of this, this, and that; you need to do this and that. I’m not downing minorities but if you don’t have it, you’re unaware of it. You can’t do as much with it if you don’t know it.

Donald (Cohort I) expressed a similar experience where he was fortunate to enroll in a SAT preparation course based solely on his prior academic performance. He explained,

I took it, but it was like, we had to take it. It was a thing; I don’t know how to explain it to you. It was at a community college and they gave it if you were qualified to go there. All the juniors who were qualified to go there did and if you did well on it then you got one of those—what is it called? A cord? Yeah, you got one of them if you passed a certain amount of stuff on there. I don’t remember how I did, but I got a cord.

In this instance, Donald benefited from a counselor who saw his academic potential and opened a gateway of opportunity for him because he was “qualified” to attend. Implied from Donald’s experience are those hundreds of students in his high school who were not selected to participate in this preparatory course because they lacked the “qualifications” to do so.

Ashley’s experience (Cohort II) also speaks volumes about these institutional practices where knowing the “right” people provides a privilege other students are not afforded. She explained,

I was in a club or something for like two weeks in the summer. I got nominated to do it. That’s how I prepared for the SAT. It was like a little mentoring thing that we were doing for two weeks and we did it everyday for two weeks straight for about eight hours per day. We had a lunch. I think it cost two or three hundred dollars to do it.

Without being nominated into this club, Ashley’s test taking experience may have been significantly different. Having these resources afforded her the opportunity to learn more about the SAT and the many tricks and nuances associated with it, but without her family’s economic means, she could not have participated.

Test Results

Participants in this investigation did not perceive the Praxis I test as culturally biased. When posed with the question “Some people argue standardized tests are culturally biased. What is your perspective on this argument?” on the *Student Information Inventory* at the beginning of the semester, 55% of the participants wrote responses disagreeing with the assertion that standardized tests are culturally biased compared to 25% of the participants who wrote responses agreeing with the assertion. Nine percent of the participants wrote they were uncertain about the topic, and 11% chose not to write a response at all.

Participants provided greater insight during focus group interviews where they defended their belief that standardized tests are designed to gauge the knowledge an individual has in a particular discipline. Joshua (Cohort II) explained, “I think [standardized tests] are designed to test your learning and show you where you could use extra help in order to help you do better.” Gerald’s perception (Cohort II) of standardized tests echoed Joshua’s sentiments as he concluded, “I don’t think a test can be biased if everyone is taking the same test or something similar to each others test.” Tiara (Cohort I) replied, “I feel they are set up in a way that you either know the stuff on the test or you don’t.”

Felicia (Cohort I) responded to the question similarly, stating, “So far I have found little proof of standardized tests being culturally biased. Everyone has the same opportunities to learn what everyone else is learning if they just pick up a book and read.” Parris (Cohort I) replied, “I believe that standardized tests are not culturally biased, as long as you know the required material you should do well on the test.” Sasha’s response (Cohort II) was also consistent with many of her peers’ views of standardized tests:

I disagree because everyone has equal rights, and you can’t really tell what race you are by group name on a sheet of paper, (not all the time) so they shouldn’t judge or change the test because of your culture.

These students denied standardized tests were designed to have one particular cultural group perform poorly on it. They viewed standardized tests as objective measures of knowledge and understanding and believed the content of these tests accurately assessed information they learned.

Although the participants did not feel the content of standardized tests were culturally biased, they did articulate their beliefs that standardized tests were inaccurate measures of an individual’s ability, passion, and desire. Participants doubted the accuracy of any test to capture or measure a person’s emotional quotient. Lauren (Cohort II) wrote, “The Praxis tests your knowledge, not if you are passionate about teaching.” Johnnie (Cohort I) responded, “I don’t have a problem with [standardized tests], but at the same time I don’t believe the results are accurate. The test results don’t tell you about me—who I really am.” During a focus group interview, Naomi (Cohort I) replied similarly:

The Praxis I is not an indicator of a teacher’s ability to be a good teacher. It is just an indicator that the teacher, according to the test, has met the required standards to be certified. A teacher’s ability to be “good” or “bad” has more to do with their character and passion for the job.

In his essay response, Donald (Cohort I) wrote:

Because you don’t pass the Praxis test doesn’t mean you’re not a good teacher. There wasn’t a [Praxis] test long ago and everyone was still taught and they learned what was taught to them.

Quitina (Cohort I) replied:

Here’s the thing about tests—any kind of tests; it doesn’t matter. The right answer is in front of you because of the prior information you’ve learned, right? But with teaching, the right answer isn’t right there in front of you all the time. As a teacher, you have to have heart and you have to care about your kids and their personal life as well. How do you show that on a test? You can’t.

What these students refer to is the overdependence on one test to make long-term decisions without triangulating data. This failure raises concerns about educational validity, where the results of tests are

used to make educational decisions about students that will have long-lasting and far-reaching implications (Evans-Hampton, Skinner, Henington, Sims, & McDaniel, 2002; Jencks, 1998). These issues were of greater concern to the participants in this investigation than notions related to cultural bias.

Affirmation of Stereotypes

Using Steele and Aronson's stereotype threat investigations, I structured two reading testing conditions (i.e., the diagnostic condition and non-diagnostic condition) for participants and provided them with a *Post-Reading Assessment Inventory*. What emerged from these data is an interesting dichotomy. Although the testing conditions were different for both groups, the actual test scores between the two groups based on the conversion table are very similar. Given what participants shared throughout this investigation, I attributed the similarity of the students' scores to their limited knowledge of test preparation, especially given the homogeneity of the participants.

In terms of (a) prediction of questions answered correctly, (b) actual number of questions answered correctly, and (c) total number of questions attempted, Cohort I (non-diagnostic testing condition) had higher mean scores than Cohort II (diagnostic testing condition). But, the one-tailed *t* test results showed that there was no significant difference between the groups when they predicted the number of questions answered correctly, $t_{\text{Cohort I}} = 22.51852$, $t_{\text{Cohort II}} = 13.6$, $df = 50$, $p > 1.25$. Also, for their actual number of questions answered correctly, the one-tailed *t* test results revealed no significant difference between the students, $t_{\text{Cohort I}} = 15.85185$, $t_{\text{Cohort II}} = 14.76$, $df = 50$, $p > 0.20662$. For their total number of questions attempted however, the one-tailed *t* test results revealed a significant difference between the students, $t_{\text{Cohort I}} = 30.66667$, $t_{\text{Cohort II}} = 23.72$, $df = 50$, $p < 0.00004$, thereby suggesting that Cohort I, with the higher mean score, attempted to answer more questions than Cohort II. Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations for the groups.

Table 1
Mean Scores and Standard Deviations about Questions

Question Response	Cohort I		Cohort II	
	M	SD	M	SD
Prediction of Questions	22.51852	7.39735	13.6	3.94757
Actual Number of Questions	15.85185	4.64678	14.76	4.87579
Total Number of Questions	30.66667	7.35893	23.72	6.57343

Other results of data for Cohort I and Cohort II are illustrated in Table 2 for participants' perceptions of the reading test and their performance on it. Overall, mean scores are lower for Cohort I than for Cohort II, thereby suggesting that the two groups experienced the test taking experience differently. Notably, Cohort I ($M=1.40$, $SD=0.50$) was not as concerned as Cohort II ($M=4.74$, $SD=0.45$) about what the instructor would think of their performance; about how poorly they would do on the test (Cohort I $M=1.44$, $SD=0.51$ vs. Cohort II $M=4.22$, $SD=0.93$); about them thinking of the difficulty of the test questions (Cohort I $M=1.60$, $SD=0.65$ vs. Cohort II $M=4.85$, $SD=0.36$); about the difficulty of taking the test (Cohort I $M=2.04$, $SD=0.79$ vs. Cohort II $M=4.04$, $SD=0.85$); and about the biases of the test (Cohort I $M=1.84$, $SD=0.75$ vs. Cohort II $M=4.84$, $SD=0.37$).

Table 2
Perceptions of the Reading Test - Cohort I and Cohort II

Perceptions	Cohort I		Cohort II	
	M	SD	M	SD
I wondered what the instructor would think of me.	1.40	0.50	4.74	0.45
I thought about how poorly I was doing as I took the assessment.	1.44	0.51	4.22	0.93
I thought about the difficulty of the problems as I took the assessment.	1.60	0.65	4.85	0.36
Some people feel I have less verbal and reading ability because of my race.	2.04	0.84	3.07	0.17
My race does not affect people's perceptions of my verbal and reading ability.	2.16	0.80	3.37	0.88
On a scale of 1 (Extremely Easy) to 5 (Extremely Difficult), this reading assessment was	2.04	0.79	4.04	0.85
On a scale of 1 (Not Biased) to 5 (Extremely Biased), this reading assessment was	1.84	0.75	4.84	0.37

Note. The rating scale ranged from 1 (lowest rating) to 5 (highest rating).

Participant's qualitative data were examined as well. After taking the reading test, Tanya (Cohort I) remarked:

I mean we know what the perception of us is on taking it. I think sometimes we look up to that perception and then I also think we don't know what to expect. I feel like we're already kind of at a disadvantage because I think we may not have had the resources that some other ethnic groups may have had. We kind of go in there blindsided and do what we can.

Toni (Cohort I) commented:

That's a big thing with us—that self-esteem component. If we really feel like they're behind us, and we really feel like we can do it, we'll do better, but until we really believe we can do it, we're in trouble.

Toia, (Cohort II) replied:

A lot of times, no offense, we as Blacks, we don't have a lot of faith in ourselves. I'm not going to lie; I have moments where I doubt.

Another participant in Cohort II, Valencia, argued this uncertainty is created intentionally by the dominant culture of power as part of a larger conspiracy to have Black students underperform. She explained:

How do we know Blacks really don't perform well? We're going by what we're told. We don't get to see anyone actually analyzing the numbers. We only see the final reports. How do we know those people are telling us the truth? I hate to say that, but I've seen kids ... they say this kid is slow and this kid is lacking, but this is the smartest kid. It's just that the way you were trying to get information out of that child wasn't working. It's like you told us on the first day ... you told us you were a bad test taker and they put you in a learning disabled class and nobody expected nothing of you. But look at you now. You're a doctor—a young doctor, too; a young, Black doctor. But we're supposed to believe what they tell us?

The impact of these data on the psyche of Black test takers is evident in the performance of students like Angel, a first-semester freshman in Cohort II. She remarked:

I'm half Latino, and I'm Black, so when you look at the statistics for test taking, it's always really low. I'm sure the statistics help some people, but I know it doesn't really help me. It's really ridiculous. It's hard to focus just on the test when you know those statistics. It's like Caucasians do better on this and Asians do better on this but it shouldn't be a focus on that [be]cause when you go in to take the test or whatever, it's hard. You know that the test taking is really low for Black and Latino people and—that isn't going to help you take the test. You already feel like you're at a disadvantage just because of that.

Johnnie (Cohort I) commented:

I think a lot of times people get so intimidated because they realize the potential outcomes of the test. It scares them to death and I think that's why a lot of Black people don't really perform that well on the test.

These participants' comments highlight their concerns about how stereotypes can influence their performance while taking a test on the campus of a historically Black university. They expressed their concern with underperforming on standardized tests but concluded they were programmed to think of themselves as incapable or substandard by the establishment, which they felt concocted statistical data to remind them frequently of their inabilities and deficiencies. Although many of these participants suggested they do not trust these data, they overwhelmingly indicated they cannot exclude this information from their psyche prior to and during testing situations.

Discussion

This mixed methods investigation examined undergraduate teacher education students' perceptions of and their experiences with the Praxis I test. This issue was examined through the eyes and voices of 52 Black teacher education candidates striving for admission into the teacher education program at an HBCU in North Carolina. Although this investigation is local in nature results do show that research on these pre-service teacher preparation candidates is more complex than those issues commonly cited throughout the extant literature.

Participants explicitly stated that their experiences with and perceptions of standardized tests have been primarily negative due to their lack of awareness of “how to” take these tests. Additionally, they concluded that a test taker’s performance on a standardized test is influenced significantly by that person’s ability to access and utilize resources such as test preparatory sessions, individual tutors, or testing materials. From their perspective, those people who make use of these resources are destined to perform better on tests than those who do not. These findings are consistent with extant literature from Niesser (1986) and Collins (2009) where they concluded various domains influence participants’ social capital. Several participants identified resources they used to improve their performance on standardized tests while other participants admitted they had no assistance whatsoever and their performance on those tests indicated that they did not. These students’ comments suggested secretive institutional practices are in place that keep students who are not knowledgeable marginalized. Their comments are consistent with Bennett, McWhorter, and Kuykendall (2006), Grant (2004), and Meece and Kurtz-Costes (2001) who asserted segregationist principles oppress certain groups of students in public schools. Unfortunately, educational systems in the United States reward those individuals who have capital and punish those students who lack it or are unaware of how to use it.

Participants generally agreed that standardized tests are not culturally biased. Their responses contrasted the findings of the participants in the investigation conducted by Bennett et al. (2006) at a predominantly White institution who felt the Praxis I was culturally biased. Participants in this study repeatedly grounded their argument in notions of equality, articulating how every student has the same opportunity to read the same books or to take the same examination, thereby eliminating in their minds traces of cultural bias. Although they did not view these tests as culturally biased, they collectively complained that tests like the Praxis I do not produce the types of teachers needed for public schools. Essentially, these students argued standardized tests could not reveal or elicit information about an individual’s “real self” (Davidson, 1996).

Participants in this study were found to be victims of stereotype threat even when the examination was presented as a measure of intellectual ability. The effect of stereotype threat did not emerge in the actual test score performance as the scores for both groups of participants were not significantly different. However, the influence of stereotype threat emerged between groups during the test taking process. Replicating Steele and Aronson’s study with these two cohorts revealed Black students who are primed to view the Praxis I as an indicator of their intelligence may place more pressure on themselves while completing the test, which may lead to test takers reducing the number of questions they attempt and answer. Additionally, these students may experience increased levels of anxiety during the test taking process as they consider various external factors (e.g., wondering what assessors will think of their scores, reflecting on performance outcome statistics for their ethnic and racial group).

The findings from this investigation clearly indicate more research is needed on Black pre-service teacher education candidates not only from historically Black colleges or universities but also from predominantly White institutions. Too frequently, these students are treated monolithically within the research literature; however, this investigation suggests their experiences may be different from the experiences of other candidates. The results of this investigation can provide insight into possible solutions public schools and Schools of Education at colleges and universities can address through strategic planning, educational programming, and curricula revisions. Using these findings may lead to an increase in the number of Black students who graduate from Teacher Education programs, especially at historically Black colleges and universities where the majority of Black teachers are prepared.

Haycock (2001) argued that students across the United States engage in discourse about how guidance counselors consistently underestimate the potential of students, placing them in lower level courses or on vocational tracks. However, the converse holds true as well as those students who perform well academically often benefit from “academic privilege” where they receive priority and early

notification from counselors about educational programs or enrichment opportunities. This investigation explicitly indicated that students at this institution are fairly comfortable taking standardized tests and have had a great deal of exposure to different types of tests; yet, the majority of these participants explained they did not know “how to” take them. Many of them disclosed that they had no real strategic plan when taking a standardized test, and a great number more revealed they rarely prepared for standardized tests. A large number of participants in this study explained they did not have the economic means to pay for preparation courses like some of their classmates, or they did not have the academic qualifications to be selected to participate in various enrichment programs that paid for test preparation sessions. Without these experiences, students may underperform on standardized tests.

Given this information, there are several courses of action that educators at each level can take to ensure the success of all students on standardized tests. For example, K-12 educators must safeguard against the temptation to prepare only those students who appear “academically gifted” or college bound. Additionally, it would behoove K-12 public schools across the United States to institutionalize test preparatory courses or programs within their curricula for all students, thus eliminating the gap between the privileged and unprivileged. Additionally, the results of this investigation suggest educators should present tests as instruments to improve student knowledge and ability rather than as tools to gauge intelligence or skill level. More emphasis must be placed on tests as tools to inform the instructional presentation of teachers rather than as tools to segregate students.

Faculty in Schools and Colleges of Education who prepare teacher education candidates should consider strongly the implementation of required preparation sessions, workshops, or courses that are prolonged and concentrated. Such sessions would benefit all students not only those from minority racial or ethnic backgrounds. Having a support unit appears beneficial and useful for those students who are anxious and overwhelmed by testing requirements. If Schools and Colleges of Education are to increase the number of Black teachers in the United States, they must address issues related to standardized tests like the Praxis I and Praxis II, which are mandated qualifying examinations in most states for teacher licensure. Without addressing this issue, the number of Black teachers entering the profession will remain unchanged and may potentially decline.

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Appendix A

Cohort I Participant Profile

First Name (Pseudonym)	Verbal SAT Score	Composite Math, Verbal SAT Score	High School GPA
Quitina	430	770	2.62
Gerald	340	740	2.24
Tiara	520	890	3.75
Tanya	N/A	N/A	2.35
Erica	430	800	3.2
Patrice	440	800	2.28
Jenner	470	890	2.94
Joseph	380	760	3.06
Ekira	N/A	N/A	2.72
Candace	N/A	N/A	2.41
Anastasha	480	1060	2.42
Kristian	410	710	2.62
Naomi	530	910	3.77
Toni	400	870	3.23
Sharnise	250	610	2.32
Kimberly	380	720	2.8
Ayana	470	960	3.83
Parris	420	760	3.42
Letedra	440	890	2.24
Iris	330	740	2.87
Shanice	380	760	2.65
Gevonne	N/A	N/A	2.6
Doris	N/A	N/A	2.90
Daisy	480	940	2.93
Donald	490	1110	3.81
Johnnie	410	780	2.43
Felicia	470	960	3.00
Mean Scores	425	837.7272727	2.8304

“N/A” denotes students who transferred from a community college and no SAT score was required for admission into the University.

Appendix B

Cohort II Participant Profile

First Name (Pseudonym)	Verbal SAT Score	Composite Math, Verbal SAT Score	High School GPA
Sasha	410	890	3.61
Ashley	N/A	N/A	2.90
Crystal	380	650	3.02
Jessica	430	910	3.33
Robin	420	850	3
Elona	410	760	2.71
Tynicia	410	820	2.5
Gerald	N/A	N/A	3.01
Tiera	400	780	2.75
Lauren	420	860	2.43
Angel	370	860	2.32
Sierra	410	930	2.91
Valencia	490	910	3.17
Luvie	N/A	N/A	2.88
Brandie	430	820	2.92
Kiandra	410	750	3.55
Pia	520	1080	4.47
Cortney	380	750	2.6
Kandice	470	920	2.23
Joshua	530	830	3.2
Tiffany	410	890	3.4
Toia	510	890	2.25
Samantha	580	1110	2.84
Melony	440	960	3.17
Jillian	450	880	2.41
Mean Scores	440	868.1818182	2.945

“N/A” denotes students who transferred from a community college and no SAT score was required for admission into the University.

Appendix C

Student Information Inventory: CUIN 102 Introduction to Teacher Education I

Student Name _____
Preferred Class Name ("Nickname") _____
Please check one: Male _____ Female _____
Current Age: _____
Address (local address) _____
Address (A&T Box) _____
City _____ State _____
Telephone Number () _____
Email address (frequently used) _____
Mother's Highest Level of Education _____
Father's Highest Level of Education _____
Future aspirations (circle one):
 Elementary school teacher
 Middle school teacher
 High school teacher
 Public school administration (principal, assistant principal)
 School counselor
 College/community college professor
 College/University administration (Chancellor, Provost, Vice Chancellor, etc.)
 Public school media specialist
 Curriculum specialist
 Other (please identify) _____

Please write the names of all standardized assessments you have taken between kindergarten and college:

Directions: Please provide a detailed response to each of the following questions.

- (1) How do you feel about standardized tests?
- (2) What have you heard about the PRAXIS I examination if anything at all?
- (3) You cannot become a teacher in North Carolina without passing the PRAXIS I examination. How do you feel about this requirement?
- (4) Some people argue that standardized tests are culturally biased. What is your perspective on this argument?
- (5) What characteristics must a teacher possess to be a "good" teacher?
- (6) Explain why you feel the PRAXIS I is either a good or bad indicator of a teacher's ability to be a "good" teacher.
- (7) On a scale of 1 (extremely uncomfortable) to 9 (extremely comfortable), how comfortable do you feel taking standardized examinations (please circle a number)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Extremely Uncomfortable		Moderately Uncomfortable		Not Sure		Moderately Comfortable		Extremely Comfortable

Appendix D

Post-Reading Assessment Inventory

Directions: Please read the following statements and circle the number that most accurately reflects your feelings or perceptions. Please answer the statements honestly.

1. **As I took the test, I wondered what the instructor would think of me.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly
Disagree				Agree

2. **As I took the assessment, I thought about how poorly I was doing.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly
Disagree				Agree

3. **As I took the assessment, I thought about the difficulty of the problems.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly
Disagree				Agree

4. **Some people feel I have less verbal and reading ability because of my race.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly
Disagree				Agree

5. **My race does not affect people's perception of my verbal and reading ability.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly
Disagree				Agree

6. **On a scale of 1 (Extremely Easy) to 5 (Extremely Difficult), this reading assessment was**

1	2	3	4	5
Extremely	Easy	Not Sure	Difficult	Extremely
Easy				Difficult

7. **On a scale of 1 (Not Biased) to 5 (Extremely Biased), this reading assessment was**

1	2	3	4	5
Not Biased	Somewhat	Not Sure	Biased	Extremely
	Biased			Biased

8. **Of the 40 questions, I feel confidently that I answered _____ questions correctly.**

9. **The purpose of this assessment was to**

- (a) provide the instructor with baseline data to plan targeted instruction to improve my knowledge and skills in reading comprehension
- (b) provide me with a challenging test to measure my ability to read and comprehend textual material

My gender is _____ Male _____ Female
 My Ethnic Group is _____ (please provide)

Appendix E

Focus Group Interview Questions

- Question 1: What types of standardized tests have you taken in the past and how did you prepare for them?
- Question 2: How was preparing for the PRAXIS I similar to or different from those other tests? (Probes: Difficulties? Feelings of anxiety? Explain)
- Question 3: To what extent did this course help you prepare for the exam? (Probe: What was the most helpful? Least helpful?)
- Question 4: From what you have seen of PRAXIS I, what is most difficult about the tests? (Probe: Content? Anxiety? Test-taking skills?)
- Question 5: To what extent would you agree that the PRAXIS I is culturally biased? Explain.
- Question 6: Educational Testing Services reports ethnic minority students score lower on this test than other ethnic groups. Why do you think this is the case? (Probe: Is stereotype threat a factor? Cultural bias? Test bias?)

Appendix F

ETS Study Guide Sample Reading Questions

Question 1:

In 1976 a powerful earthquake devastated the city of Tangshan, China. Scientists had failed to predict the earthquake. But if people had paid attention to the unusual animal behavior that preceded the earthquake, they would have known it was coming. For, animals can often sense an impending earthquake when scientists cannot.

- 1) Which of the following, if true, indicates a weakness of the argument?
 - A) A wide variety of phenomena can cause animals to behave strangely
 - B) Scientists use a variety of sophisticated tools to monitor and predict earthquakes.
 - C) Many domestic as well as farm animals behaved strangely the day before the Tangshan earthquake.
 - D) The city of Tangshan is near a major fault line and will be hit by an earthquake again.
 - E) Scientists had correctly predicted three major earthquakes in China in eighteen months prior to the Tangshan earthquake.

Questions 2-3:

James Baldwin's eloquent, forceful style has given his work its wide recognition. The intricate sentences, the lyrical prose, the dramatic stance- all these characteristics contribute to a style that is unique and thus immediately recognizable. But Baldwin's style is more than simply unique; it is a living illustration of what can be achieved in a difficult environment; and when he uses it to discuss oppression, racial segregation, and inadequate social and cultural opportunities, its sophisticated grace serves as ironic commentary on the problems he considers.

- 2) Which of the following statements best summarizes the main idea of the passage?
 - A) James Baldwin's ironic commentary about racial oppression fills his writings with life and excitement.
 - B) James Baldwin has a highly original style that exemplifies what an individual can accomplish even in the face of a difficult environment.
 - C) James Baldwin is widely regarded as one of the most important writers of the twentieth century because of his innovations in literary technique.
 - D) James Baldwin has often turned to matters with which he is intimately familiar, like racial segregation and inadequate social opportunities, as the subject for his work.
 - E) James Baldwin has dedicated his literary work to educating the public at large about the problems that Black Americans face.
- 3) The passage mentions all of the following as characteristic elements of Baldwin's style EXCEPT
 - A) Lyrical prose
 - B) Ironic illustrations
 - C) Dramatic stance
 - D) Intricate sentences
 - E) Sophisticated grace

THE NEGRO EDUCATIONAL REVIEW

—1979 Historical Overview—

While attending an educational conference in Louisiana during the latter part of 1948, a group of delegates initiated a discussion about the difficulties Black scholars encounter when they attempt to publish their scholarly papers in professional journals. That discussion focused on the importance of Black educators having their reports of research and other articles published. A few weeks later, in early 1949, a group of those educators representing several colleges and universities met at Alcorn College and continued to discuss the matter in depth.

At the end of a full day of meetings and discussions, the group identified one of its members to investigate the problem of lack of access to publishing in professional journals and the feasibility of establishing a new professional journal for educators and scholars. Shortly thereafter, a report was submitted to the group detailing the evidence that Black scholars were being systematically denied access to professional media in which they could disseminate reports of their scholarly writing. A major recommendation from this report was that a new professional journal of high quality be established. Its purpose would be to provide an outlet for findings, proposals, and theories that could inform educators as well as the society at large. The report was adopted, and the first issue of *The Negro Educational Review* was published in January 1950. *The Review* matured as a scholarly organ and became firmly established and respected nationally and internationally.

The Review has never missed publication of an annual volume; however, over the years, it has missed publishing several individual issues due to lack of funds. Subscribers to *The Negro Educational Review* include individuals and institutions in North America, Africa, Europe, Asia, and Australia.

R. Grann Lloyd
NER *Editor-in-Chief*, 1981–1995

Where Extrinsic Meets Intrinsic Motivation: An Investigation of Black Student Persistence in Pre-Health Careers

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Abstract

In order to increase the number of health care providers in underserved communities, numerous efforts are being made to increase the number of Black students in the health professions. Research supports the idea that individuals from minority populations seek doctors of the same race or culture. In an effort to provide increased health care to minority communities, researchers and educators endeavor to understand the factors that prevent Black students from matriculating in and graduating from professional schools. In this study we explored how students persist in health professions, despite academic and social challenges. Specifically, the career persistence of four Black pre-health students was explored using semi-structured interviews. Career persistence and motivation were investigated using the framework of self-determination theory (SDT). Results indicate that the SDT framework does not fully incorporate the motivational experiences of these students. Further, we propose an expansion of the current SDT model.

Introduction

As the diversity of the United States population is increasing, the number of non-White health care professionals remains stagnant. Research demonstrates that an increase in the number of non-White or minority (i.e., Hispanic, Native American, and Black American) physicians could increase care to the underserved as minority physicians are more likely to treat minority patients, many of whom are in underserved populations. Minority patients are more likely to seek out minority physicians who consider their patients' customs, beliefs, and language in their treatment plan (Hargraves, Stoddard & Trude, 2001; Riley, 2007; Saha, Taggart, Komaromy, & Bindman, 2000). Marc Nivet, the Association of American Medical Colleges chief diversity officer, reinforces research findings by stating that increased diversity in healthcare impacts not only the patients served, but also improves the cultural competency of all health care providers (M. A. Nivet, personal communication, February 2, 2011). Therefore, in order to increase

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the number of minority physicians, it is necessary to increase the number of minority pre-health students by recruiting and retaining Black and other non-Black pre-health students.

In attempts to cultivate a more diverse and culturally competent workforce, professional schools have made efforts to increase the application of Black students by hiring recruiters, developing summer pre-professional programs and science camps to develop early interest in the health professions (Grumbach & Chen, 2006). Despite efforts to increase enrollment of Black pre-health students, researchers show a decline in the number of Black pre-health matriculates (Antony, 1998; Barr, Gonzalez, & Wanat, 2008; Fries-Britt, 1997; Hollow, Patterson, Olsen, & Baldwin, 2006). In 2002, 8.9% of pre-med applicants were Black; in 2009, the percentage of Black pre-med students had decreased to 8.2% (AAMC, 2009). Despite professional school interventions, Black students' career persistence² does not correspond with application and matriculation into professional schools.

