AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN AND THEIR PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO

ATTAINING LEADERSHIP POSITIONS: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

by

Tadzia Dennis-Jackson

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy – Higher Education Administration

University of Phoenix

August, 2018

The Dissertation Committee for Tadzia Dennis-Jackson certifies approval of the
following dissertation:

AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN AND THEIR PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO ATTAINING

LEADERSHIP POSTIONS: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

Committee:

Vicki Purslow, EdD, Chair

Thomas Mosby, PhD, Committee Member

Lequisha Brown-Joseph, PhD, Committee Member

Vicki Purslow
_____
Vicki Purslow

Thomas Mosby
_____
Thomas Mosby

Lequisha Brown-Joseph
_____
Lequisha Brown-Joseph

K. Eyle
_____
Hinrich Eylers, PhD
Vice Provost, Doctoral Studies
University of Phoenix

Date Approved: 12/5/2018 _____

ABSTRACT

The specific problem is that African American women face significant barriers that inhibit their ability to progress in their careers and obtain administrative positions in higher education institutions (Gamble & Turner, 2015). The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the perceptions held by African American women, who have attained administrative positions in higher education institutions, about the gender and race-based factors that may have inhibited their progress. The population of the study is women who are members of the African American Women in Higher Education association, who identify as African American, and have attained an administrative position in middle and upper management in higher education. Data were collected through a questionnaire of AAWHE members; an analysis of historical data gathered from websites; and interviews of a subset of the sample that will provide historical data based on African American women in higher education administration. Three themes emerged in the research study: institutional structures, personality traits, and Caucasian men as mentors. The findings will contribute to the literature regarding African American women pursuing higher education administration positions and the barriers they experience and may facilitate the reduction of barriers.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to African American women from the past, the present, and the future. The women who have slaved, toiled, and raised nations while being considered the lowest form of human being. The women who made a way for me and lost their lives supporting their families; protecting their children. To the elders who spanked neighborhoods, the mothers who prayed, and the wives who fought their protectors to maintain stability.

I dedicate this to the African American women, who like myself, sit in room's isolated and alone waiting for their chance to speak and be seen. Sitting in rooms where the side-eye is our welcome, and the assumption we couldn't know how to be a supporter and leader at the same time. To the women who speak and then are seen as angry, hateful, or a threat and our ideas shut down, only to be taken as their own.

We are the most educated population in the world. We are capable of brilliance in all aspects and are the epitome of multitasking. I dedicate this research to the African American women who paved a path with their lives, who continue to pave the way with their dignity, and who will pave the way with their knowledge.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents   Page

LIST OF TABLES

Chapter 1

Introduction

As diverse populations increase in higher education institutions, leadership has not reflected a commensurate diversification (Boun, 2014). The lack of African American women leading institutions of higher education affects the institutions opportunity to have these women as role models (Dowdy & Hamilton, 2012). Communities that connect students of color to the campus, and opinions in organizational change are also affected by the lack of African American women leaders (Dowdy & Hamilton, 2012). Female administrators of color are amazing models and are identified as exemplary additions in higher education leadership (Trotman Reid, 2012). In 2006, African Americans comprised 14% of existing university and college presidents; 4% of those were African American women (Trotman Reid, 2012, p.1). That percentage decreased to 13% by 2011, with African American women maintaining 4%. African American women are "grossly underrepresented" (Robinson, 2012, p. 13) in leadership positions within higher education.

Chapter 1 includes a background that supports the problem followed by these sections. The purpose of this study, the significance of the research, including the theoretical framework, assumptions, scope, limitations, delimitations, and definition of terms. A summary of Chapter 1 and conclusions drawn from its topics bring the start of Chapter 2.

Background

African American women possess many proven leadership qualities, but they consistently encounter obstacles in higher education pursuits including familial

obligations, gender discrimination, and the lack of career advancement opportunities (Ting, 1999). Past and present role stereotypes have helped stultify African American women's progress, as it has been traditionally accepted that their exclusive job was to take care of the family (Robinson, 2012). Additionally, administrative, individual, and political dynamics often deter African American women from achievement and success (Wilder, Bertrand Jones, & Osborne-Lampkin, 2013).