Researchers have suggested several reasons for decreased career persistence including: motivation, advising, past academic achievement, career aspirations upon entering college, satisfaction with college, engagement, peer groups, academic major, standardized test scores, Grade Point Average (GPA), campus climate, selectivity and size, faculty student interactions, academic major, student perception of the environment, and the number of pre-medical students (Antony, 1996, 1998; Barr, Gonzalez, & Wanat, 2008; Fries-Britt, 1997; Hollow, Patterson, Olsen, & Baldwin, 2006). However, Lovecchio and Dundes (2002) indicate that the predominant reasons for Black students' decreased persistence are: (a) academic challenges, (b) advisement, (c) campus climate, and (d) motivation. Despite these challenges, a portion of Black students do continue to persist in health-related careers.

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) suggested that one of the reasons for decreased career persistence in Black students is academic challenge. In general, Black undergraduate students' grades are strong predictors of persistence, and completion and future enrollment into graduate schools. However, among Black and non-Black students' chemistry courses have been found to have a significant role in the career plans of pre-health students (Lovecchio & Dundes, 2002). Lovecchio and Dundes found organic chemistry to be the strongest factor in determining students' pre-health career persistence. Although subsequent studies have confirmed their findings, research has examined differences of race and ethnicity. These additional studies suggest pre-health curriculum may pose a larger threat to Black persistence than originally thought (Barr, Gonzalez, & Wanat, 2008; Hollow, Patterson, Olsen, & Baldwin, 2006; Nestor-Baker & Kerka, 2009). Barr, Gonzalez, and Wanat (2008) found that not only was there a decline in pre-health career persistence due to chemistry courses, but the sharpest decline was observed in Black and Latino students. Chemistry courses become "gatekeeper" courses which negatively impact Black students at higher rates than non-Blacks (Hollow, Patterson, Olsen, & Baldwin, 2006; Nestor-Baker & Kerka, 2009).

While college chemistry courses are gatekeepers for pre-health students, the lack of mentoring and modeling throughout the career development process also has a negative impact on persistence (Antony, 1998; Barr, Gonzalez, & Wanat, 2008; Fries-Britt, 1997; Hollow, Patterson, Olsen, & Baldwin, 2006). Black pre-medical students' career development process is often associated with external factors such as academic advising and a supportive learning environment (Lovecchio & Dundes, 2002). Barr, Gonzalez, and Wanat (2008) concluded that many underrepresented minority (URM) students when confronted with academic challenge did not know how to persevere (Barr et al., 2008). In addition, the students lacked insight about how to select courses that would not negatively influence their GPAs and still support the development of many basic skills. As students struggle with these types of challenges, they could benefit from critical academic interventions or advising that are more conducive to improving their career

² Career persistence is the ability to maintain a career choice and pursue the appropriate degree, despite academic challenges (Holland, 1984).

decision-making, therefore improving their academic persistence. The lack of timely and effective academic advising can make a significant impact on the career persistence of Black students.

Current research also acknowledges the impact of campus climate³ on persistence and academic performance. Campus climate affects Black pre-health students' career persistence at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU's) more positively than at predominately White institutions (Allen, 1992; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Allen (1992) and Antony (1996) affirmed the increased medical career persistence of students at HBCU's as demonstrated in their academic performance as well as the increased mentoring between students and faculty (Allen, 1992; Antony, 1996). Drewry and Doermann (2001) examined the institutional origins of Black first year medical students. While 5.8% of the class was Black, Black students who attended private historically Black colleges comprised 16% of the Black first year medical students. This may be due to HBCUs supportive environment where students can develop their skills and abilities in an effort to better understand themselves and those around them. The unique benefits of the HBCU campuses include: increased self-esteem, faculty expectations for success, positive Black role models on campus, and a sense of belonging (Drewry & Doermann, 2001; Seifert, Drummond & Pascarella, 2006). These campus climates enhance students' social experiences and positively support students' academic success and motivation (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Research on the motivation of Black students uses multiple frameworks including locus of control (Rotter, 1990), attribution theory (Graham, 1997; Weiner, 1985,) and self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Black student motivation is often highlighted using Rotter's (1990) locus of control in which individuals have internal locus of control and believe they are controlled from within or external motivation in which individuals are controlled by factors outside of themselves. These dichotomous definitions of internal and external motivation evolved into more complex theories such as self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Some research has demonstrated that the internal-external dichotomy may inadequately describe the relationship between locus of control and other motivationally relevant variables, such as career persistence (Graham, 1994).

Theoretical Framework

We used self-determination theory (SDT) as our framework for this study. It allows us to describe the complex relationship of the career persistence of Black students and motivation along a continuum. This continuum explains how people regulate their behaviors in order to engage autonomously, in which one fully endorses one's actions (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Through a process of co-constructing knowledge, researchers critically examined if and how the autonomy continuum fit the career persistence of Black pre-health students.

Self-determination theory consists of three main categories that fall on a continuum: amotivation,⁴ extrinsic motivation,⁵ and intrinsic motivation.⁶ Unlike Rotter's (1990) definition of motivation as being driven from within, Deci and Ryan's (1985) definition of intrinsic motivation associates being or feeling controlled with negative outcomes which could be generated or controlled by

³ Campus climate is defined as the "current perceptions, attitudes, and expectations that define the institution and its members" (Peterson & Spencer, 1990, p. 2).

⁴ Amotivation is the lack of intent and/or competence. A student may lack the desire to attend class or complete coursework.

⁵ Extrinsic motivation is driven by external influences. It is present when environment, social interactions, or external influences impact one's impetus for action. A student who is extrinsically motivated participates in activities to please or impress others.

⁶ Intrinsic motivation occurs when one participates in an activity due to enjoyment and interest.

others or by one's own self. "The issue is not so much whether the source of control is oneself or another, but whether or not one is being controlled" (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 106). Being controlled in the framework of self-determination theory encompasses a sense of pressure or force to act in a certain way. The distinction being, those students who demonstrate intrinsic motivation and are free from being controlled participate in activities out of personal satisfaction. The point being, pre-health students who are intrinsically motivated choose their colleges, majors and coursework out of enjoyment and not necessity which suggests they do not feel controlled. For example, a student chooses to take an upper level seminar course in applied biostatistics because they enjoy the material. This intrinsically motivated student is associated in research with optimal challenge and social persuasion (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Optimal challenge would promote the ideal opportunity for success and enjoyment while social persuasion is the strengthening or weakening of one's belief through encouragement or discouragement. Self-determination theory acknowledges these strengths of intrinsic and autonomous regulation but also adds theoretical complexity to one's comprehension of extrinsic motivation.

Four subcategories of extrinsic motivation are: (a) external regulation,⁷ (b) introjection,⁸ (c) identification,⁹ and (d) integration¹⁰ (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The trajectory of these subcategories gradually transitions from high extrinsic motivators to more intrinsic motivating components. In order to achieve intrinsic motivation an individual often advances through these levels of extrinsic motivation. This progression occurs through a desire to meet three psychological needs: autonomy, relatedness, and competence (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Individuals must know that they are respected and cared about; and they must adopt and internalize this process.

Self-determination theory is unique in that it discusses motivation in light of universal psychological needs and an autonomy continuum. However, admittedly Deci and Ryan (2004) acknowledge aspects of the theory that call for critical expansion. Four critical perspectives of self-determination theory for expansion are: (a) positive outcomes associated with identified regulation,¹¹ (b) the description of self-determination theory in homogeneous Black populations,¹² (c) the impact of

⁷ External regulation is a fairly controlled form of reinforcers and punishments central to operant conditioning (Skinner, 1953).

⁸ Introjection occurs when individuals avoid guilt or anxiety in order to achieve approval from others.

⁹ Identification arises when an individual's motivation is associated with value of the activity; this is the beginning of embedded low levels of intrinsically motivating forces. For example, students demonstrate identification when they attend tutor sessions outside of class realizing the sessions will help them achieve long term future goals.

¹⁰ Integration is the most self-regulating type of extrinsic motivation and occurs when individuals recognize a rationale for their actions and accommodate and assimilate to that rationale.

¹¹ Vallerand, Pelletier, and Koestner (2008) highlighted the linear and hierarchical nature of the self-determination continuum, in their review, by stating the more positive outcomes associated with intrinsic, integrated, and identified regulation. Also, less self-determined types of motivation such as introjected and external regulation were noted as being associated with stagnant or negative outcomes. Exceptions to the linear continuum exist, but are few (Koestner, Losier, Vallerand & Carducci, 1996). Koestner et. al. (1996) demonstrated that one such challenge to the linear and hierarchical continuum is that there is a lack of adaptive outcomes for less self-determined types of motivation when an activity is not interesting. In this case, when an activity is considered boring, positive outcomes are associated with identified regulation and not intrinsic regulation.

¹² Researchers continue to call for additional research in motivation using self-determination theory in Black populations as much of self-determination studies in the United States focus pre-dominantly on White students (Cokley, 2003; Graham, 1997). Studies with participants of the same racial category allow researchers to examine motivational characteristics and within group differences in unique ways from comparative race studies. Also, the majority of motivation research that focuses on Black students uses other theoretical perspectives such as attribution theory (Cokley, 2003; Graham, 1997).

extrinsic motivation on intrinsic motivation including the simultaneous presentations of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation,¹³ and (d) the impact of rewards on intrinsic motivation.¹⁴

Research based on self-determination theory (SDT) suggests that promoting greater intrinsic self-determination is related to positive outcomes. Theoretically, our objective in this study was to identify thematic evidence that might explain how to better discern the complexity of whether or not extrinsic motivation influences Black pre-health student's career persistence and the importance of extrinsic motivation on students' intrinsic motivation. Methodologically, we approached our objective through the lens of a constructivist worldview, intentionally acknowledging our biases and focusing on the complexity of the student's experiences rather than attempting to understand their meaning (Creswell, 2009). Understandably, a constructivist lens as a means of critiquing current models of self-determination theory may raise a concern of subjectivity; however, we have incorporated many of the constructivist strategies. Research suggests that expansion of self-determination theory should be explored to consider multidimensional or simultaneous presentations of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation as well as a thorough examination of the impact of tangible and verbal rewards on Black students. This qualitative study explored the participant's experiences and the emergent themes are our interpretations of how current models of self-determination theory can be understood using a different lens.

Method

We utilized a constructivist methodology and a grounded theory approach in this study (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). A constructivist worldview is an overarching perspective that scientific knowledge is constructed by the researcher(s) (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2009). Specifically, for our purposes we acknowledge that our interpretation of self-determination theory and our findings represent a construction of our historical (i.e., background) and social (i.e., experiences) perspectives individually and in conjunction with one another (Creswell, 2009). According to Charmaz (2006) a constructivist perspective is compatible and complementary when using a grounded theory¹⁵ approach. In this study, we utilized grounded theory as our tool to interpret between the objective (i.e., self-determination theory) and the subjective (i.e., participant's experiences) and construct an abstract theory. A constructivist worldview and grounded theory approach supports constant comparative analysis, which contributed to our ability to explore new ideas that emerge from the data, and guide the inquiry. Constructivist ground theory afforded us the opportunity to manage and structure the analysis comfortably according to our original and unique perspectives; however, it requires first and foremost that the researchers reflect on their subjectivities.

¹³ Research has not fully explained the simultaneous presentation of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in Black students. Hwang, Echols and Vrongistinos (2002) note that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation constructs are not mutually exclusive. Hwang et al. (2002) found that Black students perceived extrinsic motivation as positively related to their future goals such as career choice. Their results showed that highly intrinsically motivated students can be simultaneously extrinsically motivated. Cokley (2003) compared the motivation of Black and White students and found both had equivalent levels of intrinsic motivation, but Black college students had higher levels of extrinsic motivation.

¹⁴ Researchers have debated the impact rewards have on the intrinsic motivation. Deci, Koestner and Ryan (1999) clarify the debate by highlighting the differences between the type of rewards and the needs of students. Self-determination theory states that tangible and controlling rewards such as money undermine intrinsic motivation, while informational rewards such as verbal rewards may or may not enhance intrinsic motivation.

¹⁵ A grounded theory is a structured means-to-an-end approach that allows the researcher(s) the flexibility of interpretation to derive at a coherent theory of a process or experience (Charmaz, 2006).

Researchers' Subjectivity

In contrast to a traditional grounded theory; a constructivist grounded theory is centered upon the researchers' subjectivity and is omnipresent throughout the research. It is assumed that given the interpretive nature of this research that the researcher's experiences will have a strong influence; therefore a valued component of this approach involves the researchers tapping into vulnerabilities and acknowledging biases that contribute to the subjective nature of their interpretations (Charmaz, 2007). It is essential for the researchers to draw upon their historical and social experiences (Charmaz, 2007; Creswell, 2009). This subjectivity recognizes that there is no truth, but understanding is constructed through a process built on the researchers' interpretations.

In this study, as researchers, we bring a diverse toolkit of historical and social experiences which were reflected upon individually and tested collectively during inquiry and theory design, and analytic processes. We used strategies (e.g., memoing, bracketing) to remain cognizant of our subjectivities during data collection, coding, analysis, and interpretation processes. In addition, we took several opportunities to discuss self-determination framework in relationship to our data; during our collaborations our unique perspectives and subjectivities were often revealed and mediated according to how we have experienced the world and how we persist.

The first author and primary researcher is a Black woman in her thirties and the daughter of two professional school graduates. Her career persistence process has evolved through experience, advising, and supportive environments. After changing careers from health care to educational psychology, her professional work experiences and discourses include supporting pre-health and health professional students' academic and career goals. As a doctoral student, her career persistence experiences do not fully match the theoretical perspectives of the self-determination continuum. These professional and personal experiences expand and limit her understanding of the motivation and career persistence of others.

The second author and researcher is a middle-aged White female, her maternal grandparents are immigrants from Italy and fraternal grandparents emigrated from Germany. As a first generation college graduate, her initial career was as a clinical psychologist. The decision to become an educational psychologist, at age 40, was sparked by the belief that there is a continual process of constructing one's knowledge. Individuals make decisions based on prior knowledge, past experience, or beliefs. Knowing what drives people in different domains is the crux of how beliefs and experiences might connect to career persistence. In a self-reflection of her own career persistence, while trying to identify the sources of motivation two thoughts seemed to reoccur: (a) time, people, place, and opportunity seemed to be aligned; and (b) interest was strongly important. She has been known to say, "I did not do it for you, I did it because of you."

Participants

Through these subjectivities, the researchers explored the narrative histories and semi-structured interviews of four participants. The four Black pre-health students included three pre-dental students and one pre-pharmacy student from a pre-professional summer enrichment program. The program offers summer opportunities to undergraduate residents in the southern region of the United States wishing to pursue careers in medicine, dentistry, or pharmacy. Participants were purposefully selected based on the following criteria: (a) completion of organic chemistry and physics, (b) intention to apply to medical, dental or pharmacy school in the next application year, and (c) self-identification as an underrepresented pre-professional student. Students in this study are (pseudonyms are used):

Angie Jefferson, a Black 24 year-old pre-dental student who was the first in her family to graduate from college, a HBCU. Her mother had some college; her father had some high school education.

Tom Clark, a Black 29 year-old pre-dental student who was the first in his family to graduate from high school and college, a HBCU. His mother had some high school education; his father's education level is unknown.

Toya Gray, a Black 28 year-old graduate student obtaining her master's degree and desires to attend dental school just like her mother and father and attended a predominately White institution (PWI). Both her mother and father have Masters' degrees.

Angel Baker, a Black 20 year-old undergraduate student who is interested in becoming a pharmacist and will be the first in her family to graduate college and attended a PWI. Her mother had some college; her father had some high school education.

Procedure

Students who attended a summer enrichment program at a large public university in the South were recruited to participate in the study through e-mail and classroom announcements. Four students volunteered and all were selected for participation. Initially, the primary researcher met with each student individually for 60 minutes to explain the purpose of the study, answer questions, and attain consent. Upon consent researchers were given access to the participants' academic records and applications which include their narrative histories. The semi-structured interview was conducted immediately after receiving consent. The interview lasted from 60 to 90 minutes with each participant. In addition, after the interview, data were collected from participants' narrative histories. All data were coded using qualitative analysis software, ATLAS-Ti (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Initial narrative histories and semi-structured interviews were transcribed and uploaded into Atlas-Ti.

Data Collection

Methods of collecting data using constructivist grounded theory include semi-structured interviews, memo writing, coding data, and document analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The pre-matriculation program application was used to complete document analysis. The application included students' demographic information, writing samples, and personal statements. For example, students were required to complete a 500 word personal statement describing their life and experiences most relevant to their interest in health careers. Students are asked to include information about: (a) educational/socioeconomic background (b) career selection process (c) extracurricular activities (d) work experience (e) interest in the health professions, and (f) adversity and/or unusual hardships they have overcome. The semi-structured interview focused on five questions about aspects of academic and social influences, motivation, and career persistence. Broad questions were used to begin the conversation such as, "What major challenges did you experience while pursuing your pre-professional degree?" Follow-up probing questions were used to gain more insight into students' experiences such as, "How did you navigate courses such as organic chemistry and physics?" and "What motivates you to continue in the face of challenge?" The guiding questions and all subsequent questions asked during the semi-structured interviews were geared toward and aligned with tapping into the sources of motivation and control as identified in self-determination theory.

Data Analysis and Verification

Although deductive analysis is covered in this section, more inductive analysis is elaborated upon in our findings. Additionally, interviewers were careful to refrain from drawing conclusions during the interview process. To avoid preliminary analysis, interviewer memos did reflect potential opinions, biases, and participant non-verbal cues which could suggest, confirm, or refute later findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

We follow the components of qualitative analysis set forth in Strauss and Corbin (1990) who suggest: (a) ensuring researcher involvement in data collection and analysis; (b) constructing analytic codes and categories from data, rather than formulating a hypothesis; (c) utilizing the constant comparative technique throughout the analysis; (d) addressing advances in theory development; (e) conducting memo writing to expand categories, identifying properties, exploring relationships, and tapping into the gaps in the literature; and (f) comparing and contrasting emergent themes with the current literature.

Initially, analysis was pragmatic and relied on deductive theoretical framework from SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000). After the data were reduced, the process maintained a discovery perspective of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), but incorporated some inductive and interpretive techniques as a means of expanding the existing self-determination framework (Charmaz, 2007; Yin, 1994). Our data were analyzed using six levels of qualitative analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) (Figure 1).

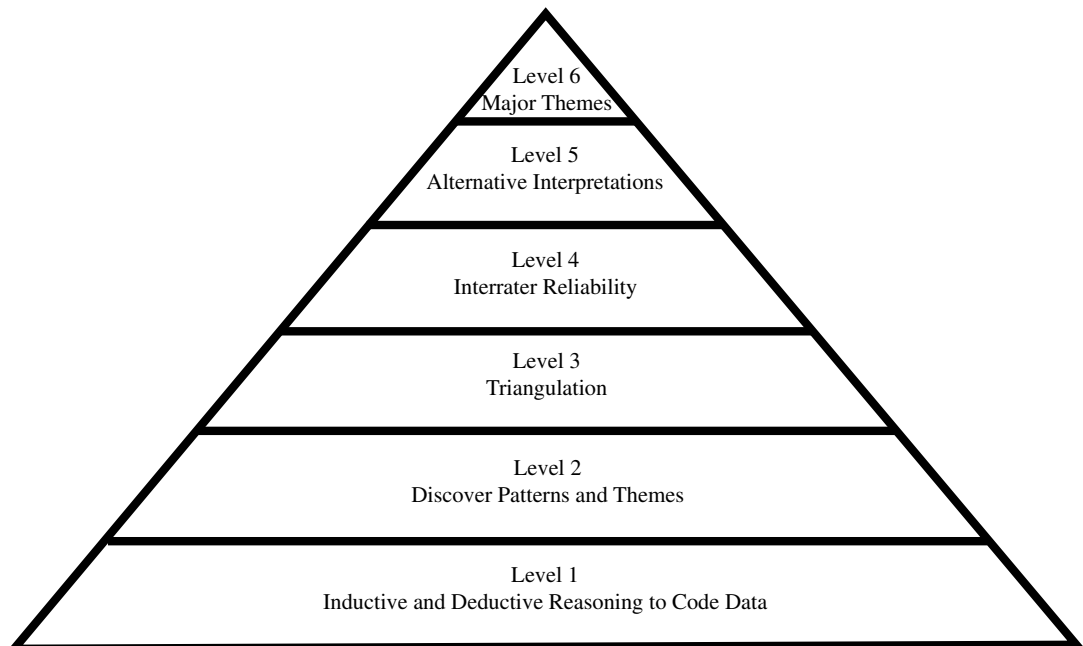


Figure 1. Levels of qualitative data analysis for student narratives and interviews

Level 1

Narrative histories and transcribed interviews were coded separately using deductive and inductive codes. Deductive codes were derived from SDT and inductive codes were added to identify characteristics derived from the researchers' exploratory nature. The coding sheet identified characteristics corresponding to five types of motivation underpinning SDT: (a) external regulation, (b) introjection, (c) identification, (d) internalization, and (e) intrinsic motivation.

External Regulation. While talking about their career persistence despite the outcomes of their efforts we identified several instances of external regulation. The most common source of external influences was the family, mentors, and/or significant others. Toya, a 28 year old pre-dental student, revealed the impact of family on her persistence when she stated, "With the unparalleled support of my family, there has never been a better time in my life to pursue this lifelong goal." Further, Angie, a 20 year old pre-dental student, demonstrated the strong tie between external regulation and career persistence with her comments:

When I got pregnant, [my advisor] was there to talk to me about that. She was there to tell me what steps to take. She was there for Calculus, when I failed.... She was very beneficial.

Introjection. Participants demonstrated introjections. For example, Toya, while discussing her personal desire to attend dentistry school, credits some of her career persistence to her mentors. She recognizes that her desire to meet the expectations of others, impacts her career persistence as shown by her comments:

The pediatric general surgery staff at Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago, Illinois performed eight surgeries directly after my birth, and chose the name *Miracle baby* for me. The head surgeon noted in the medical chart that I was a *fighter* and a *determined little baby*. Every day I strive to continue to display the positive qualities those doctors saw in me.

Angie confirms the impact of external sources on career persistence but also highlights the ego involvement associated with performing better than others.

I have talked to some of the girls and guy in our [study] group. I know I have a close friend who started off; she did the program a couple of years ago. I don't think she did very well on the test. I think she decided to do something else, compared to her I think I am more motivated than she is. Even though I did perform well, I am still here.

Identification. In this third level of extrinsic motivation, goals are personally important and valued. For instance, Angie demonstrated identification regulation in her ability to value learning her coursework.

Whenever I did have a problem or a question or something that I completely didn't understand, in undergraduate or graduate school, I would go directly to the professor [during] office hours. I don't have a professor in which I haven't gone to their office. I would go to their office hours and ask questions and then ... all the schools I have attended have free tutoring. I would go and ask questions there too as well. I would get as much [help] as possible.

Toya, like other students in our study, demonstrated identification when she connected her science GPA as personally important to her future goals.

In 2008, I decided that increasing my science grade point average by beginning a graduate program at Highland State University would be the place to begin my next step in my dental quest.

Internalization. Within the fourth level of extrinsic motivation, individuals were able to assimilate their goals (e.g., become a dentist) with their personal needs (e.g., help others). Angel, a 22 year old pre-pharmacy student, reflected on her desire to do something for others.

I did my research on [bipolar disorder] and I just felt affected and I wanted to do something about it or help others who may go through this problem ... it was something I had to do.

Angie demonstrated internalization by explaining the importance of reaching her goals as a dentist.

Working at a dental office will help me reach my goal. My goal is my goal. I am going to reach my goal. Nothing that I can control is going to stop me. I cannot serve my community if I don't reach these goals.

Intrinsic Motivation. In this most autonomous level, students described strong intrinsic and independent motivation. Angie discussed her desire to be a dentist by highlighting that enjoyment was an important factor.

I even tell my fiancée, you should pick a career that you want to do some when you go to work you are not ready to come home. You need to do something you enjoy doing. I need to do something I enjoy or I won't do it well or I won't be as motivated as I should. Everyone should do something that they want to do or like to do. Work won't be something you regret ... I want to enjoy my work.

Tom confirmed Angie's sentiments of enjoyment and interest when he talked about his skill and strengths when working with patients.

I am comfortable with the oral cavity: morphology, tooth numbers, assessing radiographs, dental anatomy. I know how to work with people. I had a female Muslim patient who did not make eye contact and her husband stood in the room the whole time. I knew how to treat her and felt comfortable with touching and conversation with her. I make people feel comfortable ... the older women want to tip me for service. How sweet is that?!

Level 2

In the second level of analysis, researchers reduced the data from individual codes to identify the categories of intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation (e.g. external regulation was grouped under the theme of extrinsic motivation). Constant comparative analysis began to inform how additional themes began to emerge and became identifiable. Throughout each level of SDT, students demonstrated that academic or personal challenges did not hinder career persistence. For example, Angie, a pre-dental student, described her persistence in the face of negative performance as follows:

One particular class I was really having a hard time with was Calculus 3. Actually, the first time I had the class I think I got an F... the second time I got a D.... It never occurred to me that I could not do it. It was something I would just have to work with. I just have to keep going.

While this student focused on poor grades, a deleterious external regulator, she did not convey decreased career persistence. This was an unexpected response which was missed during inductive coding and contradictory to SDT, therefore unaccounted for in deductive coding.

Level 3

Triangulation occurred, in Level 3, by comparing students' interview data with their narrative histories and application documents. This comparison confirmed findings identified in level 1 and 2 analyses.

Level 4

At this point in the analysis some of our preliminary findings seemed to be in direct contrast to the current research literature regarding SDT (R. Ryan, personal communication, March 22, 2011). We wanted to confirm our theoretical understanding and coding of specific content conducted in level one by conducting a posteriori or data driven analysis. As a result, we generated a list of quotes from our semi-structured interviews that were coded for different extrinsic and intrinsic levels of the SDT continuum. The purpose of this task was to obtain cross-researcher reliability to determine the degree of similarity in the coding of student interviews by different researchers (Miles & Huberman, 1994) who were selected from a doctoral level motivation course whereby all were familiar with SDT. A sample of coded data verified the reliability of the previously coded data (Figure 2). The researchers responded with high strength and 100% accuracy to intrinsic motivation citations selected from Pintrich's (1991) *Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ)*, yet when identifying subscales of extrinsic motivation, there was variation in self-determination level and strength.

Level 5

Throughout the data analysis, we took note of the recurring themes and emerging areas. During level 5 analysis a distinct understanding of intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics surfaced and relationships between these concepts developed. We compared our themes within the context of current literature for a clearer identity. For example, Ryan and Deci (2000) suggest that intrinsic motivation is undermined by extrinsic motivation. Some themes were more unclear and ambiguous; these minor themes were either closely connected to other themes and were merged to generate the major themes of the study or eliminated on the basis of insufficient evidence. From these comparisons we were able to develop major themes.

Level 6

Thus far in the data analysis the rigor of the analysis was deductive in nature; however in this final level we used inductive reasoning that is a slightly more interpretive approach to make sense of the themes that emerged from the data (Charmaz, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Using the information collected in level 5 analysis, we determined how the findings of this study supported or contradicted previous research. Major themes across all four participants that supported unique differences or expanded on previous research were organized for clarity; and these themes are discussed in detail in the

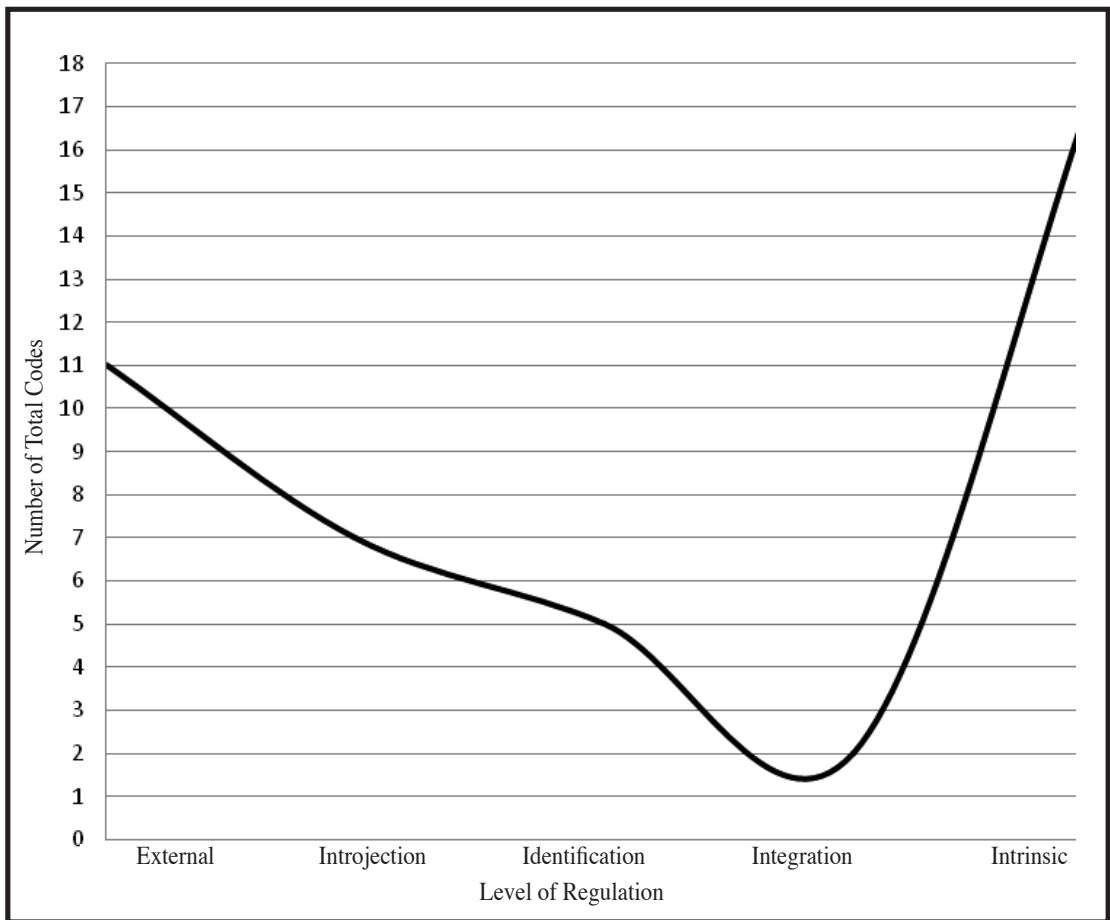


Figure 2. Self-Determination Continuum Using Total Code Counts

findings below. The goal of this approach was to compile an accurate representation of motivational experience of Black pre-health students. Following rigorous analysis, we took steps to avoid bias by conducting interrater reliability and member checking for theoretical continuity. This analysis results in the development of understanding how these students' motivation related to their career persistence.

Findings

The data suggest that self-determination theory (SDT) in a non-linear form can explain the experience of career persistence. Four major themes in this study that help to explain the experience and role of cognitive motivation in students' career persistence are: (a) social environment, it has a strong influence on career persistence; (b) students demonstrated high resilience which parallels their career persistence; (c) SDT continuum, that may not fully explain the scope of simultaneous presentation during high levels of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation; and (d) SDT assumption that extrinsic regulation undermines intrinsic motivation does not fit the students in this study.

Theme 1

Social environment is a strong influence on career persistence. This is consistent with previous research suggesting that social environment influences career persistence (Barr, Gonzalez, & Wanat, 2008; Cokley, 2003; Ellington & Frederick, 2010). Each student demonstrated that significant others (i.e., current practitioners, partners, and family) played a role in sustaining their career path.

I would not be here if it wasn't for my parents. They continue to encourage me to pursue dentistry. (Angie)

[My pediatric dentist] help me learn so much from one month of shadowing ... my eyes were opened to the exciting field of health care dentistry. (Toya)

All participants in the study demonstrated that their career persistence is strongly impacted by their social environment both in narrative histories and interview (Table 1).

Theme 2

Students demonstrated high resilience which parallels their career persistence. This resiliency was a strong contributor to students' career persistence. For example, students maintained high career persistence in the face of negative extrinsic feedback (e.g., grades).

I failed the course, I knew I needed to repeat ... then, I decided that increasing my science grade point average by beginning a graduate program would be the next step in my dental quest. (Toya)

All students in this study overcame numerous social challenges (e.g. pregnancy and poor academic performance) and continued to maintain commitment to their career pursuits (Table 1).

Theme 3

Self-determination theory (SDT) continuum does not explain the scope of simultaneous presentations of high levels of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation or exceptions to the SDT linear continuum. While each level of the self-determination continuum was present during the participant interviews, the narratives did not follow a linear progression from external regulation into intrinsic motivation as one might assume for students with high career persistence. Angel had the highest number of codes for career persistence (12), but her external regulation (6) was stronger than her intrinsic motivation (4) (see Table 1). The students' discussions about career persistence followed a curvilinear approach along the self-determination continuum (Figure 3). All students' demonstrated high levels of extrinsic regulation when talking about their career persistence despite the outcomes of their efforts. Also, they demonstrated high levels of external regulation but not all demonstrated introjection. Three of the four students, Angel, Angie, and Tom, demonstrated introjection only once in their interview when talking about career persistence. Two of the four participants provided examples of career persistence that is motivated by personal value or importance. The students who demonstrated strong career persistence overall were the same students to demonstrate identification. Angie demonstrated identified regulation in her ability to value learning her coursework. Only two of the four students, Angel and Angie, demonstrated the internalization level of SDT in which the individual assimilated their goals with their personal needs. All students' demonstrated intrinsic motivation, interest, and enjoyment (see Table 1). Overall, the number of codes in students' narratives declined within external regulation as the continuum

progressed. Students' introjected, identified, and integrated regulation was not as highly demonstrated as those of external regulation and intrinsic regulation even in the presence of high career persistence.

Table 1
Code Count of Participants

Theme/Codes	Participant Name/Number of Codes				Total
	Angie	Tom	Toya	Angel	
Theme 1: Social Environment					
Mastery experiences	25	5	26	6	62
Social persuasion	6	2	3	1	12
Family	10	3	10	8	31
Informal advising	0	4	0	0	4
Field experiences	8	7	9	3	27
Theme 2: Resiliency					
Challenging Life Experiences	5	4	10	6	25
Theme 3: SDT Continuum Does not Fully Explain Persistence	6	5	8	7	26
Theme 4: The Assumption that Extrinsic Motivation Undermines Intrinsic Motivation Does Not Fit					
Amotivation	0	0	0	0	0
Extrinsic motivation	7	1	10	8	26
External regulation	3	0	2	6	11
Introjection	1	1	4	1	7
Identification	0	0	3	2	5
Integration	1	0	0	0	1
Intrinsic motivation	7	1	6	4	18
Career Persistence	3	1	6	12	22

Theme 4

The assumption of SDT that extrinsic regulation undermines intrinsic motivation does not fit these students. Revealed in this study was the concurrent presence of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in students' career persistence process (Griffin, 2006; Hwang, Echols, & Vrongistinos, 2002). Ryan and Deci (2000) argue that intrinsic motivation is undermined by extrinsic motivation, particularly controlled tangible or verbal rewards. Students who had the highest level of career persistence also revealed higher levels of intrinsic motivation. In this study, however, controlled extrinsic motivation did not appear to diminish intrinsic motivation. In some cases, extrinsic motivation, particularly external regulation, seemed to be compatible with intrinsic motivation when looking through the lens of career persistence. Individuals with strong intrinsic motivation respond to life challenges with increased career persistence

Circle the number below that you believe is associated with the citation below:

Amotivation External Introjection Identification Integration Intrinsic Motivation
0 1 2 3 4 5

Example:

I want a job that pays well.

0 ① 2 3 4 5

X

Low Strength

High Strength

Mark an X on the line below to demonstrate how strong the citation fits with each stage.

1. [My advisor] was there to tell me what steps to take

0 ① 2 3 4 5

X₅ X₁ X₄ X₃ X₂ X₇ X₆
Low Strength High Strength

2. My mother tries to control me.

0 ① 2 3 4 5

X₅ X₃ X₇ X₆ X₄ X₁ X₂
Low Strength High Strength

3. He didn't give me the training he was supposed to give me.

0 ① 2 3 4 5

X₆ X₂ X₇ X₃ X₅ X₄ X₁
Low Strength High Strength

4. I prefer course material that arouses my curiosity, even if it is difficult to learn.

0 1 2 3 4 ⑤

X₆ X₇ X₅ X₃ X₄ X₂ X₁
Low Strength High Strength

Figure 3. Assessment Items From Cross Researcher Reliability. Adapted from Pintrich, P.R., Smith, D.A.F., Garcia, T., & McKeachie, W.J. (1991). *A manual for the use of the motivated strategies for learning questionnaire (MSLQ)*. National Center for Research to Improve Postsecondary Teaching and Learning. Ann Arbor, MI. Retrieved from ERIC database. (ED338122)

Note: Cross researcher reliability items used to code external regulation as well as intrinsic motivation. Each researcher's strength score is associated with their participant number in subscript (i.e. X₁ is the mark for researcher 1).

while simultaneously demonstrating high extrinsic motivation. Angie's passion for dentistry is supported and controlled by verbal rewards from her parents who contribute to her continued persistence. She stated that

I would not be here if it wasn't for my parents. They *strongly* encourage me to pursue dentistry [laughter] ... I will be a dentist, there is nothing else I want to do!

Angel exhibited numerous examples of high external regulation and career persistence, but moderate levels of intrinsic motivation (see Table 1). She indicated that:

Once I found out [my dad] was diagnosed with bi-polar disorder, it made me want to do something about it ... [his bipolar] is the reason I am going into pharmacy. It is a scary disorder.

I am fond of pharmacy, let's see the first reason, of course, the pay [laughs] ... I enjoy what I do as a technician, so I am assuming I would enjoy it as a pharmacist.

Decreased career persistence was only observed in students with low intrinsic and low extrinsic demonstrations of motivation. In this study, the presence of high levels of intrinsic *and* extrinsic motivation was associated with high career persistence. Ryan and Deci (1990) suggest that some extrinsic motivation may lead to positive outcomes as long as the external motivators are personally selected and controlled. Although this explains why extrinsic regulators do not always undermine intrinsic motivation, it does not fully explain the results in this study and previous studies (Husman & Lens, 1999; Griffin, 2006) in which highly intrinsically motivated students demonstrate increased levels of extrinsic motivation simultaneously.

Discussion

This study is a description of the influences impacting students' motivation and subsequent career persistence. The impact of social environment on career persistence of Black pre-health students supported the results of previous studies in which extrinsic motivators, such as the tangible and verbal rewards of advisors, family and mentors, provided significant career development support to pre-health students (Barr, Gonzalez, & Wanat, 2008; Ellington & Frederick, 2010). While all students in this study, exhibit some intrinsic motivation, surprisingly their extrinsic motivation was more substantial (see Table 1). As researchers understand the complex relationship between motivation and students' career persistence in health care professions, a need for a diverse pool of health care providers may be met, leading to a more culturally competent workforce and a smaller underserved community. Self-determination theory (SDT) is a helpful framework to use to understand Black pre-health students motivation, but future modifications may expand current understanding.

We suggest modifying the traditional model of self-determination theory to include fluid levels of the continuum. This could allow for small levels of external regulation to exist in the presences of high intrinsic motivation or moderate to high levels of external regulation in the presence of high intrinsic motivation (Figure 4). In contrast to the stage-like theories in cognitive motivation such as self-determination, we suggest reframing the continuum using overlapping waves theory (Siegler, 2002) which allows individuals to possess a range of motivational levels throughout different domains and times (Siegler, 1995; Varnhagen, McCallum, & Burstow, 1997). This framework embraces the idea of cognitive variability instead of linear processes. The SDT continuum illustrates a stage-like process which does not highlight numerous approaches students may be using while negotiating their motivation (Calais, 2008). Using this framework with SDT allows students to possess different levels of extrinsic and intrinsic regulation simultaneously. Unlike the sequential, directional and fixed order of SDT, overlapping waves theory allows students motivation to oscillate.

In addition, these students' experiences highlight a complex relationship between rewards and intrinsic motivation. Research suggests that when information rewards meet the need for autonomy, they help increase intrinsic motivation. However, when rewards are tangible and do not meet the need for autonomy, intrinsic motivation is undermined (Deci, Koestner & Ryan, 1999). While SDT implies that tangible and controlling rewards such as money undermine intrinsic motivation, the relationships of controlling verbal rewards and the undermining of intrinsic motivation was not completely clear in this study (Pittman, Davey, Alafat, Wetherill, & Kramer, 1980). The students described simultaneous positive

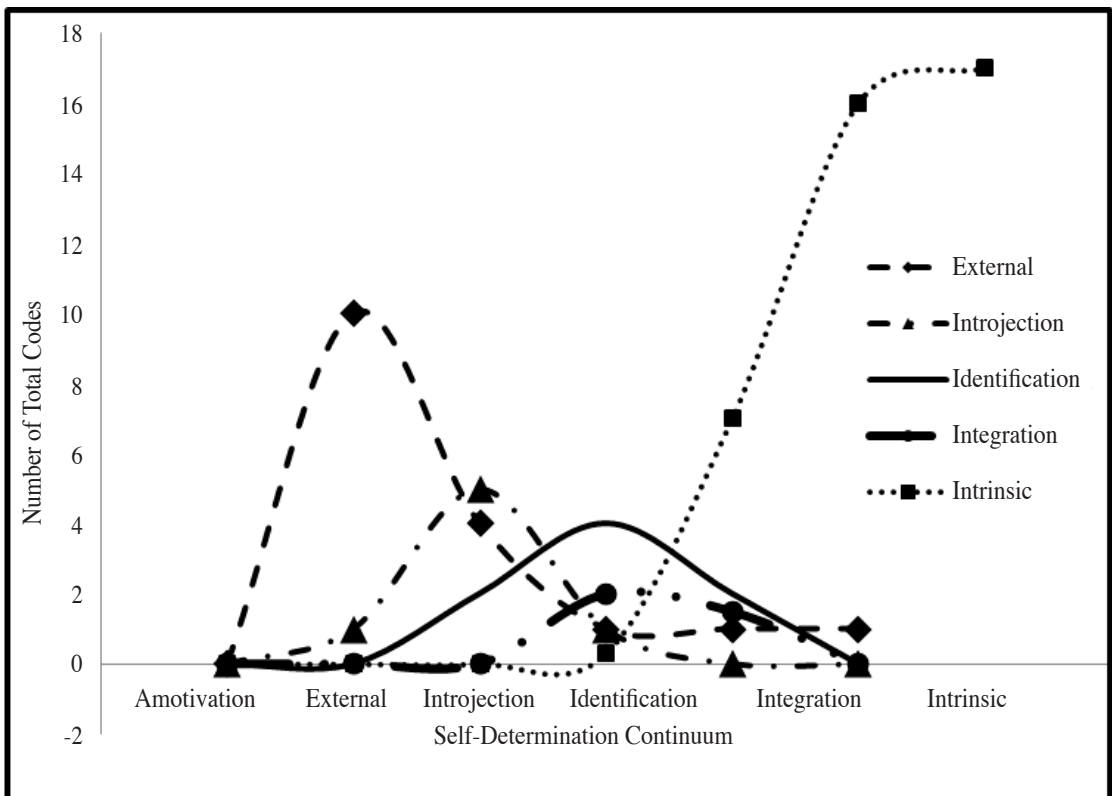


Figure 4. A Modified Model of Self-Determination Theory

perceptions of controlling rewards and intrinsic motivation related to their career persistence. This finding is supported by previous studies using attribution theory to explore the adaptive and positive psychological impact extrinsic motivation has on Black students (Graham, 1997; van Laar, 2000).

Although our current study is focused on four students at one institutional program, the findings do add more complexity and depth to a continuing conversation about Black students' career persistence and motivation. This conversation can be expanded through future research by: (a) examining the use of additional theoretical frameworks (b) validating the expanded SDT model with additional qualitative and quantitative studies, and (c) increasing triangulation of qualitative research methods. First, the data suggest that other frameworks, such as expectancy/value or attribution theory (Okeke, Howard, Kurtz-Costes & Rowley, 2009; Weiner, 1985), may bring clarity to the study of the career persistence process of Black students. Also, attribution theory may help to explain how individuals attribute past outcomes to predict future motivation. Second, both qualitative and quantitative research could focus on the nature and measurement of each type of extrinsic motivation within SDT and be used to validate the proposed model.

This study found that each stage of the continuum was not equally and easily measured qualitatively. A posterior analysis of the data using cross researcher reliability led us to determine that reexamination of the measurement of extrinsic motivation sub-stages is needed to accurately apply SDT to discussions of career persistence. The subgroups of extrinsic motivation lacked clarity in identification,

while amotivation and intrinsic motivation were clearly distinguished in interrater reliability testing. Research can continue to distinguish not only between the extrinsic motivational subgroups, but also separate from intrinsic or amotivation (Koestner, Losier, Vallerand & Carducci, 1996). Finally, future research can examine the impact of additional qualitative methods.

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Founders of *The Negro Educational Review*

Dr. J. Irving E. Scott and Dr. R. Grann Lloyd founded *The Negro Educational Review (NER)* after meeting with educators at Alcorn College in Mississippi. The first issue was published in January 1950.

Dr. Scott was born in Jamaica, West Indies on January 13, 1901. He received the AB degree from Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, the MA degree from Wittenberg University, and the PhD degree from the University of Pittsburgh. He was the author of numerous books, including *Living with Others*, *Finding My Way*, *Negro Students and Their Colleges*, *Getting the Most out of High School*, and *The Education of Black People in Florida*. He served as president of the Citizens Investment Corporation. Because of his contributions, he was listed in the *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who in the World*. Dr. Scott was editor-in-chief of NER from 1950-1981.

Dr. Lloyd was born on August 18, 1918. He received the BS degree from Tennessee State University, the MA degree from Columbia University, and the PhD degree from New York University. Dr. Lloyd's successful career spawned over 60 publications. His significant career experiences included guest economist, Chase Manhattan Bank, International Department, 1975; consultant to the Office of the Secretary, United States Treasury Department, 1973; staff member, President's Council of Economic Affairs, 1970; managing editor, *The Negro Educational Review*, 1950; president, The Citizens Economic Development Corporation; and economic consultant to the Jacksonville Urban League. In his widespread community activities, he was a courageous champion for equality and justice for all Americans regardless of class, color or religious creed. Standing on journalistic high ground, he wrote: "As a matter of both principle and policy, *The Negro Educational Review* will continue its unflagging struggle for the rights all persons are due by virtue of their humanity." Dr. Lloyd was editor-in-chief of NER from 1981-1995. A tribute to founders Dr. J. Irving E. Scott and Dr. R. Grann Lloyd is extended because of their impact on the national scene. Their works are important parts of the social history of this nation.

William Jimmerson Holloway
NER Editor-in-Chief, 1995-1999

Black Female Faculty Success and Early Career Professional Development

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Abstract

In recent years, a number of Black female junior scholars have participated in an early career professional development program designed to address socialization issues through individual and small group mentoring. This descriptive qualitative study investigated scholars' perceptions of the importance and effectiveness of a research bootcamp-like experience in the form of an early career professional development program. Findings from a focus group interview with seven junior scholar participants conducted as part of a larger study indicate that while traditional socialization activities fail to include knowledge about writing and publishing, as well as provisions for developing a professional and personal network that Black female faculty identify as crucial for success, the Research BootCamp experience includes this information.

Introduction

The factors that contribute to academic and professional success in the academy often include indicators provided at the onset of a junior scholar's career. These aspects include a well thought-out program of research or research agenda, clear and consistent performance criteria, and successful tenure and promotion. Researchers have examined these factors in many institutional and gendered contexts (Johnsrud & DesJarlais, 1994; Phelps, 1995; Ponjuan, Martin Conley, & Trower, 2011; Villalpando & Delgado Bernal, 2002). Also, critical knowledge and skill areas identified for new faculty include teaching, research, service, and academic citizenship (LaRocco & Bruns, 2006). Unfortunately, many junior scholars often do not receive adequate socialization to become productive faculty members (LaRocco & Bruns, 2006; Ortlieb, Biddix, & Doepker, 2010; Reynolds, 1992). Traditionally, socialization activities have focused on discipline-based knowledge and skills required for professional

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success. Nevertheless, these socialization² activities fail to address the many unstated and undocumented aspects of academic culture that new faculty identify as crucial to their professional success (Johnson, 2001; LaRocco & Bruns, 2006; Reynolds, 1992).

Nevertheless, inadequate preparation for success as a faculty member not only results in added difficulties for emerging scholars, but also for graduate students they advise. In short, professional development activities designed with new faculty in mind help to mitigate the issues this group faces in academia. Since socialization is an important factor in the academic preparation and professional success of early career faculty (Clark & Corcoran, 1986; Johnson, 2002; Lucas & Murry, 2002), a number of Black female junior scholars in recent years have availed themselves of an early career professional development activity designed to address and mitigate academic socialization issues in the Research BootCamp® (2010).

Socialization issues are especially acute for Black female faculty given their limited representation in academia, notwithstanding efforts to diversify higher education and the professoriate specifically. The 2009 United States Census (2010) reported .5% of Black females 25 years and older held doctoral degrees compared to .9% of White females. Out of the 63,712 doctoral degrees conferred in 2007-2008, 4% (2,594) were awarded to Black females; they comprise 12.8% of female faculty, and 3.6% of all other faculty (NCES, 2009).

Increasing the number and percentage of Black female faculty can lead to a positive and lasting impact on the overall health of the academy. For example, the presence of more underrepresented faculty role models is likely to broadly influence the recruitment and graduation rate of underrepresented doctoral students, as well as socialize these students to life in the academy (Ayers, 1983; Blackwell, 1983; Brown, 1991; Pruitt & Isaac, 1985). These faculty members can also provide knowledge about nontraditional student populations and about their teaching and professional goals (Ellis, 2001; Turner & Thompson, 1993). Ultimately, they can lead to a broadening and deepening of the scope of research paradigms, not only for themselves, but also for other members of the university community (Antonio, 2002; Garrison-Wade, Diggs, Estrada, & Galindo, 2012).

Despite this, consistent evidence has shown that non-White faculty members have different experiences in academia when compared to their White counterparts (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004; Johnsrud & DesJarlais, 1994; Ponjuan, Martin Conley, & Trower, 2011; Stanley, 2006, 2007; Thompson & Dey, 1998; Thompson & Louque, 2005; Tillman, 2001). Additionally, they receive less social support than White colleagues (Ponjuan, Martin Conley, & Trower, 2011). This lack of support often results from conflicting values of individual faculty members and the academy at large (Stanley, 2007). As a result, Black faculty members are often unaware of professional opportunities due to limited access to formal and informal networks that exist in many professions and disciplines; such lack of access may ultimately compromise their professional success (Frierson, 1990; Modica & Mamiseishvili, 2010; Patitu & Hinton, 2003; Turner & Thompson, 1993). In addition to the already challenging transition from graduate student to professor, Black faculty may also experience isolation and alienation from their White colleagues (Johnsrud & DesJarlais, 1994; McCray, 2011; Phelps, 1995). Furthermore, the intersectionality of race and gender add additional layers to the already complex environment for these female faculty (Collins, 1990; Gregory, 2001; Griffin & Reddick, 2011; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2008; Tillman, 2011). Marginalization and lack of mentoring, can increase their chances of being less familiar with the tenure and promotion process (Gregory, 2001).

² A process whereby the values, norms, knowledge, and beliefs of a group are imparted to a new member (Clark & Corcoran, 1986; Johnson, 2001; LaRocco & Bruns, 2006; Reynolds, 1992).

These factors, and the likelihood that new faculty often have not been made aware of the expected level and types of academic productivity further undermine the success these junior faculty could experience in academia. Given the challenges identified in the literature for Black female faculty, most current faculty socialization activities still do not appear to adequately address the issues of importance for them. Thus, we propose an alternative model of socialization that responds to the complexity of issues they experience.

In a study of Black faculty members in two predominantly White research institutions, Tillman (2001) identified three primary factors that present roadblocks for successful promotion and tenure: (a) lack of socialization to faculty life, (b) lack of meaningful mentoring, and (c) inability to articulate a viable and sustainable research agenda. Recently, a number of Black female junior scholars participated in an early career professional development activity designed to address challenges Tillman identified.

As such our goal is to examine these junior faculty perceptions regarding the value of early career professional development. Specifically, we aim (a) to determine the importance and effectiveness of early career professional development, and (b) to determine which features of the Research BootCamp (RBC) are most salient for their successful professional development.

Conceptual Framework

In addition to academic preparation (i.e., formal school experiences—undergraduate, graduate, or post-graduate academic study), evidence suggests that socialization involves mentoring (i.e., relationships—peer, informal, and formal; within and outside of the professional context); and professional development (i.e., formal and informal experiences—professional or para-professional daily work, additional training and development in the professional context). Individually and collectively these constructs play a major role in the socialization of new scholars and provide a framework for our study. Appendix A shows a graphical representation of the ways in which the essential components contribute to not only each other, but ultimately to better understanding socialization. Herein, though, we focus on mentoring and professional development.

Mentoring

For Black female junior scholars, mentoring can provide access to the necessary networks and professional opportunities that help mitigate the challenges mentioned in the research literature. Mentoring is characterized by the relationships developed between junior early career and senior faculty. Mentoring socializes new faculty (Davis, 2008; Ponjuan, Conley, & Trower, 2011), contributes to the recruitment and retention of faculty (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004; Stanley, 2006), facilitates engagement in scholarly activities (Gregory, 2001), ameliorates feelings of isolation and alienation (Zellers, Howard, & Barcic, 2008), and influences job satisfaction (Ponjuan, Conley, & Trower, 2011).

Ultimately, developing mentoring networks proves valuable for Black female faculty over time (Jean-Marie & Brooks, 2011). Unfortunately, the lack of a critical mass of senior Black male and female faculty limits the chances for same-race or same-gender mentoring for Black female scholars (Jean-Marie & Brooks, 2011; Stanley & Lincoln, 2005). These realities point to the significance that cross-race mentoring and culturally responsive mentors can play in a junior scholars' success (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004; Patitu & Hinton, 2003; Stanley & Lincoln, 2005). Despite the fact that opportunities for Black female faculty to be mentored are limited (Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001), they are more likely to serve as mentors, particularly for same-race students and faculty (Griffin & Reddick, 2011). Interestingly, a peer approach is more often used when mentoring does take place (Myers, 2002; Thomas &

Hollenshead, 2001) and usually occurs outside of the department or institution (Stanley, 2006; Tillman, 2011).

In many cases, the absence of the availability of mentoring—cross-race, cross-gender or otherwise—results in Black female scholars searching for these opportunities outside their home institution and even outside of academia. They often rely on their own sense of agency, or “one’s ability to self promote through interactions with others” (Jean-Marie & Brooks, 2011, p. 101). These interactions allow them to access mentoring and professional development not available at their home institutions. Consequently, they develop their own professional networks and gain access to professional development that supports their professional success.

Professional Development

Socialization activities are designed to provide insight into an environment and guidance for newcomers about an organization. These activities can be a source of professional development which has been characterized as formal and informal training and development in the professional context. Professional development for new scholars ranges from professional association conference attendance, discipline-specific conference sessions, workshops, or other trainings, as well as institutional seminars or other gatherings focused on furthering professional preparation. For faculty attendance at professional association conferences, meetings, workshops, or other trainings provide opportunities to enhance their knowledge or skills. These activities are often sponsored by institutions, professional associations, or other organizations.

New faculty often come to academia with a variety of professional experiences and credentials which calls for support during the pre-tenure years and beyond (Stanley & Watson, 2006). In addition, new scholars share unfamiliarity with the culture and traditions of their institution and institution-sponsored orientation programs, which if known could acclimate them to institutional culture as well as faculty roles and responsibilities (Stanley & Watson, 2006). For new faculty these activities take place using a variety of programs and personnel, including orientation sessions designed to introduce new emerging scholars to campus resources for teaching and research, as well as senior scholars in departments and colleges who serve as mentors. Many scholars supplement these opportunities with individual training or professional development outside of academia in order to increase their knowledge or skills in a particular area.

Patricia Hill Collins’ (1986) *Black Feminist Thought* provided an additional lens from which to view the individual and collective experiences of Black female faculty. Collins’ assertion that Black females possess a unique perspective of their experiences and that there are commonalities shared among them as a group. Shared understandings as well as a diversity of life experiences also exists impacting how each woman examines and interprets common experiences. Sharing one’s story and drawing a connection to other Black females with similar experiences aids understanding the adversity these women face in academia.