African American women are slowly attaining leadership positions in higher education institutions, but issues of discrimination, racism, and sexism continue to stifle their advancement (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). A woman's existence continues to encompass caring for the home and families, securing relationships, and fortifying households (Dowdy & Hamilton, 2012). African American women take into consideration the needs and interests of others and believe this ability can overcome any situation even movement into higher education leadership (Dowdy & Hamilton, 2012).

There remain two expectations for African American women in the higher education. The first is to turn adverse circumstances into opportunities that will work to their benefit (Dowdy & Hamilton, 2012). The second is to provide patronage to the university while ensuring they display maturity in working towards the greater good (Dowdy & Hamilton, 2012). To be successful at supporting and retaining African American women higher education institutions must find stability in communal diverseness, unparalleled efforts, monetary gain, self-regard, and unselfishness (McDonald & Associates, 2002).

Problem Statement

Diversity is growing as a progressive concept in higher education institutions gaining more popularity since the late 1970's (Harvey, 2014). Gender, sexual orientation, and ability are evolving to be more widely accepted and included in higher education (Harvey 2014). The increased acceptance of individual diversities prompts a positive approach toward acceptance, tolerance, and respect (Wolfe & Patterson Dilworth, 2015). Diversity recognition and acceptance stimulates continuous community engagement increasing societal value for all higher education stakeholders (Wolfe & Patterson Dilworth, 2015). Higher education administrators demonstrate and influence diversity (Miles, Hu, & Dotson, 2013). Although diversity has increased in higher education leadership, the pace has been slow, and programs to improve diversity have been challenged (Turner, 2013).

The general problem is that African American women holding leadership positions in higher education institutions are severely lacking in numbers (Robinson, 2012, p. 13). Senior leadership positions remain deficient of African American women regardless of the attempts made to diversify equality in terms of race and gender, in the United States (Beckwith, Carter, and Peters, 2016). Due to obstacles that include discrimination, lack of support, and segregation, African American women remain hindered from progressing to higher education leadership positions (Chaney, Davis, Edwards, Gines, & Thompson-Rogers, 2012).

The specific problem is that African American women face significant barriers that inhibit their ability to progress in their careers and obtain administrative positions in higher education institutions (Gamble & Turner, 2015). Racism is an issue African

3

American women face in higher education when, despite their training and societal standing, they are viewed as substandard, aggressive, and officious despite their training and societal standing (Wilder, Bertrand Jones, & Osborne-Lampkin, 2013). Sexism is also an issue with African American women and women of color when, regardless of their education and professional experience, they are identified as genderless, commoditized, and sexually stimulating or seen as invincible beings who are more manly than feminine (Calafell, 2012). African American women have maintained their dignity and perseverance in pursuit of higher education administrative positions despite unfriendly environments (Howard-Baptiste & Harris, 2014).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the perceptions held by African American women, who have attained middle and upper management and higher level positions in higher education institutions, about the gender and race-based factors that may have inhibited their progress. A qualitative methodology is appropriate for the study because it

> identifies a topic or question(s) of interest; collects information from a variety of sources, often as a participant observer; and accepts the analytical task as one of the discovering answers that emerge from information that is available as a result of the study. (Algozzine & Hancock, 2011, p. 12)

A case study design was appropriate for the study because it focuses on an individual representative of a group, an organization or organizations, or phenomenon (Algozzine & Hancock, 2011). The population of this study were women who are (a) members of African American Women in Higher Education, (b) identify as African

American, and (c) have attained an administrative position of dean or above in higher education. The participants were screened based on their location, age and whether or not they experienced barriers and obstacles hindering their pursuit into higher education leadership.

Significance of the Study

This case study may be significant in identifying possible hindrances that African American women face in obtaining leadership positions within higher education institutions. Women are challenged with following in the footsteps of their male colleagues, but African American women face added racial, historical, and organizational adversities that their Caucasian counterparts do not (BlackChen, 2015). This case study may help African American women, the academe, and society as a whole understand what African American women need to be successful in higher education.

This study may be significant to higher education institutions that seek to increase diversity and connectivity with their students. African American women identify with students of color as supporters helping the retention of these students (Gardner, Barrett, & Pearson, 2014). African American students, especially males, who are failing in the educational system fair better with role models, supporters, and individuals who look like them and who they can relate to (Ley & Paisley, 2004).