Mentoring and Professional Development in the RBC

The Sisters of the Academy (SOTA) Institute Research BootCamp (RBC) has been identified as a professional development opportunity for Black female faculty (Davis, Chaney, Edwards, Thompson-Rogers, & Gines, 2011 & 2012). Started in 2005, the RBC was designed to support Black female junior faculty and doctoral students in their quest for success in the academy. The RBC is an intensive, bi-annual seven-day professional development program; it provides assistance to advanced doctoral students for

dissertation research and to junior faculty for preparation of journal peer-review manuscripts. Through individual and small group mentoring, with a focus on knowledge and skill development, the RBC mitigates negative socialization issues for these scholars and provides access to a network of Black female scholars.

Participants include untenured junior faculty, tenured full-time faculty, and doctoral students from various colleges and universities. The doctoral students have completed their course work and are either designated as Level One (preparing dissertation research proposal), or as Level Two (having defended their proposal and are in the process of collecting data). Participants submit an application to participate in the RBC. The application includes a copy of the resume or Curriculum Vitae, letter of support from the major professor, advisor, department chair or mentor (for junior faculty), and a personal statement that addresses overall research interests and skills to be developed at the RBC. Senior Scholar Mentors, tenured Black female faculty at the Associate and Professor level, provide one-on-one and small group mentoring to participants. Senior Scholar Mentors are paired with junior scholars based on their research interests and fields of study.

At the beginning of the week participants present their research ideas and goals for the week. Similarly, they summarize their progress at the end of the RBC in another research presentation. A panel of Senior Scholar Mentors offers their critique and suggestions for future direction at both presentations. Daily seminars and workshops on research methodology, writing for scholarly publication, and life management within academia, among other topics specific to the participant level (i.e., doctoral student or junior faculty) are offered. Participants also have time for individual writing and feedback sessions with an assigned senior scholar.

Method

The data for this study are drawn from a larger qualitative, evaluative study designed to explore participant satisfaction with program design and implementation of the RBC, the early career professional development program that is the focus of this study. We sought to explore participant's early career professional development experiences and the RBC, specifically. While in the larger study we used survey data collected during each year the RBC was conducted (i.e., 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011) to evaluate aspects related to program design and implementation, for this inquiry we used interview data from focus groups.

Specifically, we conducted focus groups with RBC participants to explore the importance and effectiveness of early professional development. We were also able to use data from the focus group interviews to gauge the specific aspects of the BootCamp that were most salient for Black female junior faculty.

Participants

Participants of the RBC are organized by levels (i.e., senior scholars, junior faculty, and doctoral students), thus, a stratified purposeful sampling was used to recruit participants for the study based on participant level. The sampling strategy illustrates subgroups and facilitates comparisons (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The use of this technique particularly enhances our ability to conduct future analyses across participant levels and program years.

Details about the participants are shown in Appendix B. Pseudonyms were used to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of each participant. A signed consent form approved by the Institutional

Review Board of Florida State University was completed by each participant. Incentives for participation were not provided.

Focus Group Interviews

Group interviews also known as the focus group, were conducted at the conclusion of the RBC, using group interaction to generate insight (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). The interaction also highlights the “commonality of experiences and fosters self-disclosure and self-validation” (Madriz, 2000, p. 842). Fontana and Frey (2000) noted that group interviews “aid respondents’ recall of specific events or to stimulate embellished descriptions of events or experiences shared by members of a group” (p. 651). Collins (2000) asserted that Black females possess a unique perspective of their experiences and that there are commonalities shared by Black females as a group. Collins suggests that shared understandings, as well as a diversity of life experiences also exists impacting how each woman examines and interprets those common experiences. Sharing one’s story and drawing a connection to other Black females with similar experiences aids understanding the adversity these women face in academia. Although, four focus group interviews were conducted at the 2011 RBC, our focus for this study is with junior faculty, therefore we selected for analysis, only data from the junior faculty focus group.

Although, the use of focus group interviews can potentially impede the collection of reliable information when the questions pertain to matters the participants perceive as personally sensitive or would otherwise be divulged in individual interviews, our focus group enabled us to obtain deeper levels of meanings and make important connections that were generated from the ability of participants to build upon and react to responses of others, particularly illuminating their shared experiences.

Procedure

One focus group interview, which lasted approximately 75 minutes, was conducted with the junior faculty participants. The interview protocol for the focus group began with descriptive questions and then moved to specific career and professional development questions. Interview questions were semi-structured and focused on reasons why participants attended the Research BootCamp, goal setting in relation to their participation, mentoring, and overall perceptions of the specific program outcomes. Key questions for participants included: Why did you attend the Research BootCamp? What goals and expectations did you set for your participation in the Research BootCamp? How successful were you in reaching those goals? Having set out to understand how the BootCamp meets the unique needs of Black female faculty, we directed a portion of the interview guide deductively at the way the BootCamp met the specific needs of Black junior faculty, in particular. For example, we asked: “How is the Research BootCamp different from other professional development you have previously experienced?” The focus group interview was digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Participants’ interactions with each other around interview questions brought out multiple perspectives surrounding the importance of career professional development and aspects of the Research BootCamp that was particularly salient for this group.

Data Analysis

We employed a multi-stage, iterative approach for coding and analysis of the data. The initial stage of analysis included open-coding of the interview transcripts to identify initial themes and patterns in the data, which was followed by a second stage of more focused coding. During the second stage of analysis, we used content and constant comparative analyses to further identify patterns and themes in the

data (Fetterman, 1989; Merriam, 2002; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 1989). We used memos throughout the process to record reflective thoughts as we read the interview transcript and individual responses. NVivo 9, a qualitative data management software program was used to organize, manage, and code the data. This software also facilitates reliability checking between coders and allows for efficient querying of codes.

Trustworthiness

To establish dependability, we employed systematic, iterative coding approaches (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Member checks were also conducted with participants to confirm the accuracy and clarity of our interpretations to enhance trustworthiness. Finally, in qualitative research, the role of the researcher cannot be ignored. Patton (2002) labeled the researcher “the instrument,” while Bogdan and Taylor (1975) argued “the researcher must identify and empathize with his or her subjects in order to understand them from their own frames of reference” (p. 8). As two Black female academicians, one untenured professor and one prior untenured professor, we were able to identify with and understand the other junior scholars and their experiences that were the focus of this study. Using Gearing’s (2004) typology of bracketing, we were able to collect our internal presuppositions throughout the entire research process so as not to overlay our own experiences with that articulated by the participants.

Findings

In our study we asked participants to identify the most salient aspects of the Research BootCamp for themselves. Following, we present insights under themes we discovered from their comments. Specific themes include creating a community of Black female scholars, building confidence through research development, and developing action steps for success in the academy.

Creating a Community of Black Female Scholars

The faculty in our study identified the need to create a community of Black female scholars as a reason for attending the RBC; all seven participants acknowledged the importance of developing a network of Black female scholars. At the RBC, the community of scholars included doctoral students, junior scholars, senior scholars, administrators, and others outside of academia; this created what Hood (1998) calls a network of shared lived experiences which the women could access after the program ended. Their identities as Black, female, and faculty intersected to create a common language, common experiences, as well as a common context for making meaning of their experiences. When asked about the difference in the RBC and other professional development, Melanie explained,

This is the first professional development opportunity that I have done specifically for women of color; Black women, African American women, [or] whatever terms you might use [to identify yourself]. So it was great to have all these tools that you guys have provided through the workshops that have catered to our experiences, although we have different experiences.

She then continued, “I’m still a minority at an HBCU as a professor, so it’s great to come to a place where there are Black women PhDs and we can talk about things specific to our struggles.”

The women in our study observed how the attention to the intersection of race and gender at the RBC contributed to the “supportive environment,” one specifically where being Black and female were both acknowledged and intentionally incorporated throughout the entire experience. The holistic nature of

the RBC environment was also identified as a key aspect of its uniqueness. Participants acknowledged that the intentional attention to race and gender created an environment that facilitated conversations about the many roles Black females play in their professional and personal lives. Natasha commented, “I felt like SOTA valued the mind, body, and spirit and tried to give opportunities to take care of all of ourselves.” Anna added, “the reason that it is a different professional development experience is because of the communal, spiritual, the kinship side of things.”

Iva and Mary both noted the influence of being in a space with other Black female scholars and notably the acceptance and validation of their lived experiences as Black women. Mary described the acceptance she felt in the company of other Black female scholars.

I like the camaraderie. It’s different when you ... can come in the room and have people who understand where you’re at [be]cause they’re there too. You can let your hair down and be yourself, whoever that is and people not judge you for who that is [be]cause they have a clear understanding and have experiences being judged for who they are.

Expanding on Mary’s comments, Iva conveyed the importance of having other Black women validate her experiences and provide suggestions for ways they may have handled those same experiences. She explained,

I think it’s unique because my experiences are acknowledged and embraced and richer in this space. There are other people that can say that yes, I experienced that too. Here are some strategies; here are some suggestions on ways you can deal with it.

Natasha discussed the implications of the expanding network of scholars on future career development.

I think about people who are out there floating who are not attached to a community or this kind of resource and what my life would be like if I would have started this coming semester without being here. So I just feel like the sky is the limit because I don’t even know what’s going to come of these people in this room.... You just don’t know when you plant seeds like this. We talked about publication collaboration but somebody may be hiring somebody or any number of things. You might be on a committee; you might be reviewing my tenure, any number of things can happen when you get into a space where you begin to form relationships, anything you want. So I feel, for me, coming here I feel the sky is the limit and if I need something I can just ask for help and I have a lot of directions to go.

The women in our study described how the community of scholars provides an affirming environment and they discussed how the community facilitates mentoring relationships between junior and senior scholars. In fact, Monifa, a previous RBC participant, contributed her interaction with senior scholars as part of her motivation for attending. She explained, “I have mentors on campus but I’ve always loved the connections that I find here.” Other women in our study identified their relationships with Black female *senior* scholars as a significant influence on their decision to attend the RBC. For example, Melanie discussed her motivation to “obtain a mentor in the academy who was tenured.” She noted that “there are no senior women faculty on the campus I feel that I can go to and sort of have that mentoring relationship that would positively influence my scholarship.”

Both structured formal mentoring and informal mentoring took place at the RBC through the formal assignment to a senior scholar and informal relationships with other senior scholars present. Iva

contrasted how her relationship with a Black male mentor would differ from one with a senior Black female. Even though her mentor was Black, he still lacked a gendered experience that this faculty member lived. Iva explained,

I could talk to him about anything but I couldn't really. Yes we have that connection as Black people, but you're not a Black female. Yeah you have four kids but you have different roles in your family with those kids. I did find my sister circle that helped me, but I really wanted that senior mentorship and just to be in the presence of other females, who are going through similar situations.

Building Confidence through Research Development

Of the many reasons for attending the RBC, assistance with research was consistently mentioned. All seven women acknowledged the importance of scholarly productivity to their professional success. They identified how the guidance they received related to research influenced their own personal development; this included overcoming their insecurities and lack of confidence about academic writing, and receiving validation about the viability and credibility of their research ideas. Iva told of how completing the RBC application required her to think more concisely about her research agenda.

I think filling out the SOTA application forced me to think about my research agenda in a new space. At first that term was ambiguous, I was like, what the heck are you talking about? Are you talking about the research study? They [BootCamp faculty] were like, "No, your agenda on the road to tenure." That was a scary process for me ... so I was a little discouraged at first.... So, I think I appreciate being able to present what I want to do and it's like, "Go girl!" You actually have something that you are excited about, are passionate about, this is you. I don't know what form it is going to take in the next few years, but I'm excited that I have something.

Monifa also spoke about her ability to communicate her research agenda. She commented,

I knew my research agenda appeared different, but I know I always see a connection between stuff, but I couldn't talk about it very well. I feel like I got the opportunity to think through how to talk about it. I feel like I can do that now. I feel like I did that yesterday.

Similarly, Sasha also described the improvements she made in being able to articulate her research agenda during the RBC. "I learned that my research agenda is not as scattered as I thought. I thought I was all over the place. I'm not. I was able to speak coherently about it, and that was helpful, as a scholar."

The junior scholars also discussed a renewed attitude toward academic writing, research, and their ability to produce meaningful scholarship. Anna explained the role of her senior scholar mentor's encouragement in helping her think differently about writing. She explained,

I have always been nitpicky about especially somebody who's in English, I can write something but knowing that I have to go back and revise it, make sure it's clearly stated, and grammatically correct, just all these different things that's why writing's been a struggle for me at times [be]cause I'll write it but then I can get real picky about oh is this right or did I make that clear, do I need to elaborate and so on and so forth; but here I was able to learn just do it and it'll germinate, it'll come. But don't just not do anything because you're scared of how it will sound, put something out there get the process

started and that's what I really appreciated about all of this. Especially my senior scholar just saying that you have to get the process started and just go forward.

Mary commented on the clarity she received about possible research opportunities that she had available in her daily responsibilities. She noted,

Now I know that a lot of the work I do I could actually do research on. I advise the students and have student organizations and I'm up there [on campus] until twelve o'clock most nights with the kids. I could actually observe some stuff and write some stuff up to get published. Areas that you don't even think about being published you can actually get published. So I think from a career perspective I think it's awesome because like I said, I think it's going to open a lot of doors up for publishing and I think that it's going to, it makes you not as confused of the process.

Developing Action Steps for Success in the Academy

Junior scholars learn about the academy through interactions with and observations of senior and peer colleagues and students. However, often missing from their learning is full comprehension of the action steps they need to take for success in the academy. Several of the women described the ways they received guidance on developing a personal plan for success. Sasha reflected on the actions of colleagues at her institution in contrast to the information received at the RBC.

I feel that we got information that we are not going to get in PC [politically correct] types of environments. I feel like people were real here. Let's be honest about what you're really dealing with whereas, I feel like as at other kinds of professional development they tell you what is appropriate to tell you. But I felt like [here] people were honest. We realized what we/you are going up against and this is what you have to do to overcome, let's talk about how you have to do those things. I feel like I have a very supportive department, I really, I love the people I work with.... Because they tell me a lot of things, and I feel like I learned a lot of things here that I have asked them specific questions about these things and [they] ... never told me. I wonder if they don't know, or maybe they are not as supportive as they seem.

Sasha's comments suggest that even seemingly supportive colleagues might not be aware of resources that could aid in her success. The women in our study acknowledged the "hidden curriculum" of the academy that was exposed at the RBC and described how the information participants received demystified processes typically not explained in academia. Iva explained,

There is this thing called the hidden curriculum that students may not get and oftentimes White Americans may have a leg up compared to [non-White] students. I think that as we are transitioning into the academy ... that's great there were resources there to nurture my research development.... But there were a lot of us who were [wondering] what to do. Even as you get that job and transition there ... I didn't know what to do and then I'm like what the heck did I get myself into? But I was scared to ask ... this [the RBC] provided that answer to that hidden curriculum that I didn't have transitioning. Because it's like you need to do this, do that, and be excellent in everything you do.

Anna too identified how she became more aware of steps she could take to ensure her professional success. She said,

So it's like yes this is what you need to do, but in order to succeed, there is a subtext like this is what you need to do in order to succeed. That's something I really appreciated; it's like that hidden curriculum, the tricks of the trade.... Yes that's something I learned about that I did not know about before.

Discussion and Implications

Underlying the narratives of women faculty in this study are several ways that the RBC can assist them. These women acknowledged seeking assistance to develop connections to other scholars. Specifically, they valued relationships with senior scholars who could: help them build social capital, validate and guide their research interests and trajectories, and provide practical tips on how to make an academic career work. Our findings support existing research about Black female scholars, and suggest important implications for further research about their experiences and their professional development.

Given the experiences of these women, it is important to acknowledge the challenges they face in academia and ultimately provide ways to respond to those challenges. Responses for these women came from a community of scholars where they shared many common experiences. The understanding generated by a shared lived experience not only allowed for the commonalities to be explored, but also provided a framework for the differences in experience. At the RBC they were able to develop and expand their professional networks of Black female scholars. Also, this expansion of networks provided opportunities which supported their professional success (e.g., Modica & Mamiseishvili, 2010; Patitu & Hinton, 2003; Turner & Thompson, 1993). These networks (senior, peer, and other) established at the RBC provided social support, created outlets for professional development, built research capacity, and influenced success in the academy (Jean-Marie & Brooks, 2011; Stanley & Watson, 2006). This type of support can increase the likelihood of exposure to collaborative research opportunities (Frierson, 1990) as well as the development of social relationships with women who share a common profession. Additionally, this support can influence other challenges these women face (Alfred, 2001). Consistent with these ideas, comments from these women point to a clear indication that these networks are needed and appreciated by them.

Not only did these women develop crucial relationships with senior scholars and expand their professional networks, they also received guidance on their personal plans for academia. Previous research suggests that junior faculty grapple with: (a) writing consistently (Boice, 1992), balancing research, teaching, and service (LaRocco & Bruns, 2006), obtaining accurate tenure and promotion criteria (Tillman, 2001), and managing roles (Stanley & Watson, 2006). These issues are not discussed with specificity in traditional socialization activities, thus our findings suggest that focusing only on the aspects that make individuals professionally successful, while ignoring the other aspects of personal life and identity creates an imbalance that many junior faculty experience (McCray, 2011). The RBC offers a professional development opportunity that addresses academic and professional expectations of the academy, as well as the aspects of personal life that can sometimes create an imbalance for junior faculty (Stanley & Watson, 2006).

Traditional socialization activities, while essential, fail to address the intersection of being Black and female that our participants identified as unique to the Research BootCamp when compared to other professional development activities. Racial and gendered identities intersected for them in ways that need to be acknowledged in professional development settings. The Research BootCamp focused on the socialization of untenured junior scholars and their preparing manuscripts for publication in academic journals. Also, it provided for overall scholar development which set the stage for success in the tenure and promotion process, and it addressed barriers to tenure and promotion as identified in Tillman's (2001) article about mentoring Black faculty. Overall, the RBC focused on academic experiences, mentoring,

and professional development; these features specifically addressed the needs of our participants. The issues of mentoring and professional development were clearly salient as evidenced by their narratives.

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Appendix A

Socialization's Essential Components



Appendix B

**Junior Scholar Participants in the
2011 Research BootCamp**

Participant	Discipline	Position	Institution Type
Mary	Law	Assistant Professor	HBCU- Public
Monifa	Business	Assistant Professor	PWI- Private, Liberal Arts
Natasha	African American Studies	Assistant Professor	PWI- Public, Research
Anna	English	Assistant Professor	PWI- Public, Research
Iva	Education	Post-Doctoral Fellow	PWI- Public, Research
Sasha	Psychology	Assistant Professor	PWI- Public, Research
Melanie	Sociology	Assistant Professor	HBCU- Private, Liberal Arts



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Pursuing Tenure and Promotion in the Academy: A Librarian's Cautionary Tale

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Abstract

The author examines her journey before and as she pursued tenure and promotion in the academy. She argues that the path to tenure and promotion in higher education institutions was not one designed to provide a fair and equitable process for Black female faculty who function as academic librarians. Further, she suggests that librarians in this role are marginalized due to two factors—presumed incompetence based on their gender and/or race, and their ambiguous fit among the disciplines within the academy. This autoethnography, with Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Race Feminism (CRF) as its theoretical framework, outlines the struggles and successes of a Black female academic librarian as she addresses the challenges inherent in the culture of her discipline compounded with well-documented issues related to sexism and racism.

Introduction

Much has been written about the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty in higher education and the paucity of non-White faculty, who represent only 18.4% of full-time faculty nationally, and a smaller percentage of tenure-track faculty (Diggs, Garrison-Wade, Estrada, & Galindo, 2009; National Center for Education Statistics, 2011; Stanley, 2006; Thompson, 2008; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999; Wilson, 1987). Much has also been written about challenges facing female faculty and faculty representing a variety of racial and ethnic groups seeking tenure (Daniel, 2009; Edwards, Beverly, & Alexander-Snow, 2011; Laden & Hagedorn, 2000; Stanley, 2006; Thomas, 2001; Turner & Myers, 2000; Valian, 1998). Similar imbalances and challenges face academic librarians, who represent a small segment of academia and who may or may not be classified as faculty depending on the institution.

Academic libraries hold a unique position within the academy. At many institutions they are often perceived solely as service units; not part of a campus's scholarly community. Perhaps because "much of the work carried on in academic libraries tends to be invisible ... and much of what is visible ... is clerical in nature and only infrequently performed by librarians" (Oberg, Schleiter, & Van Houten, 1989, p. 215).

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Yet at some campuses, librarians have faculty status. Those in tenure-track positions are expected to teach, participate in service activities, conduct research, and publish. These are the same criteria required for tenure and promotion in research-oriented institutions of higher education. This situation presents challenges for many library faculty. One such challenge is that library faculty must often overcome feeling overwhelmed due to a lack of educational preparation for producing scholarly publications (Mitchell & Reichel, 1999, p. 232). Kennedy and Brancolini (2012) conducted a survey of 797 academic librarians and found that just 26% of respondents said they “believed that their ... master’s degrees adequately prepared them to conduct original research” (p. 437). A second challenge is that the tasks of librarianship do not fit the traditional mold of the academic world, where teaching and scholarship are most prized. This is because although academic librarianship has long included teaching, few librarians are “adequately prepared through professional coursework for their roles as teachers” (Westbrock & Fabian, 2010, p. 572). Furthermore, “because they belong to a profession whose terminal degree is a master’s, they can be at a disadvantage when they come to a campus environment where most members of the departmental faculty have doctoral degrees” (Ormes & Miller, 2011, p. 117).

Another issue is the racial representation of librarians. Despite efforts to diversify, it is still a predominately White (and female-dominated) profession. Damasco and Hodges (2012) state, as of the year 2000, White librarians represented 85% of the total number of librarians working in academic libraries. Within the last 20 years, recruitment from underrepresented populations has increased, but efforts to retain individuals from these communities in the librarian ranks have not been as successful (Damasco & Hodges, 2012; Hollis, 1996; Thornton, 2000). Furthermore, it is not known what percentage of these underrepresented individuals are at institutions where librarians have faculty status and are evaluated by a tenure-and-promotion process comparable to teaching faculty (American Library Association, 2007). In addition to the well-documented challenges that all faculty face in the tenure process, library faculty must contend with the perception that they are not legitimate members of the academy, instead they are considered to be outsiders. Moreover, Black female library faculty are as aware as their departmental faculty counterparts, that the academy was not created with them in mind; a setting in which racist and sexist beliefs and practices are embedded in its foundation (Davis, Chaney, Edwards, Thompson-Rogers, & Gines, 2011 & 2012, p. 183). Thus, Black women are often required to use an array of strategies to assist them in pursuing tenure and promotion while still allowing them to “remain productive, healthy, and whole as success after success is achieved” (Davis et al., p.183). Early in my academic librarianship career, I often felt at a disadvantage because of the attitude many departmental faculty seem to have that they are the legitimate educators and those without an earned doctoral degree are imposters. Against this backdrop, the tale of my experience as a Black female library faculty member pursuing tenure and promotion is set.

Theoretical Framework

As Cobb-Roberts (2011 & 2012) and Turner, Gonzalez, and Wong (Lau) (2011) have, I chose Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Race Feminism (CRF) theory as my theoretical anchors. CRT, which has its foundations in the legal scholarship of Derrick Bell which “challenges the experience of Whites as the normative standard and grounds its conceptual framework in the distinctive experiences of ... [non-White] people” (Taylor, 1998, p. 122). Its focus is on race, racism, and power (Bell, 1988; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Gillborn, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1998). CRF models its conception from CRT and focuses on issues of concern to non-White women (Cho, 1997; Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 1991; hooks, 1984; Turner et al., 2011). Within CRF, non-White women are placed in the center rather than the margins of the discussion, debate, research, and praxis of their lives as they co-exist in the dominant culture (Berry, 2010; Smith & Johnson-Bailey, 2011 & 2012). CRF provides a pragmatic perspective for understanding the experiences of people who are raced, gendered, or who are simultaneously raced and

gendered (Smith & Johnson-Bailey, 2011 & 2012; Wing, 2003). Through the lens of both CRT and CRF, I chose an autoethnographic methodology to examine a first-hand experience of a non-White librarian on the tenure track.

Method

Approach

I have employed an autoethnographic research approach because it allows me the opportunity to describe how race, gender, and privilege impact my work and perceptions of self in the academy as a Black female (Cobb-Roberts, 2011 & 2012; Spry, 2001). Schwandt (2007) defines autoethnography as

a particular form of writing that seeks to unite ethnographic (looking outward at a world beyond one's own) and autobiographical (gazing inward for a story of one's self) intentions. The aim in composing an autoethnographic account is to keep both the subject (knower) and object (that which is being examined) in simultaneous view (p. 16).

Participant

Using CRT and CRF as theoretical bases, and an autoethnographic methodology, I chronicled my experience on the tenure track as an academic librarian. As a methodology, autoethnography combines the inward reflection of autobiography with the external observation of ethnography. Since in autoethnography I am both subject and object, the autobiographical part of the method requires an unflinching, and uncomfortable, revealing analytical observation of self, both historically and in the present. But being subject and the object, I am in a unique position to chronicle the evolution from lecturer to a tenured library faculty, illustrating what I consider to be the counterproductive pressure points of my journey.

My Life before Librarianship

I am a West Coast native, a product of the second wave of America's Great Migration, when approximately five million Black African Americans migrated from the rural South to the urban industrial areas of the Northeast, Midwest, and West between 1940 and 1970 (Wilkerson, 2010). I grew up in a predominately Black working-class suburb of Los Angeles, a metropolitan area known for its ethnically diverse citizenry where Latinos constitute the major ethnic minority group there. While growing up in my neighborhood, I was often seen as (and felt) different. First, I had an extremely shy nature; I have worked hard to overcome it. I realized it was borne out of fear and it prevented me from taking advantage of opportunities that came my way. Next, my parents were seen as very strict by my peer group. My brother and I were closely supervised by our stay-at-home mother. Third, my formal educational experiences took place outside the neighborhood. After attending a Head Start program at a Lutheran Church, my parents decided to enroll me in the church's elementary school. From kindergarten to Grade 12, I attended parochial schools in predominately White neighborhoods. I realized my school experience was different compared to my neighborhood peers. I remember being called Santa Claus by them because of the amount of homework I had each night; my backpack was always full of textbooks. Furthermore, my gender played a significant role in my formative years. Socially, I did not feel that I fit in with my peers. I was not a "girlie girl," although my favorite color up to age nine was pink. And because I developed physically up to two years earlier than several of my female peers, I was uncomfortable with the awkward situations my appearance presented me with. Once when I was twelve, a sixteen-year old boy from the

neighborhood approached me sexually as if I were older. To this day I thank another sixteen year old boy who told him to “back off, because she’s twelve.”

In high school, I became more comfortable in my own skin. Pursuing academic endeavors was very accepted by my school peers who represented a spectrum of racial and ethnic backgrounds. College attendance was often a topic of conversation both at school and home. I am the second generation of my family to earn a college degree. College was expected. It was not a question of if I would attend college but where. The where, was somewhat of a disappointment for my mother. She had hopes that I would attend a historically Black institution. She believed I needed a stronger connectedness to my Blackness. I disagreed; I did not see, then, the value of attending a Black college. I did not believe that the environment could be or would be diverse. I thought it did not reflect the real world at all. Instead, I chose a large predominantly White public university in the more conservative and less ethnically diverse city of San Diego. This was a similar university to those which my high school peers applied.

Politically, my undergraduate years in the 1980s were a time of growing debate over affirmative action fueled by the *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* decision (Regents of the University of California v. Bakke, 438 U.S. 265). This U.S. Supreme Court case contributed to the 1996 passing of California’s Civil Rights Initiative (aka Proposition 209) (California Secretary of State, 1996), which amended the state’s constitution to include a new section: consideration of race as a factor in admissions to state post-secondary institutions is prohibited (Cal. Const. Art. I, §31). On the personal front, I held my own academically, but often the indifferent and sometimes-hostile environment I was in took its toll. For example, this was manifested in often having fellow students choosing not to sit at a table where I sat alone in a crowded cafeteria. Also, I regularly had to correct people’s assumption (inside and outside of the classroom) about my admission to the university; my admission was not because of affirmative action. I gained admission to the university through my own scholastic efforts and my parents paid my tuition. Similar repeated experiences left me doubting my academic worthiness. I felt increasingly alienated as I found myself to be the only person with my skin color in these on-campus interactions. However, I did find shelter in a few places. First, the student organizations that served people from various cultural backgrounds became a haven for me. Also, two Black psychologists from the campus’s psychological services facilitated a weekly discussion forum for Black students. It was at these meetings that I saw the largest number of Black people in one place while on campus. Third, I joined a support group for Black female students. We discussed many issues of concern (e.g., dating, choice of major, roommate relationships). In addition, the interaction with select faculty and staff was also a great comfort. One of these individuals, a Black female administrator, encouraged me to pursue graduate study. She suggested that a career path in post-secondary education might suit me. At the conclusion of my undergraduate experience I felt battered, bruised, and bitter. I opted for a totally different kind of experience for graduate study. I sought a more affirming experience, where I hoped I would not be seen as a “problem” as W.E.B. DuBois writes about in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903, 1995). I pursued the first of two master’s degrees, one in education, at historically Black, private Tuskegee University (TU) in rural Alabama (Tuskegee University, 2013). TU is one of 105 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). My mother was very pleased.

Guy (2010) observes that “accommodation to diversity has progressed from the Melting Pot to the Salad Bowl to the Quilt” (p.174). I came of age in the “Salad Bowl” era (1960s to 1990s), which denotes “not just tolerance for differentness but an appreciation that difference brings with it added perspectives and strengths” (Guy, p.174). Up until my arrival at Tuskegee University, diversity to me was primarily based on race or ethnicity and only applied when discussing persons of different racial backgrounds. However, my views about diversity (and myself) began to change when I relocated to Alabama in the Deep South. I began to move toward the “Quilt” “where the focus is accepting and leveraging differentness while combining the separate pieces into a sustainable fabric” (Guy, p. 174).

First, immediately upon arriving, my metropolitan orientation was challenged. I thought I had made a serious mistake. The Aesop fable, *The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse* (Pinkney, 2000) came to mind. I had to consciously make adjustments to the slower pace and the absence of traffic.

My new university home – Macon County, Alabama² – for the next two years had a very different social geography than had Southern California. Studying in this new setting that had a different history, different protocols and different social norms from those to which I was accustomed forced me to make adjustments and alter my assumptions. The region's history is steeped in human exploitation resulting in more emphasis on differences in gender, age, and social status. It was a more hierarchical society. For example, I observed that people always used formal and informal titles when addressing people other than peers. This was true on and off campus; the use of titles was not just with professors. This practice was very unlike Southern California where first names (without Miss or Mr. in front) suffice in most encounters outside the classroom. Further, women were expected to dress and behave differently from men. Skirts or dresses were worn much more frequently than slacks or denim jeans in the community. Shorts were seldom seen. Fortunately, my mother (she was a Michigan native) had foreseen these social norms, and insisted I pack high heeled shoes (not white ones because they are not worn after Labor Day), nylons, and skirts. In addition, being assertive was not seen as a quality associated with the female gender, even on campus. For example, a high ranking administrator's assistant admonished me when I persisted in seeking an appointment with her boss, "Young ladies don't behave like that."

However, with each passing day, the positive reactions to me and my behavior from members of the campus community rapidly outweighed the adjustments; I had to fit in with these social norms. Tuskegee was inclusive and welcoming, in strong contrast to the environment I experienced at my California alma mater. TU's 3,000 member student body is predominately Black; most come from more than 40 U.S. states and nearly 30 other nations. I began to notice that race did not seem to be an issue of concern on this campus. I realized that I was one of the majority; I finally felt liberated. My racial background did not automatically call into question my academic worthiness. The Black/White dichotomy so prevalent off campus in Alabama and on-and-off-campus in Southern California no longer set me apart. It had little distinguishing value to me in my life as a graduate student.

This move also taught me the powerful influence of physical locale on what is considered diversity. Through interaction with my classmates, I discovered I was fascinated (and delighted) with the spectrum of accents and languages, regional terms (e.g., "soda" vs. "pop" vs. "coke"), culinary and musical tastes, religious orientations, and intellectual and recreational interests among the student body. I was living the life of the television show, *"A Different World"* (Cosby & Allen, 1988). It was exhilarating.

During my stay in Alabama, I learned that a key component of diversity is gender. For the first time in my life I experienced overt discrimination based on my gender from both men and women, Black and White. A friend decided to run for TU's student body president, and I agreed to be the campaign manager. The election campaign was an eye-opening experience. Many students, all of them Black, informed me they favored the other candidate, a Black male, primarily because he was a male, and was from the South—not because of his qualifications or his political platform. My candidate was a Black female New Englander (from Boston) who spent her adolescent years in California. She lost the election, but was vindicated when her opponent soon proved to be a disappointment.

² Macon County, Alabama, is primarily a rural area with a predominately Black population. In addition to being the home of historically Black Tuskegee University (TU), it is also home to Moton Field, the training facility for the heroic Black Tuskegee Airmen who served during World War II.

Furthermore, I learned that there are distinctly different worldviews among Black people from the African Diaspora. The social, religious, and political views I encountered in and out of the classroom were extremely varied. I was stunned on more than one occasion to find out I did not always fit in or connect with people of the same racial background as myself. I was not comfortable with this discovery. However, it made me realize that it was not about my comfort level, but that growth is born out of discomfort.

My definition of diversity continued to evolve after accepting a counseling position for an Upward Bound (UB) program at a public two-year institution in the small rural town of Tifton, Georgia, a three-hour drive from Atlanta. Upward Bound (UB) is one of the federally funded TRIO programs, which mentor first-generation students in their pursuit of a four-year college degree (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Upward Bound's focus is on students in grades 9-12. During this chapter in my life, I regularly experienced a fish-out-of-water feeling. I often felt I was living in a year different from what my wall calendar indicated (e.g., "Is it 1995 or 1955?"). On any given day, I could not decide which of the three "-isms"—racism, sexism, or classism—took the precedence in my life. This was the first time in my life that I can remember encountering the issue of classism. It (classism) being bias against or discriminatory toward others based on social or economic class (American Heritage, 2002; Oxford, 1996). Up to this point, I did not believe that classism existed within the American fabric. However, my experiences led me to believe that classism not only exists but was earlier situated in the U.S. fabric when powerful White males owned property and controlled the wealth. Also, I learned that how I was regarded, by both Black and White people in Tifton and its neighboring communities, was greatly affected by my educational attainment level and socioeconomic status. Unlike in prior experiences, my differentness often created a great chasm between the local people and myself based on non-racial factors. For example, often when I began to speak, people would say to me that they could tell that I was not born and raised locally; they determined this on the basis of my non-Southern speech pattern. I was seen as not one of them. However, when I revealed the nature of my employment and some of my family background (my dad is an Alabama native), I was accorded an enhanced level of respect and acceptance.

Also, I became aware that my age was a diversity-related factor in my acceptance into the community. Many of my students were born to teenage parents. They (the parents) were surprised that the "Miss Griffin" they heard about was younger than they were. These encounters were not always a bad thing. Upward Bound's then-director informed me that a major reason I was hired was to be a counter-narrative, a living example for the program's students (and their parents) of what could be. My presence served the purpose to demonstrate that where one starts off in life need not dictate where one ends. I became aware of the strong influence that all three of these "-isms" had on life. During this period, I also noticed that the usual Black/White dichotomy was being challenged and altered by the area's growing Hispanic migrant worker community. I empathized with these newcomers and their efforts to integrate themselves into a locale with a completely different history and cultural orientation than their own.

Three years after arriving in Tifton, I relocated to Atlanta, Georgia where I pursued a master's degree in library science from Clark Atlanta University (CAU). The University is part of the Atlanta University Center, a consortium consisting of CAU and five other private HBCUs: Morehouse College, Morris Brown College, Spelman College, the Morehouse School of Medicine, and the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC). The decision to change my career path to library science was like coming home. As a child, I spent many happy summer days in the local public library. There was a Black librarian who worked there. I thought she had an awesome job. Also, during this period, I spent time with a great-aunt who was a librarian. Library science, then, is a natural fit for me. I loved the seek-and-find aspect of it. I was attracted to CAU because of its course offerings on library services for non-White people and its distinguished history of producing Black librarians. At the time I was there, it was one of two HBCUs with library schools; North Carolina Central University was the other school.

My move to Atlanta, the capital of the New South (U.S. Department of State, 2012) was a return to urban familiarity. Living in the Atlanta metropolitan area, where Blacks were the dominant racial minority, was a thrilling experience. Many of the city's movers and shakers were Black people, partly because that area is home to a high concentration of college-educated Black people. However, even more so than in Tuskegee or Tifton, I observed distinct differences among Black people. For instance, I gained a greater consciousness of Black people of various sexual orientations. My awareness of their orientations was further enhanced as I read the "Invisible Life" trilogy novels (Harris, 1994; Harris, 1995; Harris, 1999).

From my experience, I believe the CRT framework could be expanded to challenge the experiences of Southern Blacks as normative; to challenge what is considered to be authentically Black. Celious and Oyserman's (2001) *Heterogeneous Race Model* theorizes that there is no one Black American experience. They argue that the everyday experience of being a Black American is not homogeneous but rather, along with race, a combination of social class, gender, and physical attributes. Hollis (1996) states "I have lived the Black experience, yet my life is not the life of every Black American" (p. 150). Ultimately, I concluded that the concept of diversity is based more on culture than race or ethnicity; culture is the summation of an individual's values and life experiences.

My Tenure-Track Sojourn

Pre-Tenure-Track Years

The institution where I work, California State University, Long Beach (CSULB), was founded in 1949, and is a Carnegie Classification Master's I level comprehensive institution serving an ethnically and culturally diverse urban population of approximately 35,000 students. In fall 2012, there were 1,928 faculty members, of which almost 44% were tenured or on the tenure track. Of the 838 tenured or tenure-track faculty, 45% were women and about a third were from underrepresented ethnic or racial populations, including 10 Black women (CSU Long Beach, 2012). At CSULB, along with the other 22 campuses of the California State University system (CSU), librarians have faculty status. Individuals from historically underrepresented populations currently account for 40% of CSULB's library faculty compared with 25% in 2005; my arrival at the university.

I joined the CSULB library faculty with two master's degrees in 2005. Moran, Marshall, and Rathbun-Grubb (2010) found that 35% of the academic librarians they surveyed held a second master's degree. For my first two years at CSULB, I was a librarian with lecturer faculty rank. My work assignment then was as the librarian subject liaison for the College of Education, which has both undergraduate and graduate programs. During this period, my primary duty was to provide formal course-related library instruction in addition to performing the tasks that any librarian would do—reference service and the acquisition and management of library information resources. Conducting scholarly research, writing for publication, and participation in campus-wide shared governance activities were not required, but encouraged. Prior to arriving at CSULB, I was a librarian for four years at a small private two-year college where librarians were staff rather than faculty. Although the institution was located in the very diversely populated Los Angeles area, its students, faculty, and staff did not reflect this.

My pre-tenure-track years at CSULB allowed me the opportunity to transition and adjust to a new workplace through a process known as organizational socialization³ (Oud, 2008). Oud (2008) asserts that

³ Van Maanen and Schein (1979) state that organizational socialization is usually defined as the process by which a person acquires the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavior he or she needs to participate effectively as a member of the organization.

long-term retention of academic librarians is improved, in part, by this process's successful implementation. This transition influenced my tenure-track undertaking. It provided a buffer against a sense of isolation and a lack of mentoring that numerous studies have found that White women faculty and faculty from a variety of non-White racial and ethnic groups face on the tenure track (Aguirre, 2000; Evans & Chun, 2007; Laden & Hagedorn, 2000). The transition period also allowed me to identify supportive colleagues, one of the criteria that Thornton (2000, p. 229) found to be essential to feelings of job satisfaction by academic non-White librarians.

While this transition period allowed me to adjust somewhat to the campus culture, it did not shield me from the consequences of my decision to pursue a tenure-track position. My perception of the situation was that if I pursued the tenure track, I would now be judged by my instruction and evaluation of library materials, and I would also have to convince my colleagues that I was capable of producing sound scholarship and worthwhile service. Adding to the new pressure to prove myself to a search committee of colleagues was a sense that some of my tenured and tenure-track colleagues viewed me differently. I cannot point to overt actions that prompted this perception. But I sensed that I was daring not to stay in my place as a lecturer. As Alfred (2005) put it, "By ... moving out of the institutionally defined space that I had been assigned" (p. 145), I felt I was risking losing "grace with the powers within the culture" (p. 145) by seeking full citizenship in a higher echelon of the academic hierarchy. Because the stakes were higher, the criteria used to measure institutional fit changed, as it does for every lecturer or instructor aiming for the tenure track. I was, in effect, applying for the job I had already been doing for two years. The difference was that I was now applying for the possibility of lifetime job security, which effectively is what tenure confers. I was going to be judged as to my institutional fit. The full impact of this was unsettling to me; I had let down my guard. Now, I was once again being seen as someone apart or separate from my peer group. For various internal institution-based reasons, all of the candidates for the position had to go through this process not once, but twice before a selection was made. This process raised my level of anxiety.

Once I was on the tenure track, I discovered that while the transition period allowed me time to develop my teaching, it did not shield me from the pressures of research and service (Toews & Yazedjian, 2007). Nor did my time as a lecturer give me a full understanding of the pressures specific to tenure-track academic library faculty. For example, instructional duties for academic librarians are far different than those of departmental faculty. At the beginning of any given academic term, these faculty are presented with a set number of courses where they are required to prepare discipline-based course lectures, grade assignments and examinations, meet with students during office hours, and ultimately issue grades for each course, which gives them a sense of what was learned. Academic librarians, by contrast, usually conducted one-time research education sessions at the request of departmental faculty, often having no idea how many sessions they would be requested to conduct or for what courses. They also had no opportunity to assess the impact of the instruction they provided—another reason that added to academic librarians' stress.

Librarians had to engage in ongoing efforts to get non-library faculty, administrators, and students to take advantage of resources that they offered. Non-library faculty often had to be convinced of the library's vital role in student success. I became acutely aware that as a library faculty member, I had to increase my standing within the campus community by embedding myself into the academic milieu. I attended academic department meetings, participated in orientations for new faculty and graduate students, provided research assistance for both faculty and students, and collaborated with departmental faculty in the acquisition and management of library information resources.

According to Beth Shapiro (1993), librarians gain respect from faculty when they have positive experiences with the services they offer. But to provide those services, in effect, they have to promote

themselves, in a way foreign to departmental faculty—and too many librarians. Some of the faculty proactively scheduled my library instruction sessions. So, I realized that if I was going to have a real impact on student success and increase my chances for tenure and promotion, I could not wait to be invited to teach. I had to acknowledge the resistance I encountered. I realized that some departmental faculty did not want to allocate class time for my sessions. Others did not see the necessity for library instruction—especially for graduate students. I also considered the possibility that the resistance was due to who was delivering the service. I realized that responses to my offer of service reflected, in part, the faculty's perceived assessment of my skills. Still, I did not cease my efforts.

Another pressure I faced as library faculty is how we (my peers and I) are perceived by their non-library departmental peers, and by administrators. For example, library faculty are frequently asked by departmental peers, if they conduct research and are required to publish. Sometimes their inclusion in campus governance seems an afterthought, especially when new curricula are proposed (and approved) without inquiring of the library staff what level of support they would be able to offer. Recurring experiences of this type can create self-doubt in the most self-assured professional, and can exacerbate a sense of exclusion for those who feel that they may have been left out of the inner circle because of their race, ethnicity or gender.

The third challenge that the transition period could not shield me from was how “to enter and remain within the university and perform all responsibilities without losing integrity” (McCombs, 1989, p. 141). I struggled with how to deal with the anxiety and stress from the perception that Black and other non-White faculty “was expected to work harder than White faculty, or more directly put, work twice as hard to be treated as equal” (Laden & Hagedorn, 2000, p. 61). Since I was apprehensive in discussing these feelings with my White colleagues, I sought and received encouragement and coping strategies from persons with similar backgrounds as myself. These individuals are professional women both within and outside higher education.

Tenure-Track Years

A key component for successfully navigating the tenure-and-promotion process is a mentoring relationship. Mentoring, both formal and informal, plays a significant role in success within the academy. Shea (2004) defines mentoring as:

a developmental, caring sharing, and helping relationship where one person invests time, know-how, and effort in enhancing another person's growth, knowledge, skills, and responds to critical needs in the life of that person in ways that prepare the individual for greater productivity or achievement in the future (p. 13).

Gibson (2004) states that “mentoring should be considered in academia as a means to contribute to the career success of women faculty” (p. 184). Johnson (2007) asserts that “mentoring relationships create a deeper understanding of the attitudes and ideology of the profession and—in the context of academic libraries—both librarianship and academe” (p. 406). Yet the ideal does not always become the reality. According to Thomas and Hollenshead (2001) [non-White] “women ... respondents were least likely to report having a mentor” (p. 173). Damasco and Hodges (2012) present a similar finding. The nature of the mentoring relationships is also important. In Thomas and Hollenshead's (2001) study, few Black women reported having positive mentoring relationships. In contrast, Daniel (2009) reports all the participants within her study, who were all Black female faculty, had experienced positive mentoring relationships throughout their academic careers. She goes on to state that, “mentoring in the form of encouragement was critical for the participants in my study. All of the participants felt that their mentors encouraged them to keep going when faced with difficult challenges” (p. 63).

My own mentee experience was a positive one, which coincided with Daniel's (2009) findings. At my institution, the campus library designed and implemented a formal mentoring program for new tenure-track librarians. Bosch, Ramachandran, Luevano, and Wakiji (2010) describe the Resource Team Model (RTM) in which "a trio of senior librarians offer support, guidance, and training to a new [tenure-track] librarian during their first six months of employment" (p. 59). During the six months, and beyond, my resource team members⁴ were encouraging and supportive. Each team member, all three with the rank of full professor, had extensive experience in different areas of librarianship.

Since I was already effectively performing the primary librarianship duties—namely library instruction, reference service, and the acquisition and management of library information resources, my mentors focused on guiding me through the potential landmines of research and service. They were integral to my successful navigation of the waters of tenure and promotion (Lee, 2007; Spires, 2007), including successful retention at the end of three years, and the submission of my credentials for tenure and promotion.

In addition, our relationship is a success story of cross-race/cross-cultural mentoring. Although my resource team members and I shared the same gender, we differed in culture and race. There is much literature on the challenges of cross-race or cross-cultural mentoring in academia (Damasco & Hodges, 2012; Holmes, Land, & Hinton-Hudson, 2007; Johnson, 2007; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2002; Tillman, 2001; Witt-Smith, Smith, & Markham, 2000). Stanley and Lincoln (2005) state it is "almost always assumed that mentoring is more beneficial when mentor and protégé are of the same gender and race or ethnicity, are in the same discipline, and share similar professional interests" (p. 46). Yet they attest the "successful mentoring relationship, in our experience, is characterized by trust, honesty, a willingness to learn about self and others, and the ability to share power and privilege" (p. 46).

Another key factor that impacts the tenure-and-promotion process is the level of institutional support. What framework does a campus have in place to ensure its tenure-track faculty are tenured and/or promoted? Damasco and Hodges (2012) state in order for library faculty to work successfully toward tenure or promotion they must have a clear understanding of their institution's procedures and performance expectations (p. 286). Because of increasing emphasis on research and scholarship as criteria for tenure, institutions must support a culture of research productivity and scholarly output for its library faculty (Damasco & Hodges, 2012; Fennewald, 2008; Sapon-White, King, & Christie, 2004).

The level of institutional support I received was extensive. First, workshops explaining CSULB's tenure and promotion policies were regularly conducted by the University Library (CSU Long Beach, 2007-2012), the Office of Academic Personnel (CSU Long Beach, 2007-2012), and the California Faculty Association (CFA, 2012). Second, I received a workload reduction by way of an assigned time allocation. Third, I attended multi-day scholarly writing institutes supported by the University Library and sponsored by the campus's Faculty Professional Development Center (CSU Long Beach, 2009-2012). Furthermore, until recent budget reductions, librarians were given fairly liberal funding to travel to conferences for professional development and scholarly presentations.

⁴ One team member, an expert in business and electronic information services, was at the time interim associate library dean. Another member is the subject librarian liaison for the university's College of the Arts, and the editor of a peer-reviewed journal on cinematic music. The third member is the subject librarian liaison for English, comparative world literature and classics, and linguistics. She is currently writing her dissertation, a citation analysis on science and fantasy fiction scholarship, for a doctorate in Information Studies from UCLA. Her research subsequently sparked my own research agenda.

However, during my first three years on the tenure track, the university rewrote the campus Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion (RTP) document, forcing all of the academic units to redo theirs so they were consistent. Overall, and especially in the library, considerable additional emphasis was placed on research and scholarship. Some departments went so far as to require a certain number of scholarly journal articles in certain types of publications. The library did not go that far. Its requirements were less rigid, but with emphasis on publication in refereed scholarly journals (e.g., *Journal of Academic Librarianship*). They focused heavily on instruction, service, and traditional librarianship responsibilities, such as collection development. These changes in expectations midway through the tenure-track process added to the already substantial anxiety over the process. While I could have been grandfathered into the earlier criteria, it was clear that long-term success meant an active scholarship agenda, which I had.

Three distinctive areas which currently constitute my research agenda are: (a) information resource usage, (b) students' research behavior and information seeking techniques and, (c) science education and information literacy. *Venturing into a New Landscape: A Citation Analysis to Develop and Strengthen the Ed.D. Program at CSULB*, is an evidence-based longitudinal study analyzing the information usage of Ed.D. dissertation authors at six peer institutions. The data compiled from these six institutions will be compared to information usage of students from CSULB's first three cohorts of the Ed.D. program in Educational Leadership to create a subject core collection in Educational Leadership for the University Library. So far, I have conducted two presentations about this project. As a result of the second presentation, I was invited by the editor of the peer-reviewed journal *Behavioral & Social Sciences Librarian* to submit a manuscript. This manuscript, based on data from the study's inaugural phase, was submitted, accepted, and published (Griffin, 2011). Next, the research project, *Are They Getting It?: A Longitudinal Study of the Information Seeking Techniques of Undergraduate Students* is a collaborative effort with four other CSULB Library faculty, investigating the extent (if any) a student's information-seeking behavior changes over the course of the undergraduate experience. This ambitious project gave us a strong sense of the lack of research preparedness that Kennedy and Brancolini (2012) discusses, as well as, a taste of our unequal status in the academy, when the door was abruptly shut on our initial efforts at contacting students for data collection. Would this have happened to traditional departmental faculty members? Would we have approached the challenge as naively if we had had more in-depth research education? To date, a peer-reviewed presentation and a workshop at two different conferences have been conducted in connection with our study. My third scholarly research endeavor, *The Science Education Information Literacy Project* was a collaborative effort with CSULB's Engineering Librarian. We partnered with the Science Education department to create a workshop series whereupon pre-service science teachers were shown how to incorporate information literacy into their lesson plans to foster critical thinking skills in their students. An article describing the workshop series was published in the refereed journal *Science & Technology Libraries* (Griffin & Ramachandran, 2010).

All tenure-track faculty face similar challenges that include time constraints, teaching workload, service obligations, and life-work balance (Toews & Yazedjian, 2007). However, Black female faculty and others who are underrepresented in the academy have additional issues they must face. First, they may experience a denigration of their research agendas when the focus is on race, culture, and/or gender (Aguirre, 2000; Edwards et al., 2011; Gregory, 2001; Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001; Turner & Myers, 2000). My particular research agenda, which focused primarily on information literacy and evidence-based collection development and management, allowed me to sidestep this issue. However, if my research had had racial, cultural, or gender-based themes, it may have been discounted. Another issue that can pose obstacles for me and my tenure and promotion-seeking peers is the nature of and time provided for service activities that are likely to lead to tenure and promotion (Damasco & Hodges, 2012; Turner & Myers, 2000). I was strongly encouraged by my mentors and resource team members to be very selective in my service activities. They advised me to seek out and engage in service options which had influence

on policy within the library and on campus within a professional organization. I did my best to follow their advice.

Within the Library, I served a term as an officer (Secretary) for the Library Faculty Council during which the Council launched a revision of both the Library Faculty's constitution and by-laws. Concurrently, I served nearly five years on the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement Committee (GWARC) of the Academic Senate, two years as its Vice-Chair. While as the Vice-Chair, the GWARC initiated a major revision of the GWAR Policy, which led the committee to become the center of a political storm with some interesting gender-based dynamics. Also during this time, I served a term on the board of directors for the state-wide professional organization for academic librarians.

Reflections on My Journey

To sum up, a great deal of research has focused on maintaining diversity among American higher education faculty, particularly in tenured and tenure-track rankings (Edwards, Beverly, & Alexander-Snow, 2011; Laden & Hagedorn, 2000; National Center for Education Statistics, 2011; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999; Valian, 1998; Wilson, 1987). A similar portrait illustrates endeavors to recruit and retain underrepresented persons among academic librarians, including those with faculty status at their institutions, who are evaluated by way of a tenure-and-promotion process equivalent to faculty teaching in traditional disciplines (American Library Association, 2007; Damasco & Hodges, 2012; Hollis, 1996; Thornton, 2000). In addition, many library faculty face not being perceived as members of a campus's scholarly community (Fleming-May & Douglass, in press; Oberg, Schleiter, & Van Houten, 1989). Furthermore, based on their experiences, Black female library faculty determine that, akin to their disciplinary faculty equivalent, the academy was not designed to include them (Davis et al., 2011 & 2012).

With the notion of non-inclusion for my study, I first traced the evolution of my concept of diversity, from a persistent sense of differentness outside of academic endeavors through high school to a sense of hostility in an anti-affirmation action climate as an undergraduate and then to an acceptance while a graduate student at two historically Black colleges. The next expansion of my definition of diversity came during my first job in higher education, in a rural Georgia community, where as an Upward Bound counselor I was viewed through a lens of my educational attainment and socioeconomic status by both Black and White people. It was a socioeconomic chasm often based on non-racial factors. My definition of diversity had come a long way, from one based primarily on race and ethnicity in childhood to one that encompassed gender and sexual orientation, an understanding of the powerful influence of physical locale and social geography, and socioeconomic status.

The ethnography side of the methodology employed required an analytical observation of my professional life in academia and how it was influenced by my definition of diversity and the three "isms:" racism, sexism and classism. In my Upward Bound job at a public two-year college, my background was viewed as an asset. I was hired to provide a counter-narrative; a living example for the program's students (and their parents) of what could be. My experiences in higher education began to change after I became an academic librarian. Once again I found myself feeling "different"—this time because of those in my profession. In my second academic position, as a librarian at a private two-year college back in a major West Coast urban community, librarians were staff. Here I first discovered that academic librarians occupied a place on the periphery of the educational mission. Additionally here, the socioeconomic balance was reversed. Most of the students came from far more privileged backgrounds than mine or many of the faculty.

My next position was at a large, public university with broad diversity in all its variations where librarians have faculty status. Nominally at least, I was recognized as a peer with departmental faculty,

albeit as a lecturer at first. But despite their faculty status, librarians are still outside the main instructional mission. They repeatedly have to promote themselves to prove the worthiness of their contribution to student learning to be invited into the classroom. The next step in my academic career was the tenure track. Getting hired opened questions about my fit with academia's version of socioeconomic status. Once in the role, the mission became tenure and promotion achieved by demonstrating a high level of teaching, scholarship, and service. I learned that teaching still required organized self-promotion if I wanted to be acknowledged by my discipline-specific peers as embedded in the curriculum. The challenges to service had preceded me; librarians were eligible to participate in shared governance, the foundation of academic service. The current challenge was not to become overloaded with service, a mistake many junior faculty often make. A librarian's role in scholarship, however, often is questioned by non-library faculty, who may not realize that library faculty have similar scholarly publishing requirements. These challenges facing academic librarians parallel the challenges and barriers confronting academic library non-White faculty trying to overcome the "presumption of incompetence" and can exacerbate a sense of exclusion for those who have been left out of the inner circle by virtue of their race, ethnicity or gender.