Significance to Leadership

There is a major gap in the presence of African American women in higher education administration with fewer than 100 African American women higher education leaders in 2010 (Gamble & Turner, 2015). Therefore, administrators and leaders of higher education institutions may use this research to better understand the barriers African

American women face. This research may lead to further suggestions on overcoming these barriers and creating leadership teams that better reflect their student populations. Additionally, higher education institutions may find this research helpful in understanding how to eliminate the barriers African American women experience, and how to better support them in their pursuit of leadership roles.

The majority of leaders in higher education do not reflect the population of the students they serve creating disconnect (Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012). Diverse leadership teams stimulate originality, problem resolution, and diverse thought (Tienda, 2013). Inclusion, diversification, and retention are all positive outcomes of having diverse leadership teams (Tienda, 2013). African American women bring much of their upbringing when they become higher education leaders offering motivation to excel, familial connection, and spiritual guidance (Gamble & Turner, 2015). However, African American women have been restricted from movement in leadership roles which has been detrimental to administrative success (Davis & Maldonado, 2015).

Significance to Society

Higher education institutions, and the African American women who serve in them, may find this study significant in context of student retention and advancement. In their traditionally supportive and nurturing roles, African American women work to help students through their educational journey, offering these students opportunities that they might not have obtained from their personal backgrounds and culture (Dowdy & Hamilton, 2012). While this type of service has often proved successful in student retention, is has been viewed as over mothering or unprofessional and discouraged from practice (Cobb-Roberts & Agosto, 2012).

Higher education institutions will find this study significant in context of societal perception as a sound institution. Excluding African American women from leadership positions and segregating their knowledge and experiences from the diversification affects all higher education stakeholders (Everett, 2014). This form of discrimination adversely affects an institution's economic, social, and just soundness as a business (Everett, 2014).

Nature of the Study

Qualitative inquiry was the best methodology for this study. In a qualitative inquiry, topics or items of curiosity are identified; information from different sources is gathered, often as a participant observer; and the logical duty is accepted as one of the discovering answers that arise from data that is available because of the study (Algozzine & Hancock, 2011). Qualitative inquiry is designed to reflect the usual, continuing context being examined. Information is often collected by participant observers, who are individuals actively involved in the context being examined (Algozzine & Hancock, 2011).

An explanatory case study was the best design for this study. The purpose of the study was to investigate the perceptions held by African American women to determine what obstacles they faced in obtaining administration positions in higher education. Case study research includes families, beliefs, government, health care, demographics, urban development, and matters related to sexual characteristics, ethnic diversity, status, and the elderly (Algozzine & Hancock, 2011). Sociological case study research is focused on civilization, communal institutions, and social relations, and is designed to review the construction, advancement, interaction, and shared behavior of systematized groups of

individuals (Algozzine & Hancock, 2011). The subjects of the study were African American women who are or were administrators in higher education. Further research will be needed to identify the specific obstacles and hindrances African American women face when working towards a leadership position in higher education. Cause and effect was the focus of this explanatory case study, as literature was reviewed and research was gathered in an attempt to understand better the obstacles and the hindrances that African American women face in their pursuit of higher education leadership positions.

<div align="center">Research Questions</div>

Two research questions guided this proposed research study.

1. How have gender- and race-based factors hindered African American women's pursuit into leadership positions in higher education?

2. Why did African American women gain leadership positions in higher education despite the barriers they possibly experienced?

<div align="center">**Theoretical Framework**</div>

Critical race theory and black feminist theory are the foundation for this qualitative case study. Critical race theory identifies the experiences of underprivileged groups in societal terms, recognizing societal constructs smaller than the greater society and underprivileged connection to power (Yancy-Tooks, 2012). Critical race theory was initially used to discuss race in law cases but has been applied to many different genres of research (University of California Los Angeles, 2009). Critical race theory can be used as a lens to view the issues, hindrances, and perceptions African American women face in their interactions, relationships, and collaborations in the larger society. CRT identifies discrimination is entrenched in the interworking's of the American culture (University of

California Los Angeles, 2009). The need to identify that racism exists, therefore, begets research under the critical race theory umbrella, it is not simply identifying how racism affects specific groups.