Discussion and Conclusion

What lessons have I learned through these experiences and the autoethnography? I learned academe is a unique geography requiring a strategy for gaining full expertise of its cultural landscape. Ableser (2009), Bakken and Simpson (2011), and Hansen (2008) support this. First, I followed advice given early in my career to "Be a sponge." I sought and obtained copies of the department and/or college, and campus-wide policies for tenure and promotion. Inquiries about these policies were made by me, to persons within and outside my academic unit on anything that was not clear. I attended multiple seminars and workshops which focused on my institution's tenure and promotion policies to learn the required criteria necessary for the journey toward tenure and promotion (Damasco & Hodges, 2012). Next, establishing mentoring relationships was imperative. I found mentors, both formal and informal, and within and outside my institution. Mentors, through their encouragement, experience and insight provided valuable guidance in avoiding obstacles and pitfalls tenure-track faculty often encounter as Lumpkin (2009) asserts. Third, I discerned the need to be aware of my service endeavors—both the types of service and the amount of time allocated for them. Within the academic criteria (Toews & Yazedjian, 2007), service often carries the least amount of weight in tenure and promotion portfolios. Finally, the most fundamental part of my strategy was an active research agenda and scholarly output. In the last 40 years, American institutions have placed greater emphasis on research and scholarship as criteria for tenure and promotion. Youn and Price (2009) suggested that, at all four-year institutions, the percentage of faculty and administrators surveyed who viewed publishing as essential for tenure and promotion rose from 47% in 1969 to 76% in 1997. At comprehensive institutions, this trend is even more prominent: from 19% in 1969 to 60.5% in 1997. I participated in professional development activities offered by my institution which focused on writing for scholarly publications. The academy is a community of scholars whose primary objective is the expansion of the knowledge base. By having evidence of a successful, high quality record of scholarly research and publishing, a strong case can be made for tenure and promotion (Hahn & Jaeger, 2013). This action plan was integral for me on my path toward tenure and promotion.

Librarians who "dare" to seek tenure must leave the familiar reactive geography of the reference desk and stop waiting to be invited into the classroom to teach. Instructional success requires self-promotion. I learned that I needed to step out of the shadow of the stacks. I learned to be cautious about relying too heavily on my propensity toward service. Accentuating this ingrained characteristic of librarianship can lead to shortchanging the other two responsibilities prerequisite of tenure. Most importantly scholarship success required me to supplement my training in research methodology. Surmounting these challenges required trusted mentors experienced in the rigors of scholarship, service,

instruction, and the culture of the academy. Also, I have asked myself what I learned about race, diversity, and gender as a faculty member traveling the road to tenure and promotion from the outskirts of the academy. In many ways my experience reinforces my belief in the power of locale that I learned in Alabama. Academia is in its own way a locale or cultural geography. And there are distinct differences in roles among those who call academia home. Part of what I learned is precisely what I learned in Alabama—the power of cultural geography. Academia is a culture all its own. Not all faculty are perceived as equal; discipline-specific faculty sometimes do not recognize librarians as their academic peers. Librarians are frequently reminded that their faculty status is a “round peg” trying to fit into the “square hole” of the dominant faculty culture; just as some believe that Black female faculty were not the intended residents in the academy. This is compound marginality.

The campaign academic librarians wage for a rightful place at academia’s table is a continuous endeavor critical to the academic mission in the Information Era. For academic non-White female librarians, especially those on the tenure-track, this effort is exacerbated by the need to quell the myth of presumed incompetence. Several components are essential to assist in countering this myth and enhancing the campaign. These are: (a) library schools preparing librarians to conduct original scholarly research, (b) organizational socialization, (c) mentoring from colleagues and others, (d) institutional support using professional development opportunities, and (e) academic librarians themselves demonstrating how they make a vital contribution to the academic community through active engagement in the campus life beyond the library.

It is my hope that this autoethnography will inspire further research on the concept of compound marginality. In addition, while this study describes the tenure-track sojourn of an academic librarian from an underrepresented segment of society, it is not representative of all the different backgrounds which exist among the academic librarian ranks. Further research is needed which focuses on the experiences of academic librarians from specific cultural, ethnic, and racial backgrounds and/or nationalities; particularly those who are males. Few such studies exist. Chang (2013) recommends “identifying which aspects of recruitment strategies work most effectively with each racial and ethnic group” (p.191). Davis-Kendrick (2009) examined the motivational factors for Black males in choosing a career in library and information science. Ibraheem and Devine (2013) surveyed the experiences of African librarians in American higher education. Also, future research could identify how many non-White academic librarians have faculty status and are on the tenure track.

Finally, for academic librarians to get their rightful place at academia’s table, at a time when their expertise is critical to the educational mission, more research about librarians’ instructional role needs to be published outside the library science field both by librarians and classroom faculty. This could help reduce the amount of energy librarians spend continually advocating for their inclusion in the curriculum and promoting the value of their instruction—activities apparently required of few other faculty.

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Becoming Academicians: An Ethnographic Analysis of the Figured Worlds of Racially Underrepresented Female Faculty

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Abstract

Research that exclusively focuses on pre-tenure racially underrepresented female faculty remains scarce. Our aim is to shed light on these rarely documented experiences in an effort to understand their navigation of the world of academia. Using critical ethnographic methodology, we argue that pre-tenure racially underrepresented female faculty come to understand themselves as academicians through the figured worlds that they participate in. We use the framework of figured worlds to frame these sites of identity production and to describe how they become academicians. Findings reveal that pre-tenure racially underrepresented female faculty enact agency in seemingly benign, yet critical moments within their professional contexts to assert their identities. We conclude by suggesting that it is within these spaces of authoring that they exercise their limited yet meaningful agency in an effort to make sense of the process of becoming academicians.

Introduction

In the academy, racially underrepresented female faculty (i.e. Black, Asian American, Latina, and Native American) are dually burdened because of their race and gender, constructing a space in which they are doubly minoritized (Berry & Mizelle, 2006; Hirshfield & Joseph, 2012). This intersection of racism and sexism contribute to racially underrepresented female faculty having the lowest tenure rate of all faculty groups (Vargas, 2002). Among female faculty in the United States, White women represent

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85% at the full professor rank and 80% at the associate level, whereas non-White women represent 13.5% and 18% respectively (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). On the road to tenure, racially underrepresented female faculty experience structural and interpersonal roadblocks, i.e. identity taxation, that their White male and female colleagues do not face (Ford, 2011; Hirshfield & Joseph, 2012). Tokenism arises when racially underrepresented female faculty are one of “the only” ones in their department (Hirshfield & Joseph, 2012; Turner, 2002). For example, they are often assigned extra duties, such as additional university committee membership, because they dually fulfill the diversity requirement of being both female and racially underrepresented in higher education (Turner, 2002). Furthermore, they typically hold greater student advising responsibilities than their White male and female colleagues as they are often called upon to do “mothering work” (Griffin & Reddick, 2011; Turner, 2002). However, they embrace mentoring as a way in which to support the educational advancement of their self-identified communities (Griffin & Reddick, 2011).

Given their hyper-visibility at predominately White institutions (PWIs), racially underrepresented female faculty are intersectionally marked (raced, gendered, and otherwise marked by social identities) and “othered” by colleagues and students (Ford 2011; Turner, 2002). Criticisms are either centered on bodily features, such as hair, skin color, or clothing; or bodily performances, which are institutional/departamental expectations of how faculty should behave or act (Ford, 2012). Similarly, their intellectual credibility is often called into question (Ford, 2011; Johnsrud & Sadao, 1998). Racially underrepresented female faculty members are commonly “othered” because their complex identities contradict what the academy perceives as normal. Consequently, their tenure reviews are often based not on transparent and objective standards but on a “candidate’s particularities” (Agathangelou & Ling, 2002, p. 370) or “fit.” Finally, they find it challenging to legitimize their research and find an academic space of their own because they are commonly one of the few or only one in their academic department who conducts research on social justice issues. As a result, they are intellectually segregated and further isolated from their colleagues (Mawhinney, 2011 & 2012).

Contrarily, this “otherness” is used as a vehicle for struggle, resistance, legitimacy, assertion of agency, and a space for their own intellectual productivity in their departments (Segura, 2003). At PWI’s, Latina and Black female faculty similarly exert agency by “[acting] upon and acting within the organizational structure to achieve a particular outcome” (Sulé, 2011, p. 182). We found little research that exclusively focuses on pre-tenure racially underrepresented female faculty. As such we precisely aim to shed light on these rarely documented experiences in an effort to understand non-White Women’s navigation of the world of academia. Using a critical ethnographic approach (Madison, 2011), we argue that pre-tenure racially underrepresented female faculty continuously use improvisational play in seemingly benign, yet critical moments within their professional contexts to assert their identities. It is within these spaces of authoring that they exercise their limited yet meaningful agency in an effort to make sense of the process of becoming academicians. We suggest that this complex navigation of academia requires a careful and nuanced coordination of competing and clashing figured worlds.

In order to uncover the complexity pre-tenure racially underrepresented female faculty face in the academy we address how they make sense of their new identities in the academy and how they enact agency as academicians.

Racially Underrepresented Female Faculty

The existing literature on racially underrepresented female faculty addresses a range of issues. Studies primarily aggregate both male and female faculty and sometimes focus on Black, Asian American, Latina/o, and Native faculty as specific racial and ethnic groups. The primary research area concentrates on the experience of these groups (Diggs et al., 2009); mentoring (Griffin & Reddick, 2011;

Thompson, 2008); best practices in recruiting, hiring, and retaining racially underrepresented female faculty (Battle & Doswell, 2004; Carriuolo, 2004; Guenter-Schlesinger & Ojikutu, 2009; Izard, 1990; Kayes, 2006; Niskodé-Dossett, 2008; Turner, 2002); and the incorporation of them into predominantly White institutions (PWI) (Fenelon, 203; Weems, 2003). Studies have also focused on issues specific to these groups in the tenure and promotion process such as: racial taxation (Harris, 2008), the legitimization of knowledge (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2010), marginalizing experiences as faculty (Aguirre et al., 1993; Johnsrud & Sadao, 1998; Sadao, 2003), and specific elements related to assessment in the tenure and promotion process (Antonio Lising, 2002; Baez, 2000). Still other studies have centered on specific groups of faculty such as: community college faculty experiences (Bower, 2002), recruitment and support of Latina/o faculty for tenure and promotion (DeLuca & Escoto, 2012; Ponjuan, Conley & Trower, 2011), and the lack of faculty diversity in specific fields and institutions (Maynard & Watts, 2006; Quezada & Louque, 2004).

We designed our study to focus specifically on the experiences of women faculty who are Black, Asian American, and Latina faculty from various regions of the country. Because the pre-tenure period is such a crucial one and little is known about their experiences during this time, our research carves a space to begin conversations about this decisive phase in the lives of these future potentially tenured female faculty.

A majority of research on tenure-track Black, Asian American, and Latina/o faculty collapses their experiences at all ranks (Ford, 2011; Griffin & Reddick, 2011; Hirshfield & Joseph, 2011; Turner, 2002). Researchers agree that these faculty live with multiple marginalities (Turner, 2002) and navigate a contested terrain in predominantly White institutions (Aguirre, 2000; Vargas, 1999). Turner (2002) notes that “although [underrepresented] faculty ... have obtained academic positions, even when tenured they often confront situations that limit their authority, and as they address these situations, drain their energy” (p. 75). Vargas (1999) explores the experiences of racially underrepresented female faculty at PWI’s, specifically examining the phenomenon of teacher as “other” and the implications of this otherness. Segura (2003) discusses Chicana intellectual production in the academy and the multiple spheres that Chicana professors navigate. She reveals that Chicana faculty are academic “others,” who utilize oppositional consciousness (Sandoval, 1991) to combat the discrimination they encounter.

As current and future racially underrepresented female faculty ourselves, we are particularly concerned about our own well-being, success and health, and that of our colleagues. Research featuring *testimonios* (Flores & Garcia, 2009) and individual narratives are crucial and represent a significant portion of the literature on this topic. In our study, we focus on a larger data set, in order to make broader generalizations of the phenomenon of this group (Ford, 2012). Finally, our study takes a unique approach by analyzing these narratives through a figured worlds’ framework.

Theoretical Framework: Figured Worlds

We use the concept of “figured worlds” (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998) to frame sites of identity production for pre-tenure racially underrepresented female faculty. Figured worlds, according to Holland et al. (1998) are imagined communities that operate dialectically and dialogically in “as if” worlds. These “as if” worlds are both social realities defined by power dynamics and spaces of agency and improvisation. They are defined by the ways in which individuals participate in and with these *figured worlds* on a daily basis. They can be characterized as metanarratives that develop over time, forming in continual practice. Holland et al.’s (1998) theory of identity production is unique in conceptualizing the agency that is enacted within their own figured world of academe because it pays special attention to the space of improvisational play, where agency is enacted in often subtle but critical ways.

In other words, we examine the ways in which the study's participants negotiate their relationships with others within and outside of these figured worlds by "figuring" who they are in an academic context. We describe how they come to "new" identities that define their position within an often-hostile institutional environment. We attempt to uncover the processes that contribute to their self-identification as particular sorts of actors in figured worlds. Also, we suggest that these women move within, across and on the periphery of figured worlds, organized by "cultural means" in an effort to author themselves. Finally, we consider the ways in which the construction of these figured worlds impact notions of agency and power within academe.

Figured worlds, according to Holland et al. (1998) consist of four traits. First, figured worlds are

historical phenomena, to which we are recruited or into which we enter, which themselves develop through the works of their participants. Figured worlds, like activities, are not so much things or objects to be apprehended, as processes or traditions of apprehension which gather us up and give us form as our lives intersect them (p. 41).

Secondly, they are "social encounters in which participants' positions matter" (p. 41). Third, they are "socially organized and reproduced" (p. 41). In other words, they depend on interaction and subjectivities in order to perpetuate. Finally, "figured worlds distribute 'us,' not only by relating actors to landscapes of action (as personae) and spreading our senses of self across many different fields of activity, but also by giving the landscape human voice and tone" (p. 41). Accounting for daily lived moments is important because it allows us to reveal sites of agency within daily interactions which emphasizes the agentic potential in the everyday, and in this way, highlighting the complexity, positioning and negotiation of the lived experiences of our participants.

Figured worlds, according to Holland et al. (1998) "rest upon people's abilities to form and be formed in collectively realized 'as if' realms" (p. 49). As Holland et al. (1998) note, "people's identities and agency are formed dialectically and dialogically in these 'as if' worlds" (p.49). A figured world is a narrative which includes a standard plot as well as "figures, characters, and types who carry out its tasks and who also have styles of interacting within distinguishable perspectives on, and orientation toward it" (p. 51).

Identity within Figured Worlds

Other critical facets of these lived worlds are that of "power, status, relative privilege, and their negotiation and that of one's self as entitled or disqualified and inappropriate" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 125). Holland et al. (1998) refer to these facets as relational and positional identities. Relational identities "have to do with behavior as indexical of claims to social relationships with others. They have to do with how one identifies one's position relative to others, mediated through the ways one feels comfortable or constrained" (p. 127). Positional identities "have to do with the day-to-day and on-the-ground relations of power, deference and entitlement, social affiliation and distance—with the social-interactional, social-relational structures of the lived world" (p. 127). More specifically, positional identity is "a person's apprehension of her social position in a lived world" (p. 128) depending on the contextual circumstances including, but not limited to, other people present, access to spaces and activities and authoritative voices, or any voice at all.

From the vantage point of *positional/relational identities*, identities can be defined by their position, relative to others. An example of this is, when our participants negotiate their identities based on their comfort level in situational contexts. These negotiations allow them to operate in dynamic, fluid and ever-changing modes of strategic essentialism (Spivak, 1990). Holland et al. (1998) note,

People tell others who they are, but even more important, they tell themselves who they are and then try to act as though they are who they say they are. These self-understandings, especially those with strong emotional resonance for the teller, are what we refer to as identities (p. 3).

As identities change based on the relational nature of specific situations, there is no way to essentialize our participants' identities—this analysis invites new ways of thinking about identity development that are both flexible and purposive.

Agency

We define agency as conscious or subconscious improvisational activity, individual and/or collective, that responds to particular situations, as a form of positioning within hegemonic structures. We view identity as a negotiation, position(s) and construction of self-understanding from which individuals enact agency. Participants utilized agency to construct and negotiate their identities within a context where identity was both self-constructed and produced for them in their day-to-day interactions with others. As Holland et al. (1998) indicate, “people’s identities and agency are formed dialectically and dialogically in these ‘as if’ worlds” (p.49).

Improvisation, then, became the predominant form of agency for participants to contribute to their identity production as academicians. Identity production is regarded as a dynamic, multilayered, commodious and ongoing construct influenced and shaped by a variety of factors, contexts, and positions—most of which are outside of the individual’s realm of control or direction but with space for personal agency. The utilization of personal agency to take partial ownership of one’s own identity as an academician did not remove external perceptions of that identity, rather the assertion of this agency allowed participants to respond to and navigate both the internal and external aspects of their identity production. Participants utilized their personal agency to construct and negotiate their academic identities by developing “new scripts” which fell outside of the traditional academician’s identity.

Space of Authoring

The *space of authoring* refers to a continual inner dialog, where one is persistently addressed and in the process of answering. In other words, “people coexist, always in mutual orientation moving to action; there is no human action which is singularly expressive” (Holland et al., p. 169). Further, Holland et al. (1998) base this concept of Bakhtin’s vision of self-fashioning, which allows them to articulate “an alternative vision, organized around the conflictual, continuing dialogic of an inner speech where active identities are ever forming” (p.169). In the making of identity, “the ‘I’ is by no means a freewheeling agent,” (p. 170) rather the ‘I’ builds upon that which is already there, what has been built over time. The authoring of self is also “invisible to itself” (p. 173). This is because the self is a continuing activity and cannot be finalized. Indeed, self-authoring “is an orchestration of such voices” (p. 178), or “heteroglossia” (p. 182), “a cacophony of different languages and perspectives” (p. 182).

This notion resonates with the ways in which our participants are positioned in addressing their academic identity and answering to it, both within themselves and in interactions with others. Such interfaces are laden with opportunities to seize, confiscate, and/or brush with agency. This *space of authoring* is not immune from the hegemonic norms and structures, which insidiously permeate all of our actions, and, is, in fact, never fixed. It is a space where, in that precise moment, an identity is asserted—partially self-orchestrated but only within the parameters and sites, which constrain and provide the limited language/expression to devise it. It is within this space of authoring, where the “space of play”

resides—that is, “the form of activity that proceeds in ignorance of any constitutive condition other than a cultural and conventional design” (p. 236).

Play is also “the medium of mastery, indeed a creation of ourselves as human actors. Without the capacity to formulate other social scenes in imagination, there can be little force to a sense of self, little agency” (p. 236). Precisely within this play, is where this study situates the compelling site of the production of academic identity. It is through this play that “new figured worlds may come about” (p. 272). Improvisation, then, becomes the predominant form of agency for our participants to contribute to their identity production.

Method

In this qualitative study we draw upon tenets of a critical ethnography (Madison, 2011) in order to further understand how racially underrepresented female faculty navigate issues related to “policy, power, and dominance” within postsecondary institutions (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 26). Madison (2011) explains that “critical ethnography begins with an ethical responsibility to address processes of unfairness or injustice within a particular *lived* domain” (p. 5), in this case, the figured worlds of our participants. The critical ethnographer “also takes us beneath surface appearances, disrupts the *status quo*, and unsettles both neutrality and taken-for-granted assumptions” (p. 5), paying specific attention to the “politics of positionality” (p. 6). Critical ethnography, then, takes an activism stance (Fine, 1996) in which the ethnographer takes an explicit position in exposing injustices of marginalized communities while offering suggestions as to how to ameliorate such injustices. Critical ethnography asks who this research will ultimately benefit, who gives us authority about where we have been and how our work makes a difference in people’s lives, even when the ethnographer herself is implicated within colonization and disenfranchisement (Madison, 2011).

In this study we specifically employ critical ethnographic tenets to disrupt the status quo by unveiling the voices of our participants, whose experiences are typically restrained in their institutional settings (Madison, 2011). Furthermore, we embrace critical ethnographic orientations around sociopolitical affiliations and its ties to personal subjectivities and their impact on carrying out research. Specifically, we contextualize our own positionality, as pre-tenure racially underrepresented female faculty “thereby making it accessible, transparent and vulnerable to judgment and evaluation” (Madison, 2011, p. 8). Our intuition, senses, and emotions (Anzaldúa, 1987) are inextricably woven into and inseparable from our research process.

The Authors

The first author is a single, Multiracial female who primarily identifies as Latina. As a once undocumented immigrant, she attended one of the poorest school districts in the nation, along with her five siblings. This author attended highly prestigious higher education institutions, an experience which highly influenced her desire to join the academic ranks. She has utilized her academic acumen as both a refuge and a location of agency from where to draw power and therefore, sees her faculty life as an instrument of social justice. The second author is a single Black female, first-generation college graduate who grew up in a working class, single parent home. The second author was raised by both family and community members and has always used community support to help her navigate educational settings. Thus, she considers this sense of community much a part of her Black identity. However, the academy appears to be a competitive and individualistic environment, and unfortunately the community assets the second author has used in the past to navigate educational settings are typically not legitimized in the academy. The third author, identifies as a single, heterosexual Latina, specifically of Mexican American

decent, from the Texas border. Now in her second year in the professoriate, it is her own experiences in navigating her own social identities as a student along the P-20 pipeline and as a bilingual teacher and counselor in public schools that inform her understandings of inequities, oppression, and politics within the academy. The fourth author, also from South Texas, draws from her own experience as a postdoctoral fellow. She locates herself in a space of “becoming” particularly since the postdoctoral experience lends itself to neither being in a space of faculty or fully achieving the status of an academic. As a married Latina scholar, she can identify with those female faculty who also juggle family life and struggle with how to be fully committed to a spouse and a profession that requires equal devotion. As a former higher education administrator, she utilizes her organizational lens to understand institutional complexities.

Data Collection

While a traditional critical ethnographic study on this topic might consist of interviews, observations, and additional forms of data gathered from a group of assistant professors within one institution over an extended period of time (Madison, 2011), our study primarily draws upon interview data with assistant professors residing at various institutions. Unlike conventional interviews, critical ethnography treats its interviewee not as an object or subject, but, rather as “a subject with agency, history, and her own idiosyncratic command of a story” (Madison, 2011, p. 25). The interviewer and the interview co-construct a narrative in partnership and dialogue through the sharing of memory, meaning and experience together (Madison, 2011). The focus of this study aligns with a critical ethnographic approach as the intent is to describe and interpret the experiences and identify shared patterns of experience of racially underrepresented female faculty.

Madison (2011) states that “representation has consequences” (p. 4) affirming Hall’s (1997) belief that how people are represented is how they are treated. Therefore, we treated our participants’ narratives with care and a heightened sense of conscientiousness, adopting Madison’s (2011) interviewer attributes of: mindful rapport, active thinking, sympathetic listening, and patiently probing. Oftentimes, there is a “degree of trauma” (Madison, 2011, p. 35) involved with racially underrepresented female faculty’s experiences within academia which is further reason to proceed with ultimate respect and care. Our research study is an exercise in “performative writing” (Pollock, 2007), where we recognize that the body writes. We write from our body and through our body through the bodies of racially underrepresented female faculty. We embrace our struggles and are not ashamed of our politics and advocacy (Agger, 2002; Denzin, 2001), because we understand that this work is consequential. According to Kincheloe and McLaren (2000), critical theory finds its method in critical ethnography becoming the doing or the performance of critical theory, or critical theory in action.

The study is part of ongoing research conducted by a team of researchers at various universities in the U.S. As such, multiple team members assisted with the creation of the interview protocol, the recruitment of participants, data collection, and analysis of data. We collected and analyzed data through hour long, individual, semi-structured interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) conducted either in person or online via Skype (a software program for video and voice calls).

Participants

Participants for this study include 28 tenure-track racially underrepresented female assistant professors with at least one-year experience working at a 4-year public or private university in the U.S. Participants were provided a pseudonym for purposes of confidentiality during this process. Each self identified as follows: 5 Asian females, 14 African American/Black females, and 9 Latinas. The professors work in a variety of fields including: liberal arts, education and the social sciences. Some work at large

comprehensive institutions that are research-intensive; some work at small, liberal arts institutions, and others work at teaching institutions. These institutions are located in the Northeast, Midwest, and the South.

Participants were recruited through the research team's scholarly networks. Using the snowball technique (Patton, 1990), consenting participants referred the research team members to other potential participants. Participants were recruited by email, phone call, and in person. The protocol for the initial interview consisted of 12 key questions (see Appendix) that asked participants to share their views and experiences as assistant professors.

Procedure

All interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed. As interviews were completed, at least one research team member checked each transcript for accuracy. Each research team member was then assigned a certain number of interviews to read and preliminarily analyze individually. In this process, we drew upon our research questions and "figured worlds" (Holland et al., 1998) conceptual framework to conduct a typological analysis (Hatch, 2002). Hatch (2002) describes typological analysis as: "data analysis [that] starts by dividing the overall data set into categories or groups based on predetermined typologies. Typologies are generated from theory, common sense, and/or research objectives, and initial data processing happens within those typological groupings" (p. 152).

In this preliminary analysis stage instances of identity production where agency was enacted in critical, but often-subtle ways, were the typologies we used to organize our data. And each researcher made note of overarching themes (Creswell, 2009) related to such instances. Thereafter, the team met to review, discuss, and compare data that they felt supported these overarching themes. In order to identify more specific patterns within these overarching themes, the lead author then coded each transcript individually identifying excerpts of data from each transcript that supported the overarching themes. Patterns, relationships, and themes that fell within the typologies were then noted in order to determine whether there was sufficient data to support each pattern or theme derived. As Hatch (2002) suggests, themes that were most supported by the data were then written in the form of one-sentence generalizations, or phrases. Hatch (2002) explains:

A generalization expresses a relationship between two or more concepts. Expressing findings as generalizations provides a syntactic device for ensuring that what has been found can be communicated to others. If findings cannot be expressed as generalizations, chances are data analysis is incomplete (p. 159).

He further indicates, however, that such generalizations do not imply generalizability. "Generalizations are special kinds of statements that express relationships found in the particular contexts under investigation" (Hatch, 2002, p. 159). Thematic generalizations derived by the lead author were then shared with the research team for feedback. Then, in order to write-up our findings, "powerful examples" were taken from our data to make our thematic "generalizations come alive" (Hatch, 2002, p. 159). The study's generalizations included four major themes: Tapping In and Stepping Out, Showing Proof, Not Accommodating, and Doing Things that Don't "Count" but Matter.

Findings

Tapping In and Stepping Out

Participants would tap into networks and step out (figuratively and physically) of situations in order to preserve their sanity. The women realized early on that reliance on just one type of network was insufficient. Supportive networks came from various sources and securing a broad base of networks that were formal, informal, and sometimes unexpected, equipped the women for any cross-examinations and challenges they anticipated would emerge on the road to tenure. Participants took advantage of these diverse relationships to gain their bearings and better understand the figured world of academia. This type of reaching out was an aspect of the new racially underrepresented female faculty figured world, wherein new strategies and coping mechanisms were developed in order to survive the academy. This new figured world allowed them a space to talk about issues relevant to their relational and positional identities, issues that they encountered on a daily basis but were unable to discuss safely outside of this figured world. Additionally, the figured world was a space where they could ask “dumb” questions, deconstruct the requirements of tenure and promotion (such as publications) and understand what not to do in order to become successful.

Some of the women had to “step out” of their department and join organizations on campus that would help them to launch their research agendas. It was not until Cassandra started talking to other faculty across campus and in professional organizations external to the university that she learned she was doing extraneous administrative tasks and program development for her department. Several colleagues in her network told Cassandra that she “shouldn’t have been doing all this stuff.” It did not occur to Cassandra that she should not be engaged in administrative tasks while she was still untenured and “so that’s when I was realizing something isn’t really right here.” Even still, there were instances where the women experienced a mismatch in mentorship and the mentor they originally were paired up with or sought out was not the right fit. Yet, there were lessons to be learned from any missed opportunity for mentoring. Allison explained a mismatched mentoring relationship taught her “what not to do” because when visualizing the type of professor she wanted to become she would “think about all the things that I don’t want to be in based off of that person as well.”

There were times when having identity commonalities with their mentors was critical and other times it was not as important. For Nadine it was important to have a Black female tenured professor to talk through with her some of the racial microaggressions that students projected onto her:

I told her about the whole ghetto professor comment, and she was like able to process through that with me because I told my White colleagues in our specific curriculum area about that because we talk about all the students and I had to explain to them how historically and socially the term ghetto has been socially constructed to me, Black, female, and poor.

For Nadine it took too much energy to talk to her White colleagues about racial microaggressions because she would have to do a mini-lesson on oppression, which would then steer the conversation away from her emotional needs and towards the adult learning needs of her White colleagues. Conversations about racism and sexism in the workplace with her Black female colleague did not require a pre-requisite explanation, and for this reason the conversation could center on her needs. Therefore, the idealism of “safe” spaces for non-White people to engage in racial dialogue is a myth (Leonardo & Porter, 2010). According to Leonardo and Porter “in their naiveté White students and educators fail to appreciate the

fact—a lived experience—that racial dialogue is almost never safe for ... [non-White] people in mixed-racial company” (p. 147).

However, when it came to negotiating some of the women did tap into their “White male network” and used the power and knowledge of the tenured White male colleagues to their advantage. Maya had one White male full professor colleague who read every one of her manuscripts before it was submitted to a journal. Maya’s mentor spent countless hours editing her papers to the point that there was more red editing ink than Black typed ink on her manuscripts. This White male professor’s specific mentoring role was to teach Maya how to negotiate the peer-review process for publishing. Similarly, when it came time to negotiate her contract for her tenure-track position Nadine’s White male colleagues from other universities reached out to her by means of email and supplied her with insurmountable resources on contract negotiation.

And, while, some participants had to step out of their departments for mentorship, they also physically stepped out of certain situations, choosing their mental well-being over the academy’s further encroachment into their personal health. Nadine recalled an incident where a student of hers made a particularly racialized comment. This information reached a colleague of hers and Nadine made an executive decision to disengage any conversation around that. She recalled,

Something had happened ... so one of my students this semester said to one of my colleagues that she didn’t like how I went from ghetto to professor in the classroom, and that got back to me.... I cancelled all of my meetings for that Friday and I left ... for the whole weekend.

So, while there were more mundane instances of physically stepping out, there were others that were much more imminent. Teresa, for example, detailed her own harrowing experience with breast cancer and insinuated that she would literally leave or “step out” of the academy at anytime noting that it was not worth sacrificing her personal happiness and health. She said,

I think the breast cancer made me rethink this. It was like [forget] this place, I mean excuse my language but I finally got to the point, and I’m sorry if I start crying, but I got to the point where I said, there are more important things in life than (my university) [absolutely] and if they don’t want me, you know if I had been younger I would have probably quit and gone looking for another job. Remember this was like my third career switch and it has to do with my retirement and everything. I think when I got breast cancer it put it all in perspective.

Showing Proof

Participants were frequently put in the position of having to verify that they deserved to be in academia. The purpose of the tenure process is to demonstrate through primarily scholarship, with teaching and service following, that you are “worthy” of being a permanent member of the academy. However, this notion of “worth” in the tenure track process was even more complex for racially underrepresented female faculty given they not only had to prove themselves in terms of research, teaching, and service, but they also had to legitimize their identities. It became painfully clear that participants did not operate in a vacuum. They were often reminded that their lack of power, status, and privilege disqualified them for entrance into the figured world of academia. They were defined by their position as non-White, relative to their White colleagues and students.

From the simple, everyday qualifiers such as dress and title, participants expressed their need and frustration with “playing and looking the part” of a professor. As racially underrepresented female faculty, our bodies are often marked through our gender and race, triggering an instant demotion of position. As Grace noted, “it’s just that dual minority piece, that status of being questioned because of your gender and your race and your age. I don’t know many times people assume that I’m a student.” Allison recalled a commonplace incident where she was mistaken for a graduate student, minimizing her role as a faculty member. A fellow administrative colleague made it a point to introduce her with the title of doctor in order to emphasize her important position.

I think he’s caught on to it too, we were all invited to lunch, and someone asked “are you a grad student” I told him I was going to get that all day long, so the next time he saw me he made sure to announce “Hello Dr. M” instead of just [first name], it was like let’s let everybody know now this is Dr. M, so we’re not going to “are you a grad student” so that’s one of the things I appreciated.

In this case, her colleague assisted in fomenting her space of authoring. It is precisely within these improvisational moments, where participants found a space to author themselves. The ways in which participants presented themselves and clothed their marked bodies consistently was an issue within the figured world of academia. Allison paid close attention to how she would be perceived as a result of her choice of attire. She recollected:

If I wear jeans, t-shirt and tennis shoes I’m going to be thought of as one of the [undistinguishable] people ... so I have to perform differently and not just pencil and paper performance, I’m talking about everyday interaction ... all day long I get told “oh you dress so nice” and I’m just like I may not like to dress nice, that’s what I’d like to do but I also cannot afford not to dress nice.

While moments such as these may appear seemingly minute, over time and repetition, each opportunity to assert their academic selves became increasingly important. In the figured world of academia, such issues of gender and race would be presumably obsolete while in the figured world of racially underrepresented female faculty, such markers become immediately present, meaningful, and consequential.

In negotiating within and between these figured worlds, racially underrepresented female faculty were often impacted negatively in their process of “becoming” academicians. Many experienced paranoia, fatigue, anxiety in earning tenure, and felt they often took on extra “service” because of their “identity” expertise. Therefore, they were expected to represent and be the expert on all issues of diversity, especially issues of race. As Jocelyn explained her colleagues were silent on issues of diversity, and their silence meant her “worth” was seen as the sole person to speak upon these issues.

And I always feel like I’m talking. I always feel like I’m the one having to offer up a perspective or something. And part of it has to do with me, you know willing to do that, but part of it is also that nobody is contributing. Nobody else and you have these dead silences. And if somebody brings up something it’s somebody that’s a ... [non-White] person, right? It’s coming from issues of class but that’s not the whole story and I want to be able to communicate how much more complicated that is.

Being untenured placed participants in a vulnerable position where any action or inaction on their part would be questioned. As racially underrepresented female faculty who were not yet tenured, voicing a concern could be perceived as adversarial to those who had power over their tenure process, but sometimes if they remained silent they could be perceived as not being collegial. Some participants as a

cautionary strategy retreated from the open political arena altogether by silencing themselves, “until I get tenure.”

Carrying multiple identity labels beyond their status as untenured meant they had to keep consistent documentation to prepare for the time when any number of their identities would come into question. For example, Jocelyn found herself keeping documentation such as emails “as evidence but just kind of to document those kinds of interactions that I have with my colleagues here, in case [anything] goes down, in case I don’t get tenure. In case something, right. Oh I need to look for that.” She went on to explain that some of her White colleagues with tenure were ignorant to the fact that as an untenured racially underrepresented female faculty member, others either silenced her or she often purposefully chose to protectively remain silent:

Somebody during one of those conversations, a faculty member said, “so what’s stifling people from saying what they want to say?” and there was silence and I said, well let me ... offer one thing up, tenure right. Not having tenure could be preventing people from saying things that they want to say, from being part of this courageous conversation. And that faculty member was like “really? That has an affect?” And I’m like, of course. Right, exactly, right.

Cassandra found that any racially charged incident that occurred within her department meant others felt threatened by her because of race. She kept constant documentation of departmental racial and gendered microaggressions, which often came in the form of mistrust from her colleagues:

I think in my former program it was an issue with my faculty colleagues, even one of the—our department chair got written up twice for racial comments in class, so I really think that that did translate over to my relationship with her, and I just constantly had to keep everything I did I had to keep record of, even like my book order or something like that because our administrative staff, she’d say I did things I wasn’t doing, so I’d always have to show proof that I wasn’t doing it, and I was always kind of backed up, but she would always believe her over me.

Diane experienced similar microaggressions rooted in mistrust as the provost demanded “proof” or documentation that she was indeed diagnosed with cancer:

The provost made me get a letter from my oncologist, which that I thought was sort of punitive because she, I don’t know who would lie about that but anyway when I put in my request to my department chair who was, at this time, a new department chair, a different person, she was very supportive and very helpful.... But the Provost wanted, I guess to verify that I wasn’t making it up so I had to get a letter from my oncologist to prove that I really had a cancer diagnosis and ah ... Ahem, but it’s, you know, what are you gonna do? You’re an Assistant Professor and I didn’t wanna, ahem, totally alienate the Provost. I knew she had her reasons so I got that.

Not Accommodating

Participants refused to accommodate to the ways of academia in various forms. In many ways they performed small acts of rebellion, which let them know they are still fighters. The women learned early on in order to survive the academy they had to be overly critical, cautious and not capitulate or accommodate to elements of the academy that would compromise their integrity and identity. Through a savvy series of agentic acts, participants attempted to maintain their integrity, stay healthy all while

coming to this new identity in a hostile academic environment. Participants' identities were continually forming and in consistent inner and outer dialog. Through daily inner dialogs with themselves, they learned to remain intact as individuals while moving within and between figured worlds. They showed that they were and are continuously in a space of authoring—whether in a classroom, department meeting, social gathering, conversation or likewise. Throughout moments in the day, they seized opportunities to assert their emergent identities as faculty members in often-nuanced ways that floated beneath the general radar but proved meaningful, even pivotal, for their well-being and overall retention in the field.

Participants were generally conflicted about when to say no to projects that would distract them from what really “counts” for tenure. Similar to existing research findings, the women were called upon to do additional service or “mothering” work (Griffin & Reddick, 2011; Turner, 2002). Even still, serving others was a key part of their identity, and for this reason it was a challenge to put themselves first for the sake of their professional survival.

Early on Allison learned to say no even if others considered her refusal as “oh she’s mean.” One strategy she would use to turn people down would be to say “thank you for the offer maybe in a couple of years I’ll get back to you on it.” She emphasized only volunteering for service that is “in your best interest” because it is the one time that the identity label *untenured* could be used as an excuse to say “no” given at this stage of the professoriate scholarship should be the priority. Therefore, she emphasized to be “selfish” even if it “sounds relatively mean.” Allison said “no” to service that was not in her best interest, and recommended only saying “yes” to service and advising because “it is helpful to you and you want to give back, but don’t just do it because students asked you.”

Despite the pressures to fall in line with what is “expected” by the academy, several participants practiced scholarly resistance by engaging in research that veered from traditional/rationalistic approaches, was based on their personal experiences and identities, social justice oriented, and supported communities in which they were deeply connected. For example, Allison aimed to “maintain my integrity” in her scholarship by resisting the ivory tower notion that the language in academic scholarship must be complex and difficult to ascertain. Instead Allison made her scholarship broadly accessible by using “plain” language to counter academese:

My goal is to dispel some of those myths so I try to make my language very plain, even though they may be academic and using the jargon, uhuh I know what you mean, but I’m going to say it as plainly as I can say it and I know some people interpret me as not being as educated as they are, but I chose to speak a plain language because I want it to be something that no matter who is listening to me whether you have a 5th grade education or a PhD everyone can understand what I’m saying of course in academic writing, you write a certain way and I know that some people argue academic speaking you have to speak a certain way, but every single person in our audience is not the same especially when you’re teaching to a classroom [where] all [are] at different levels, and what we end up doing is isolating the individual and making them feel like they can’t do it. And I think that I’m here because I’m the accidental PhD student, accidental doctor to show that it is doable for the vast majority of us if we just do it.

Even though discussions related to their personal identities were generally silenced in their academic departments, participants used their scholarship as a way to break this silence. Linda denied being discriminated against if asked, and even though she tries “not to think” about it or “ignores” microaggressions in the workplace “academically in my own research, I am going to talk about that.”

Teresa explained further how her own research on issues of social justice reflected her own struggles within the academy and her frustrations and unwillingness to culturally accommodate in this White, male-centric world. In some ways she resented the fact that some of her White colleagues claimed to be social justice advocates, but did not necessarily experience the daily microaggressions that she did. “I think that a lot of the people in this program teach about privilege and Whiteness and White privilege but I don’t think they have a clue of what it really means for day to day life,” she said, “For us, that we constantly accommodate 1,000 times a day. And even as hard as we work, we’re still not good enough.”

She described a particular incident in a faculty meeting, where she spoke up and felt that she was being silenced but refused to be. In such instances, she felt that this silencing was attributed to her being a Latina. She described a cultural disconnect of sorts, that she felt also reflected her not having been groomed for the professoriate. This disconnect was not attributed to an issue of language per se, as she was a native English speaker. Yet, she seemed to feel that at times the manner in which she said things, a reflection of her culture, was in question. She explained:

A good example of that was when, that day when we were discussing about changing the hours [for faculty meetings] ... [Marco] wanted to push the hours back for our meetings and there was this interaction and then Marco said, “well we don’t need to say that.” And I turned around and said, “yes I do,” and I need to say it in the way that I’m gonna say it because part of what has gone on is Nora translates for me because they can’t hear it. They need to learn how to hear me! Excuse my language, but if my students have learned to accommodate to my communication style then why can’t the professors. It shouldn’t be always us accommodating.

Doing Things that Don’t “Count” but Matter

While confronted with multiple challenges as academicians within their figured worlds, participants enacted agency by engaging in activities that directly benefited the communities in which they identified. In the eyes of the ivory tower serving one’s community was considered low on the hierarchy of priorities when compared to scholarship. Often, service does not count toward tenure (or is a secondary and usually, tertiary aspect of the tenure and promotion process) but it is a very important part of their survival and community building mechanisms that to them in ways that trump carrying out “official” duties. Thus, affirming service related activities were as equally important to their success in the academy as maintaining a strong scholarly record. Additionally, service related activities contributed to the building of a legacy, where racially underrepresented female faculty’s “I” built upon what had already been developed over history and time. In other words, racially underrepresented female faculty depended on the experiences of others similar to them, male and female, present and past, and relied on their own abilities to sustain other racially underrepresented students, to make sense of their identities.

In their formative evaluations for tenure some of the women were told by senior ranking faculty to discontinue service activities that were tied to communities in which they identified. Despite this warning from senior scholars, the women saw identity-affirming service related activities as one way to build support networks, develop community, and create a space to authenticate their identity even in the midst of pervasive Whiteness, especially for those participants who were at PWIs. The women named multiple organizations on campus in which they were involved such as mentoring students in the Black Student Alliance, Latino Unidos, and cultural/ethnically based sororities. A few women even established their own campus networking organizations for racially underrepresented female faculty. Ultimately, they recognized that they were “called upon for some things other [White] faculty are not, and as a [non-White] woman in the academy there is the expectation or ‘role’ they agree to play.”

For the most part, participants were able to decode and decipher the language of academia because of the mentoring they received along their pathway to the professoriate. Therefore, they felt compelled to do the same and found it mutually beneficial to mentor students with similar identities and experiences. Barbara saw mentoring Chicana students as therapeutic and restorative. Mentoring helped her reflect upon what drew her to academia in the first place—the ability to pay recognition to her community in research. Here Barbara describes how she used both research and mentoring to affirm the identity she shared with her students:

I took a couple of students, two Chicana activists first-generation, to their first Chicana studies conferences. And seeing a reflection of what happened to me when I first attended or saw or had that experience ... that was a success for me. I think exposing students to people like that to scholarship like that ... that is healing for them. The way it was for me has definitely been one of my successes ... now it's less about me. I'm here now, I got the job.... Its how can I get students involved in research. How can I get them involved ... and I'm doing an oral history project with Chicana of the civil rights moment. How can I connect those kind of opportunities for knowledge?

Yet, while some activities beyond the call of duty were identity affirming, a few women admitted that there were certain service related activities that were personally draining and were performed with great emotional cost to their own identities. Jocelyn made numerous personal appearances giving advice to others about what it is like to be a racially underrepresented female navigating the academy, but these service activities at times required her to reveal too much of herself, put her on the “stage” or “spotlight” and made her feel “vulnerable.” Jocelyn’s other colleagues were not “expected” to “perform” this type of personally revealing service and she wondered, “How much of my identity is read along with who I am? What I do? How should I contribute to the college? How you know, everything, how it relates to my identity in ways that my White colleagues don’t see.” Conversely, Nadine and Lucia both verbalized they were conflicted about being extra critical of students who shared similar cultural and ethnic identities. In her classes on issues of social justice Lucia found that sometimes she had more success with her White students than her racially underrepresented students because there are other intersections with racism (i.e. gender and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning (LGBTIQ) issues) that racially underrepresented students may still be reluctant to talk about. Lucia felt sometimes even her racially underrepresented students in classroom settings expected her to “perform” a certain way:

I believe in these intersections of racism and privilege that we don’t want to look at. I’m going to push students in all ways, because students want me to say yes we have been oppressed. Let’s talk about other challenges and other ways we perpetuate oppression. It can be challenging in a classroom when students expect you to be another way and you’re not, because I’m expected to be challenged as much as the White students.

Similarly, Nadine had to be particularly critical of a Black male student’s writing, giving him an incomplete as a result. She was “struggling because, as a Black woman I don’t want to see a Black man, or I don’t want to see any person; I don’t care what color you are; I don’t want to see any person fail, especially this early, or at any point, and they’re really not getting any support.”

Discussion and Implications

Racially underrepresented female faculty entered into the figured world of academia by choosing to become assistant professors. As they faced challenges in their day-to-day encounters with the various

aspects of academia, they utilized improvisational play as a form of agency. These agentic acts fell within the themes of: Tapping In and Stepping Out, Showing Proof, Not Accommodating, and Doing Things that Don't "Count" but Matter. In their processes of "becoming academicians," racially underrepresented female faculty constructed and negotiated their identities within an academic context where identity was both self-constructed and produced for them. Participants utilized their personal agency to construct and negotiate their academic identities by developing "new scripts" within the parameters of academia. However, they did not intentionally set out to create a new figured world. Instead, in their continuing activity, their daily (yet somewhat invisible and even unintentional) agentic acts built upon that which was already there. The authoring of self was indeed heteroglossic; while the participants had arguably minimal control over their academic environment, a cacophony of their own daily agentic acts, mentorship from senior faculty members, previous racially underrepresented faculty's successes in forging inroads into academia and institutional retention initiatives contributed to the authoring of self.

Racially underrepresented female faculty dwell both in the social reality of academia that are laden with power dynamics, and simultaneously, replete with spaces of agency and improvisation. In this study, participants illustrated the ways in which they negotiated their relationships within and outside of the figured world of academia for better or for worse. In other words, as racially underrepresented female faculty struggled to occupy a new figured world within academia, they were reminded of their positional and relational identities. It became painfully clear that they did not operate in a vacuum. They were often reminded that their lack of power, status, and privilege disqualified them for entrance into the figured world of academia. Racially underrepresented female faculty were defined by their position as non-White, relative to their White colleagues and students.

Racially underrepresented female faculty also moved within, across and on the periphery of the figured worlds of academia and made an effort to author themselves in a non-traditional way. The only way to negotiate such boundary crossings were through a savvy series of agentic acts which allowed them to maintain their integrity, stay healthy all while coming to this new identity in a hostile academic environment. They operated "as if" they were true members of academia with the standard plot and characters, all the while in a dialogic interplay between figured worlds, balancing a thin tightrope of tolerability and success. Surviving and thriving as a racially underrepresented female faculty is by no means an independent endeavor. Racially underrepresented female faculty's "I" builds upon what has already been developed over history and time. They depend on the experiences of other racially underrepresented faculty, male and female, present and past, to make sense of their identities. Racially underrepresented female faculty showed that they were and are continuously in a space of authoring—whether in a classroom, department meeting, social gathering, conversation or likewise. Throughout moments in the day, they seized opportunities to assert their emergent identities as faculty members in often-nuanced ways that floated beneath the general radar but proved meaningful, even pivotal, for their well-being and overall retention in the field. They engaged in improvisational play, masterfully extemporizing situational contexts so that they were both working within the parameters of the traditional academic figured world and carving a space for a new figured world.

These improvisational spaces of play need to be legitimized as crucial knowledge in helping other racially underrepresented female faculty succeed. Participants in this study found inventive ways to "figure" out the academy. Even though their identities were not readily accepted by the academy, the women pushed back against this resistance by asserting their identities even more (Segura, 2003). The act of using their identities as a tool to create a space for themselves, in the academy was not a survival skill the participants were formally taught. For the most part their navigational skills were self-taught. With the exception of select sources of support from peer networks and mentors external to their academic institutions, these participants put forth most of the effort and work towards establishing themselves and creating a space for their multifaceted identities, including their academic identity, at their academic

institutions. The institutions themselves contributed very little in terms of helping them mediate and navigate the tenure-track process. The additional codes of power the women had to decipher meant the tenure process required extra exertion when compared to their White peers (Ford, 2011; Hirshfield & Joseph, 2012)

Unfortunately, this lack of navigational assistance from the university commonly stems from institutional and even department level devaluing of racially underrepresented female faculty's scholarship (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002). While it is the responsibility of faculty to ensure they are seeking and securing the necessary supports to achieve tenure, their academic institutions must reciprocate with systematic supports. Especially considering the unique experiences, dedication, and determination of racially underrepresented female faculty transforms and benefits institutions of higher education in so many ways (Griffin & Reddick, 2011; Turner, 2002), therefore, their institutions must give something in return. One way in which academic institutions can systematically support them in the tenure process is through specifically designed formal mentoring programs.

Given that Black, Asian American, Latino/a, and Native faculty, especially female faculty in these groups, are still grossly underrepresented in academia, Tillman (2001) contends that mentoring is essential to increasing the number of these faculty who are "promoted, tenured, and retained within the institution" (p. 321). According to Tillman systematic mentoring is especially important at the department level, and she suggests three specific formats for mentoring. First, racially underrepresented female faculty must be purposefully paired with mentors who are dedicated and committed to providing the professional development and growth necessary to help them achieve tenure. Secondly, the mentoring pairing should be monitored and evaluated to ensure that it is the right fit and should continue. Third, any mentoring relationship or formal program should consider the specific career and psychosocial functions (sense of competence, identity, work effectiveness, socialization, acceptance, and confirmation) for them (Tillman, 2001).

While mentoring relationships are crucial to academic success, talking to one another and creating sister circles of support can also prove valuable. Rather than working in isolation, racially underrepresented female faculty can utilize existing virtual social networks and technological communication tools to create spaces of sustenance. Additionally, more venues that safely allow racially underrepresented female faculty to express their experiences need to be created; the *Women of Color in the Academy Conference* (2013)² is one example. There are some examples of instances in which organizations and/or groups that have emerged to provide this type of space and support. Some exist at the institutional level, like a group that Cassandra mentioned in her interview. In this case, however, the organization she described was for racially underrepresented faculty on her campus. She explained how this group had emerged several years prior to her arrival, based on feeling marginalized. She was able to find the support she needed in this group. *Sisters of the Academy* (Davis, Chaney, Edwards, Thompson-Rogers, & Gines, 2012 & 2012) is another organization that exists at the national level, and was founded by Black females in the academy to support other racially underrepresented female faculty. Yet, other circles of support have not necessarily resulted in formalized organizations such as this one. *Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios* (Latina Feminist Group, 2001) resulted from the work of the Latina Feminist Group, an informal group of Latina feminists that began to meet in the early 1990s to discuss their "concerns as Latina feminists in higher education" and to discuss possible means of collaborations.

² The University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign annually sponsors Faculty Women of Color in the Academy, a national conference that brings academicians together to discuss the politics and perspectives of an undertheorized and underresearched population—female women of color in the academy (see <http://inclusiveillinois.illinois.edu/WCA/index.html>).

In conclusion, pre-tenure racially underrepresented female faculty have learned to navigate the predominantly White terrain of academia but predominantly through their own improvisational techniques. Certainly, they would not have arrived at this point in their careers without a nuanced understanding of the ins and outs of academic settings. Yet, if the academy intends to genuinely support efforts in their recruitment, retention and well-being, then institutions of higher education must make a commitment to institutionalize effective practices in this regard, rather than shouldering the responsibility on the racially underrepresented female faculty themselves. The fact that these faculty have been consummate sources and savvy purveyors of their own success does not relinquish the academy from implementing their own measures to ensure that such skills and resources are not explicitly fostered to future, incoming and current underrepresented female faculty. On the contrary, so long as we must primarily rely on our own grassroots efforts to succeed in academia, the academy fails to honor their sweeping declarations of diversifying its professorial ranks.

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Appendix

Interview Protocol

1. First of all, can you go ahead and restate your name, title/position, the name of your institution and your discipline, department, or program?
 - a. Given the scope of this project on Assistant Professors of Color, can you indicate how you identify racially/ethnically?
 - b. Do you mind telling me your age, where you're originally from, and how long you've been at this institution in particular?
2. Can you tell me a bit about what led you to become a tenure-track professor?
 - a. Do you consider yourself a first generation college student, in that neither of your parents obtained a bachelor's degree?
 - b. Could you tell me a bit about the academic institutions you've attended?
 - c. Were there any particular events or individuals that influenced your decision to become a professor?
3. Do you feel you were prepared, or trained for what academic life is like?
 - a. When you were hired did you negotiate your compensation package, what did it entail, and did you get what you asked for?
4. How does your life as an academic shape or impact your personal life?
 - a. How does it impact your health, family, relationships?
5. What would you say are some of the greatest successes and challenges you've had so far in navigating the academy as a professor of color?
 - a. 3 successes and 3 challenges so far?
6. How do you think your experience in the academy compares to your White counterparts?
 - a. How does your experience in the academy compare to your (male/female) counterparts of color?
7. From who or what do you draw strength in the midst of challenges?
8. What role has mentorship played for you in this process, if any?
 - a. Does your dept./institution have a formal mentorship program/process?
 - b. Have formal or informal mentors been readily available?
9. How do institutional, departmental, programmatic dynamics factor into your successes and challenges?
10. Given your experiences in academia so far, how satisfied are you with the profession?
11. If you could change anything about the profession, what would it be?
12. What advice would you give other students of color seeking to become professors?
13. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Demystifying the Contributions of Public Land-Grant Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Voices of HBCU Presidents

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Abstract

Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) represent one of many types of institutions in the American system of higher education. Comparatively little attention has been given to the campus' executive leader, namely the president. Our study describes early twenty-first century contributions to and challenges of public land-grant historically Black colleges and universities to life in the United States, as perceived by HBCU presidents. Three major themes that emerged from the analysis of data generated from interviews are: (a) serving as 'the people's university,' (b) educating the 'underserved' everywhere, and (c) promoting racial uplift and empowerment. Suggestions for policy, practice, and research are discussed.

Introduction

During the post-Emancipation era, Black Americans took advantage of the education offered by historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Since slavery prohibited them from obtaining an education, the pursuit of a formal education became significantly important. They believed that education would help them assert themselves as equals. Blacks have always thirsted for knowledge and a formal education (Allen & Jewell, 2002). Eventually, they were provided opportunities for academic pursuits. However, while most institutions of higher education catered only to the White male socially-elite (Brown, Ricard, & Donahoo, 2004), HBCUs opened their doors to both Blacks and poor Whites (Manzo, 2000). Furthermore, they provided education to students of all ages, despite limited resources. Indeed, HBCUs have had an ongoing commitment to educate students who are chronically underserved and have the least in terms of human and social capital.

Historically, HBCUs were founded specifically to educate Black Americans as most of them were refused admission elsewhere (Allen & Jewell, 2002). Furthermore, these land-grant institutions were

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supported through such federal statutory efforts as the Morrill Act of 1890² (Brown & Davis, 2001). The mission of these institutions was

to produce graduates who are leaders in and contribute to their communities, the nation, and the world; and to provide teaching, research, and extension and public service through collaborative efforts, which improve the standard of living and quality of life of diverse populations, including limited-resource persons (The Council of 1890 Presidents/Chancellors, 2000, p. 13).

Although, the Morrill Act provided funding for the operation of these institutions, it did not provide financial endowments that matched those of predominantly White land-grant institutions (Harris & Worthen, 2004).

As a result of federal legislation and funding, the number of HBCUs mushroomed over the 20th century; particularly the number of public land-grant HBCUs, which are affectionately known as the “1890 universities.” There were nearly 130 HBCUs by 1960. Not all of these survived; in 2010, there were at least 103 HBCUs in America, representing approximately 3% of all postsecondary institutions (Hirt, Strayhorn, Amelink, & Bennett, 2006). Currently, there are 18 public land-grant HBCUs, representing 17% of all HBCUs and 0.45% of all institutions in the nation.³ Although HBCUs represent a relatively small proportion of all postsecondary institutions in the United States, they educate 14% of Black undergraduate students and confer approximately 24% of all undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees each year (Stewart, Wright, Perry, & Rankin, 2008).