African American women are the underprivileged group in this study who experience a convergence of dual subjugation (Bartman, 2015). To create educational impartiality, it is essential to attend to socioeconomic variances across lines of sex, race, and culture (American Psychological Association, 2012). African American women face a number of obstacles as members of society and in higher education. Recognizing and understanding these obstacles will help all those who are underserved and disadvantaged (Yancy-Tooks, 2012). Individuals of color and women are discredited and often are not offered an opportunity for peer on peer guidance. A lack of backing is provided to these underserved populations who face race and gender issues (Yancy-Tooks, 2012, p. 32).

Black feminist theory is similar to critical race theory in that it supports the belief that racism exists in society and that underrepresented individuals are different than the majority race (Hooks, 1984). Black feminist theory developed out of contemporary feminism, which claims that assumption of society, and its efforts to attribute all women's suffering to all women, was a way to identify bias against women (Hooks, 1984). Black feminist theory is an effort to fight against societal and organizational gender and race issues (Hoffman, 2016).

The relationship of marginality between women of the majority race and African American women is very different, in that African American women had to deal with intersectionality, or the ownership of multiple diversities including gender and race (Hooks, 1984). This study attempted to investigate the perceptions held about African

9

American women and to determine what factors inhibited their ability to obtain administrative positions in higher education. The experiences of these women and how their colleagues and superiors view them may be explained through black feminist theory. In day-to-day interactions, African American women complete their main jobs while facing obstacles and hindrances that may keep them from obtaining leadership positions.

> Racist stereotypes of the strong, superhuman black woman are operative myths in the minds of many white women allowing them to ignore the extent to which black women are likely to victimize in this society, and the role white women may play in the maintenance and perpetuation of that victimization. (Hooks, 1984, p. 2)

Definition of Terms

The terms referenced and included in this document were used to increase the readers' understanding of the information presented in the context of this study.

*African American/Black Women***.** African American women are U.S.-born individuals of African descent (United States Census Bureau, 2010).

Mentor. Mentor identifies someone who supports students and colleagues with educational needs (Everett, 2014).

Assumptions

Assumptions identify what is expected to be gathered and understood from the data collected (Algozzine & Hancock, 2011). There were three assumptions in the research in this study. The first assumption was that barriers prevent or hinder African American women from obtaining leadership positions in higher education. This

assumption has been met as evidenced in the literature, which is proven through marginalization and intersectionality experienced by African American women in or pursuing higher education leadership positions (Gamble & Turner, 2015). The second assumption was that African American women are seen as supporters in their roles, but often are not considered or viewed as leaders in higher education. This assumption has been met as evidenced in the literature, which is realized by the perception of African American women as wives and matriarchs as opposed to leaders (Gamble & Turner, 2015). The third assumption was that African American women are beneficial in the leadership of higher education institutions. This assumption has been met as evidenced in the literature, which states that African American women bring about change and transformational leadership with a different point of view proving the value of diversity in higher education leadership teams (Gamble & Turner, 2015).

Scope

The population of this study was limited to African American women who hold or have held at least a .5 FTE leadership position at the dean level or higher in higher education and are members of the African American Women in Higher Education. Women who did not identify as African American were excluded from this research. The participants were screened and removed from the study if they live outside the United States. The participants were 21 years of age or older; any person 21 or younger was disqualified from the study. Data were gathered through questionnaires, a review of historical documentation, and interviews. This research excluded African American women who have not obtained a leadership position in higher education, do not hold

administrative position contracts, or are appointed to an administrative position through a teaching contract.

Limitations

This research study had five limitations. First, the number of African American women in higher education administration is lacking (Everett, 2014); therefore, the use of African American women in leadership positions in higher education limited the number of available participants. Second, time constraints with the participants' schedules presented a hindrance in data gathering. Data collection was limited to 3 months; due to the work expectations and work schedules of administrators in higher education, data collection time of 3 months was insufficient.