While land-grant institutions were established to focus on agriculture and industrial work, today land-grant HBCUs offer a wide range of degrees in subjects that include education, engineering, physics, theology, and agriculture. As the need for more skilled workers increase, many HBCUs are focusing on programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Recent data show that HBCUs awarded 41% of bachelor’s degrees in biological sciences, 35% in computer sciences, 32% in mathematical sciences, 47% in physical sciences, and 22% in engineering (Perna, Gasman, Gary, Lundy-Wagner, & Drezner, 2010).

HBCUs in the United States date back to 1837. They pioneered today’s concept of the Minority Serving Institution⁴ (Roach, 2001) which include Tribal Colleges and Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) as well. Although, the Carnegie Foundation identified 3,941⁵ accredited degree-granting institutions in the nation (Carnegie Foundation, 2000), minority-serving institutions were not among them (Gasman, Baez, & Turner, 2008; O’Brien & Zudak, 1998). Nonetheless, around 214,000, or 16%, of all Black higher education students in the nation are currently enrolled at HBCUs, which comprise 3% of all colleges and universities nationwide (Harmon, 2012).

Even at the beginning of the twenty-first century with fewer resources than predominately White institutions (PWIs), HBCUs experienced an increase in their enrollments (Roach, 2001). Additionally, college enrollment rates in the United States increased significantly over the last 40 years (see Yen, 2011;

² The Morrill Act authorized land to be designated for colleges and universities. It allowed for the creation of 17 public land-grant HBCUs between 1890 and 1912; one HBCU was founded before 1890 (Brown & Davis, 2001).

³ Percentage is based on 3,941 universities, the total number of universities in the US as reported by the Carnegie Foundation in 2011.

⁴ Minority serving institutions are colleges and universities that serve a relatively large number of minority students as compared to other predominately White institutions.

⁵ Of the 3,941 about half were two-year community colleges, 611 comprehensive universities, 606 liberal arts colleges, 312 religiously affiliated schools, 261 research universities, and 505 other specialized institutions.

Collison, 2000; Manzo, 2000; Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004). Factors affecting this enrollment trend were first generation college students, underrepresented minority students, and HBCUs role in educating these students. In the 2007-08 academic year 42% of students enrolled at public two-year institutions were first generation and 34% of students enrolled at public four-year non-doctoral universities were first generation (U.S. Department of Education NCES, 2012).

Underrepresented minority (URM) students accounted for more than 50% of the increase in college enrollment between 1976 and 1994 (O'Brien & Zudak, 1998). Between 1998 and 2008, student enrollment in colleges and universities increased by 32% from 14.5 million to 19.1 million and approximately 33% of these incoming students were from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups (Snyder & Dillow, 2010). In 2008 the overall freshman enrollment was up 6% as compared to 2007. Hispanic freshmen increased by 40,000 compared with 2007, a 15% increase in enrollment and the largest of any of the major racial and ethnic groups. In comparison, freshman enrollment of Black students increased by 8% and Asians by 6%. White freshman enrollment increased 3% over 2007 (Fry, 2010). Furthermore, researchers have long predicted a record increase of minority college enrollment by 2015 (Manzo, 2000; Roach, 2001).

Throughout history, some HBCUs have faced difficulties due to political strife (Allen & Jewell, 2002). For instance, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) struggled to keep its doors opened when legislators recommended closing the university. Despite its continued increase in enrollment rates and successful efforts to raise funds, the university was often faced with the task of affirming itself (Bennett & Xie, 2003). HBCUs have also been expected to follow the curriculum of the mainstream schools, ignoring the particular needs and experiences of their students. Despite the lack of resources, they continue to uphold their long-standing mission to educate Black youth (Allen & Jewell, 2002).

Today, most HBCUs serve a majority of Black students, but ironically, face criticism for their very existence, denigrated and condemned as perpetuating segregation in a time when segregation is no longer the status quo. While HBCUs were founded to provide a place for Blacks to receive education, some today believe that after the *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954) decision the need for HBCUs no longer exists. However, HBCUs remain institutions of choice for many Black students who continue to populate these campuses (Evans, Evans, & Evans, 2002).

Some HBCUs have served their communities for over one hundred years, have prepared strong Black faculty members (Billingsley, 1982; Perna, 2001), and have graduated many students who now have successful careers (Evans et al., 2002). These institutions continue to educate a significant majority of Blacks who earn college degrees. Research has shown that their graduates assume higher status occupations and have reported greater satisfaction with their jobs (Strayhorn, 2008a; 2008b).

Researchers have also focused on students who attend HBCUs, covering an array of topics, including college choice, engagement, persistence, graduation, and even more recently studies on Black men at HBCUs (Ellington & Frederick, 2010; Palmer, Davis, & Hilton, 2009; Palmer, Davis, & Maramba, 2010; Smith, 2008). Lundy-Wagner and Gasman (2011) found that Black students feel welcomed at HBCUs since they can relate culturally to their peers and instructors. Freeman and Cohen (2001) found that strong cultural and racial identities allow HBCU students to thrive academically. Their very presence at HBCUs satisfies the need to connect with their racial group (ASHE Higher Education Report, 2010b). Many Black students choose to attend HBCUs for cultural and academic motives. Others are attracted to the rich legacy that HBCUs provide (Freeman & Thomas, 2002) and the availability of financial resources (ASHE Higher Education Report, 2010b).

Studies have compared HBCU students to their counterparts at PWIs (Kim, 2002; Watson & Kuh, 1996). Freeman and McDonald (2004) found that Black students attending PWIs have more negative

experiences, suffer higher attrition rates, and lower academic success than their counterparts. Further, they argue that in contrast, these students at HBCUs experience better psychological adjustment and self image than those who attend PWIs. Blacks at HBCUs also have higher aspirations; many go on to attain doctoral degrees.

However, other research focuses on the experience of White students at HBCUs in the early decades of the twenty-first century. Contrary to popular belief, the literature points to a rapid diversification within HBCUs (Evans, Evans, & Evans, 2002; Strayhorn, 2010). Students of various ethnic and racial groups (e.g., Whites, Hispanics, and Asians) are attending HBCUs. In addition, with the influx of students from African and Caribbean nations, HBCUs are experiencing even greater “within-race diversity” (Lundy-Wagner & Gasman, 2011).

Some researchers have focused on studies involving HBCU staff members, namely faculty and student affairs administrators (Hirt, Strayhorn, Amelink, & Bennett, 2006). For example, some scholars have highlighted the work experiences of HBCUs faculty. Other research addresses specific challenges that HBCUs face when recruiting and retaining strong faculty members (Nichols, 2004). One of their major challenges in recruiting top-ranked faculty to HBCUs is the inability to offer competitive salaries, as HBCU fiscal resources are generally not as much as their PWI competitors (Mikyong-Minsun & Conrad, 2006; Nichols, 2004).

Other challenges faced by HBCU faculty members include larger teaching loads than their counterparts at PWIs (ASHE Higher Education Report, 2010; Lewis, 2011). Also, they fulfill roles as advisors, mentors, and role models to students (Stewart, Wright, Perry, & Rankin, 2008), which can be facilitated by smaller teacher-student ratios at HBCUs. Other features of HBCU faculty work life include their dedication to work and help in providing remediation for academically underprepared students. Additionally, they offer students support by providing them with opportunities to learn about and even engage in research that they might not get at PWI institutions. The role they play in producing female STEM field professionals and the encouragement of post baccalaureate studies and careers in STEM for women are often important parts of their accepted workload (ASHE Higher Education Report, 2010; Perna, Lundy-Wagner, Drezner et al., 2010).

There are other studies that describe the work life of HBCU staff members. For example, student affairs administrators who work at HBCUs report that their work tends to be challenging, highly stressful, and slow to change. They point out that their job requires ongoing multitasking. Still, HBCU student affairs administrators have an abiding commitment to racial uplift and education of Black students, describing their work as centered on the students they serve in a very direct and personal way (Hirt et al., 2006).

Although researchers have studied HBCUs historically, students who attend HBCUs and staff who work there, have yet to consider twenty-first century contributions of HBCUs to society and the most senior campus leaders, namely university presidents. Some researchers have cited unfavorable attributes associated with HBCU leadership such as monocratic governance (ASHE Higher Education Report, 2010; Minor, 2004), while others have sought to focus on doubts about HBCUs’ presidential leadership (Gasman, Lundy-Wagner, Ransom, & Bowman, 2010) that include fiscal management (Blake, 1991); still we found no studies that examine the role of HBCUs in educating a diverse student body from the perspective of its administrative leadership—specifically college and university presidents. Further, little if any focus has been evident in the literature regarding presidential perceptions of HBCU contributions to society. Herein, this study is designed to present perceptions of HBCUs contributions by HBCU presidents. Clearly, data from these presidents about the important role that HBCUs fill in American society can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of their role. Public land-grant HBCUs,

with their long-standing commitment to public service and outreach, offer a unique setting in which to examine this topic.

Method

A constructivist qualitative approach was employed in the present study. This approach was selected on the basis of its epistemic underpinnings about the very nature of knowledge and how participants in a social setting construct multiple realities (Glesne, 2006). Its utility in investigating unexplored or *rarely* explored phenomena, its potential for building a foundation upon which future research can stand (Hill et al., 2005), and its congruent positioning with our own ethics and values as researchers in terms of how silenced people can be seen and heard without doing damage or “violence” to their authentic voice (Lincoln & Guba, 1986) also made it a logical choice for this study on HBCU presidents. Notwithstanding, much of what is known about HBCUs comes from studies of their faculty, staff, and students with little to no attention given to the perspectives of those who lead HBCUs nationally. As the senior-most executive leader on campus, their powerful influence on institutional priorities (Nichols, 2004), and their virtual absence in the present literature, HBCUs presidents were exemplary cases for participation in this study.

Participants

Participants were selected purposefully using a related sampling approach (Merriam, 1998). As Patton (1990, p. 46) aptly described, “The logic and power of purposeful sampling ... leads to selecting information-rich cases⁶ for study in depth.” Specifically, we recruited an initial pool of prospective participants through a national association for institutional leaders of land-grant universities. From the organization’s membership log, we identified all individuals who were currently presidents of public land-grant HBCUs ($N = 18$). All prospective participants were asked to participate in the study and to share their email address with the principal investigator. Six HBCU presidents agreed to participate in the study, representing 33% of the population.

Willing participants were invited, by email, to participate in a one-on-one, in-depth interview with a member of this research team. All six prospects agreed to be interviewed. Shown in the Appendix are several major demographic characteristics of the participants, all of whom are identified hereafter by a self-selected pseudonym.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth one-on-one interviews.⁷ In this study, we wanted to know what was on HBCU presidents’ minds regarding the present-day contributions and challenges of HBCUs. Interviews were conducted in a way to elicit stories from each participant about his or her experiences as the chief administrative leader on campus (Vygotsky, 1987). Interviews, on average, lasted approximately 90 minutes, although they ranged from 60 to 120 minutes across the sample. Consistent with the study’s design (Kvale, 1996), interview length varied across participants because some needed more time than others to recall their experiences as a president, to convey their feelings through spoken words, and to work through some emotions (e.g., excitement, anger) that were evoked as

⁶ Information rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research (Patton, 1990).

⁷ Interviewing is a widely-used, sound approach for eliciting information from individuals who know something from which the researcher hopes to learn (Kvale, 1996). The purpose of interviewing is to “find out what is in and on someone else’s mind” (Patton, 1990, p. 278).

they responded to our questions. In some cases, ambiguities and additional questions were resolved by follow-up correspondence or additional interviews with the participants by telephone, electronic mail, or in-person.

We employed a semi-structured interview protocol that included questions about each participant's demographic background (e.g., What is your race or ethnicity?), educational experiences (e.g., Tell me about your time in graduate school), and prior work experiences. Other questions were designed to elicit recollections of notable experiences, people, and circumstances related to their experiences as president of a public land-grant HBCU. Where necessary, follow-up probes were used to prompt reconstructions of their lived experiences (e.g., "Can you tell me about a time when ... ?").

As this qualitative study sought to understand the contributions of public land-grant HBCUs, the experiences of their presidents, and the meanings attached to such experiences, the amount of time required for serious reflection and critical analysis of data is great (Patton, 1990). Thus, all interviews were digitally recorded and professionally transcribed verbatim for subsequent analysis. Transcripts were stored electronically using *NVivo*[®], a qualitative data analysis and management software package. Storing transcripts electronically allowed the research team to retrieve data at any time to read, re-read, and read again the experiences shared by our participants.

Since we wished for our interviews to be candid, we promised our participants confidentiality, which proved to be important to several of our respondents. For example, two participants asked questions about how interviews would be transcribed, who would see the transcripts, and how they would be accessed in the future. Answering their questions, building rapport, and using pseudonyms provided by participants seemed to quell all concerns about anonymity and confidentiality (Glesne, 1989). Although pseudonyms may mask their "real" identities (Grinyer, 2002), participants will be described with "rich thick description" (Geertz, 1973); it is known as the hallmark of good qualitative research.

Data Analysis

Interview data were analyzed in three stages using the constant comparison method, as described by Strauss and his colleague (Strauss, 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). They argue that this approach is appropriate when studying new phenomena or groups where initial understanding is limited at best (e.g., we could not anticipate what presidents would say) and when analysis of previously collected data informs the development of emergent categories or codes (e.g., early on we identified the relevance of land-grant mission which lead us to a new level of coding and analysis). For the first stage, transcripts were read and re-read to generate initial categories of information or codes that represented "an initial plot of the terrain" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 69); this is known as open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) which is the process of "organizing the material into 'chunks' before bringing meaning to those chunks" (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p. 171). Second, codes were collapsed by grouping categories that seemed to relate to each other while leaving intact those that stood independent from all others. This smaller list of categories was used to generate "supercodes," or preliminary themes. In this study, 10 discrete codes were sorted and reduced to 6 supercodes or preliminary themes. Lastly, themes were compared and contrasted to understand the degree to which they were similar. Closely related themes were collapsed or renamed so that the "whole name" reflected the sum of its parts.

This iterative process was repeated until no new codes or themes were found—a point called *saturation* in the literature (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A final list of three themes was agreed upon by the researchers to represent the major findings of the study. Participants reviewed the final list of themes and were able to clarify, revise, ask questions about, and add elements, if necessary.

Trustworthiness and Quality

Several steps were taken to enhance trustworthiness and ensure quality of the data and subsequent findings in this study. Lincoln and Guba (1986) identify four measures (credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability) by which rigor and accuracy in qualitative research can be evaluated. These four metrics “replace the usual positivist criteria of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 21) used in quantitative studies. Credibility was assured through member checks, follow-up correspondence, and storage of all data sources that could be easily retrieved and (re)tested throughout the entire research process. Additionally, members of the research team discussed presuppositions, preliminary ideas, and interpretations with each other, as well as with three peer debriefers—that is, disinterested but skilled peers who were qualitative research experts and/or familiar with HBCUs.

To ensure transferability, rich thick descriptions of both institutions and participants are provided. Findings from this study will likely transfer to HBCU and/or public land-grant presidents who face similar experiences in other institutions. But ultimately, transferability is primarily the responsibility of readers (Denzin, 1989).

Finally, dependability and confirmability were ensured through audit trails conducted by members of the research team. Despite our many attempts to render findings that are credible, transferable, dependable, and trustworthy, like Henstrand (1991), we cannot promise that these findings represent anyone’s truth but our own and our best attempt to “re-present” the lived experiences of public land-grant HBCU presidents as told through their stories, vignettes, and their own voices. Indeed, participants’ perspectives have been interpreted in the section that follows and interpretation may distort their intended meaning; however, member checking should have reduced, if not eliminated, this effect (Glesne, 2006).

Findings

Three themes were identified using the constant comparison analytic process described above: (a) “The People’s University,” (b) “Serving the Underserved,” and (c) “Racial Uplift and Empowerment.” Each of these themes is discussed below, using verbatim quotes from participants to illuminate the context from which themes came, as well as to unpack the meaning and significance of each finding.

The People’s University

All public land-grant HBCU presidents in this study talked about the historic land-grant mission of their institution. Without exception, participants explained that a public land-grant HBCU serves as “the people’s university” through its outreach and public service mission. In fact, two participants who have over 30 years of work experience in higher education and have served as president at multiple public-land grant HBCUs noted that it is the outreach and public service mission of such institutions that attracts them to serve in the senior-most administrative role. Dr. Sheila, whose background is in educational leadership, remarked: “I wouldn’t be anywhere else in higher education than here. This is not my university ... it’s the people’s university. We are here to serve them.”

It is not just the mere frequency with which participants stressed the importance of the public service mission of HBCUs that deserves mention, but it is also important to note the seriousness in which they made such claims. Dr. Doug, president of a public land-grant HBCU that enrolls approximately 4,000 students shared the following, which reflects the sentiments of others:

We're not just a university, we're an HBCU; and we're not just an HBCU—we're a public land-grant. So we have a particular mission to fill here; (a) providing outreach and service to the community, (b) educating Black students and, in fact, *all* [stress added] students who come through our doors, and (c) providing low-resource communities with opportunities. This is the mission of [said university] today! We've never closed our door on anyone ... and we won't. We're probably more relevant today than we were back then for that reason.

Further analysis of the words and phrases that HBCU presidents used to describe their public mission suggests the seriousness of their declarations. Phrases ranged from “we’ve got to do it for our community” to “we’re here for the people ... period,” from “it’s our responsibility to go out and make sure that issues affecting the small farmer are addressed” to “they [the people] need us ... and we [the university] need them.”

Lastly, it was interesting to note how many HBCU presidents in this study viewed the public service aspect of their institutional mission as “equal to” that of the 1862 PWI land-grant within their state. In fact, all but one remarked that they see themselves as “the people’s university” because they are a land-grant, not because they are HBCU. Their HBCU identity, historically, defined the students that they served. As Dr. Cornel, a recently seated president, stated: “Public service and outreach should be the primary objective of any land-grant university ... HBCU, PWI, or otherwise.”

Taken together, HBCU presidents in this study stressed the importance of their institution’s outreach and public service mission as one of the main present-day contributions of HBCUs to society. Participants agreed that HBCUs provide much-needed outreach to local and/or low-resource communities, as well as public service to society through the education of historically underserved populations, service-learning, citizen-building, and environmental preservation. The gravity of participants’ words reflects the seriousness with which they take this responsibility as both HBCU and “the people’s university.” Underscoring the outreach and public service missions of HBCUs led participants to discuss in some detail how such missions were established, how they relate to other priorities on campus, and how they compare with the PWI land-grant within their state.

Serving the Underserved

All presidents in our study talked at length about the critical role that public land-grant HBCUs play in educating underserved populations, individuals who might not gain access to higher education otherwise. The following quotes reflect the sentiments of two participants:

Most of us here at [said institution] know that we are *THE* [emphasis added] university for the public. Yes, our mission is service ... and its’ outreach ... and its’ research ... but it’s also providing education to the least of these, addressing the educational needs prevalent in urban communities. (Dr. Sheila)

By state constitution we are to be an institution of first rank, which means we should have programs attracting students nationally who want to study law, physics, medicine, and so forth. But by law, we are an HBCU and therefore unapologetically devoted to providing a second chance to the underserved. (Dr. Judson)

When talking about underserved populations, participants were quick to clarify that underserved means more than Black students. For much of their history, HBCUs were the only public institutions available to these students. The following quote sums up what was shared by several others:

It was different back then. Now, we educate people from all walks of life and notably the poor, the rural, yes [Black students], but also first-generation students, international students, undocumented immigrants, and the like ... that's what [we] mean when we say underserved here.

Although serving the underserved is an important social justice goal in education, the HBCU presidents, in this study, talked at length about several challenges that they face in trying to serve underserved communities, one of which is finances (i.e., economic resources or lack thereof). Serving underserved communities is hard work, according to our participants, and it takes a lot of money. One president pointed out several areas where additional resources are sorely needed given the institution's commitment to serving "those with the least;" areas included facilities, scholarships, student support services, and even remedial or developmental education. Dr. Cornel shared the following; it demonstrates the perspectives of his peers:

We were founded to educate those who couldn't be educated elsewhere. So, now, we are an institutional reflection of the people we have historically educated. That is, we [are] committed and remain committed to educating the underserved who, on average, lack access to wealth ... I'm not talking rich. So, we too lack access to wealth and our alumni base can't do what [the PWI land-grant in his state] can do because they have cushion. It's a difficult and important, very important issue ... because, we don't have any problems that money can't solve (laughing).

Despite lack of resources, virtually all of these presidents stated that serving the underserved and maintaining "[their] contributions to the people" (i.e., the local community) must remain at the forefront of future institutional priorities. As Dr. Doug aptly said, "It's because of our commitment to the underserved ..., those with the least that we must renew our focus on societal contributions." Providing access for underserved populations ranging from racial and ethnic minorities to first-generation and/or low-income students is one way that public land-grant HBCUs fulfill their social justice mission.

Racial Uplift and Empowerment

Interestingly, presidents in our study talked about their personal desire to "give back," as well as the institution's mission to uplift local and Black communities. Two of the presidents shared comments that reflect their personal desire to "give back" to their race and/or institution as follows:

I said earlier that we don't close our doors on anyone and that's simply true ... we don't. But we have a historic obligation to give back to our community what we got from them. I wouldn't be here today if it weren't for an HBCU. So, even as president, I see my role as giving back, sowing back into the community so that someone else can benefit too. (Dr. Linda)

By renewed focus, I mean we got to fight. Fight the fight against the forces that tell us to just "go away"... forces of unenlightened self-interest. We [renew our focus] by articulating [among] ourselves, [and by] uplifting our historically Black institutions rather than tearing them down. (Dr. Doug)

Not only did participants note their desire to give back to the Black community, but a number of them noted that they chose to work at HBCUs to give back to the institution which, in several cases, was their undergraduate alma mater. For instance, two participants remarked:

Yeah, see, I'm a graduate of [said institution] ... undergraduate. I went on to a PWI for graduate school and got my doctorate there but then I was fortunate to have the opportunity to come back to [said institution], my alma mater, to be provost and now president. And it's rare that you have the chance to give back to people and a school that gave so much to you. (Dr. Cornel)

I feel like I owe a lot to [said institution] and to the people who worked here when I was a student. They invested in me and took care of me and watched out for me, like family. Now that mantle is passed on to me, even as president, to give back ... striving to make the institution not just good but excellent. (Dr. Jackie)

Despite their desires to “give back” or uplift local and Black communities, HBCU presidents with whom we spoke noted difficulty in getting alumni to do the same. Several talked about the need to develop a “culture of giving [back]” so that future alumni giving efforts can be more productive. In light of shrinking state budgets and limited federal support for higher education today, our participants stressed the importance of cultivating a culture that uplifts and empowers not only graduates of their institutions but the institutions themselves to be self-sustaining in years to come.

Discussion and Conclusion

Our purpose for this study was to describe the present-day contributions and challenges of public land-grant HBCUs, as perceived by presidents of these institutions. Findings suggest a number of important conclusions that deserve additional dialogue. First, HBCU presidents frequently referred to public land-grant HBCUs, as “the people’s universities,” reflecting their deeply ingrained public service and outreach missions. Serving the needs of the local and/or state community went beyond merely educating those who aspire to earn a college degree; it also included providing technical assistance to small and/or local businesses, addressing the needs of poor local farmers, informing citizens of voting rights and political referenda, as well as contributing to policy discussions about social issues such as economic and health disparities. While prior research has noted the public service mission of HBCUs (Brown & Davis, 2001), findings from the present study shows that the public service mission is still relevant to HBCUs today. In many ways, the mission undergirds presidents’ strategic decisions regarding what will take place on campus, how resources will be used, and how best to serve external constituents.

The second major finding stressed the critical role that public land-grant HBCUs play in educating underserved populations, typically defined by participants, as racial and ethnic minorities, economically disadvantaged individuals, rural or farm-based citizens, and often first-generation students. While much of what is written about HBCUs focuses on the experiences of Black students (e.g., Allen & Jewell, 2002; Freeman & Thomas, 2002), HBCU presidents in this study call attention to the diversity of students enrolled at their campuses and underscore the important role that their institutions play in providing access to individuals who might not access higher education otherwise. Fulfilling this social justice mission is not without problems—one of which is finances. Notably, participants candidly expressed that they are often working with very limited financial resources (i.e., shrinking budgets) while facing increased demand for higher education from Black and non-Black students who desire to attend their college. Additionally, our presidents explained that educating individuals with very few resources creates an alumni base that also has limited resources—resources that are vital to the tripartite mission of the institution to teach, conduct research, and perform public service.

Despite limited resources, HBCU presidents in the sample expressed an abiding commitment to racial uplift and empowerment. Presidents shared their commitment to advancing the Black race, by using their positions and institutions to produce strong Black leaders, educated Black youth, and individuals

who aim to change the material conditions of the race. It is also true that presidents in our study feel an obligation to “give back” to their institution, which, for a few, was their undergraduate alma mater. Devoting time and energy to their alma mater was a way of paying it forward to future generations.

In conclusion since we found very little research published about the HBCU presidency, particularly from the perspective of individuals who serve in that role, and the various factors that inspire them to assume that position, our study presents what presidents say about their roles. Moreover, it reveals that some HBCU presidents are motivated to give back to their alma mater, to uplift their race, and to empower other Blacks to make a difference. Also, a further understanding of HBCU presidents, their personal dispositions, and the ways in which they bring such skills to bear in their leadership role is recognized.

Previous researchers examined HBCU faculty members and student affairs professionals (e.g., Hirt, Strayhorn, Amelink, & Bennett, 2006). Going forward, future researchers could examine the work experiences of other HBCU administrators (e.g., chief academic officers or provosts), as a way of furthering knowledge about the administrative work-life at HBCUs. Also, a comparison of our findings to those of private HBCUs might clarify the extent to which our findings are restricted to public land-grant HBCUs only or the degree to which they can be generalized to their private counterparts. As researchers start to separate general findings from those that emerge from specific contexts, one can also begin to generate theories about HBCU leadership that might be useful in future work.

In terms of policy, presidents in our study talked about the need for additional money to support new or renovated facilities, academic advising, and student support services. These findings may be used to encourage educational policymakers, particularly those who make decisions about HBCU funding and federal programs such as TRIO⁸ to provide sufficient funds for HBCUs. Policies that support the continuation of programs that provide much-needed academic assistance to underserved students are warranted. Creating new or revising existing programs to offer support to a broader range of historically underserved students might be an appropriate next step.

We acknowledge that our sample of participants was purposefully selected and that we employed qualitative methods to unearth perspectives of these sitting HBCU presidents. Therefore, we urge caution in attempting to generalize findings from this study to the general population. Nonetheless, in our opinion, we view perspectives of these presidents as contributory to further understanding their challenges in the American system of higher education.

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⁸ TRIO refers to the three programs (Upward Bound, Talent Search, Student Support Services) originally established by the 1968 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act as a way of providing support to historically underrepresented populations (Office of Postsecondary Education, 2011).

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Appendix
Description of Sample

In this appendix we have listed the characteristics and percentages for participants in this study.

Characteristics	Percentages
Sex	
-Male	50
-Female	50
Years as President	
-Fewer than 2	33
-Two to 4 years	17
-Five or more years	50
Field of terminal degree	
-Education or related field	50
-STEM* field	33
-Business	0
-Other	17

*STEM = science, technology, engineering, and mathematics

Contributors

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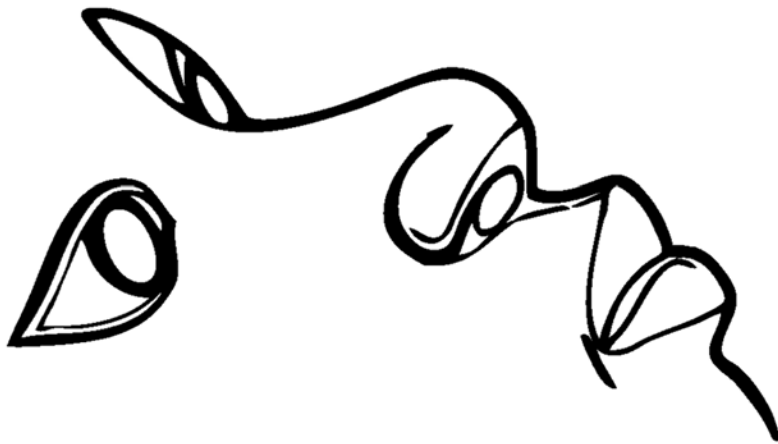
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