Third, study participants were reluctant or unwilling to share information. The information gathered in this research study was hard to discuss or uncomfortable depending on the situations these women encountered. Fourth, the study was limited in its generalizability because the population was restricted to members of African American Women in Higher Education. Generalizability may cause difficulty in connecting with groups outside of this population (Graham, 2015). A fifth limitation was the lack of barriers experienced by the survey participants. If the survey participants experienced no barriers in the process of becoming administrators in higher education, then they were offered an opportunity to share how they gained a position in higher education administration.

Delimitations

This research study had one delimitation. The delimitation was the participants. The participants were American Women in Higher Education, identified as African American, and had attained an administrative position of dean or above in higher education. These women provided information from their experiences, which were relevant to African American women in other professions.

Summary

African American women are tremendously underrepresented (Robinson, 2012) in higher education leadership positions. The purpose of the qualitative case study was to investigate the perceptions held by African American women in higher education leadership positions to identify factors that may have been barriers to obtaining their positions. Understanding the barriers that hinder African American women from obtaining leadership positions in higher education lead to the creation of solutions that increase diversity.

Chapter 2 contains a review of current and past literature that exemplifies the hindrances African American women have faced in their pursuit of leadership positions in higher education. The chapter contains specific information on the barriers women face in higher education administration. An examination of the current trends related to the barriers African American women face in higher education administration appear in Chapter 2. The review of literature includes a historical background and synthesis of the literature.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The literature review is an analysis of the content available on the current state of African American women in higher education leadership and the barriers that they face. These barriers may be possible reasons that could explain why African American women in leadership positions in higher education are severely under represented (Robinson, 2012, p.13). Senior leadership positions remain deficient of African American women regardless of the attempts made to diversify equality in terms of race and gender, in the United States (Beckwith, Carter, and Peters, 2016). Chapter 2 begins with the documentation section that includes information on references and resources used. The chapter includes background information on barriers facing women in general and African American women in higher education leadership specifically. A synthesis of the literature, conclusion, and summary end the chapter.

Documentation

The information found in this literature review was gathered using online resources and databases including EBSCOhost, ERIC, ProQuest, and Google Scholar. The following search terms were used in the research process: African American women in higher education, African American leadership in higher education, higher education and African Americans, higher education leadership and African Americans, barriers to African American women in higher education leadership, barriers to women in higher education leadership, black women in higher education, black women in higher education administration, black women in higher education leadership, black women leaders in higher education, black women administrators in higher education, higher education

14

administration and black women, diversity in higher education administration, diversity in higher education leadership, higher education value in diverse teams, higher education value for diverse teams and value diverse teams. Over 1,088,493 journal articles, books, dissertations, wire feeds, and national reports were identified using the search terms. The literature review comprises forty journal articles, four books, and three national reports. Articles, statistics, and relevant information were obtained from various industry websites, including the White House Project, National Center for Education Statistics, United States Department of Education, Ohio State University, and The Association for the Study of Higher Education.

Historical Background

Women in academia have often faced issues with career advancement (Everett, 2014). One of these issues is the glass ceiling effect or the experience many women have at being excluded from higher or desired ranks (Walker, 2015). "The under-representation of women in positions of senior management within educational institutions continues to be a matter of some concern, particularly of the teaching force is largely dominated, nationally and internationally, by women" (Cubillo & Brown, 2003, p. 278).

The pool of adjunct faculty is made up of African American women at 48%, of which only 11% are acting in full-time professorship roles (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007). Only 6% of African American women who work in higher education degree-granting institutions hold leadership positions (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007). A growing trend in higher education institutions is hiring African American women to staff positions as coordinators; advisors; and another student, faculty, staff, and administrative support roles. Women earned 51% of all doctoral degrees

conferred in 2007 and 2008, compared to 42% a decade earlier (Schneider, Carden, Francisco, & Jones, 2011). In 2014, African American women obtained 98,000 doctoral degrees out of the 4,124,000 conferred to women (Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2016). Fewer than 3% of African American women have earned a doctoral degree, thereby limiting the number of African American women eligible to hold leadership positions in most colleges and universities (United States Census Bureau, 2014).

Where women do find advancement opportunities, they also face different hindrances. Women face sexism, hatred, and prejudice that specifically stem from traditionally held views of the woman's role in the family and presumed expectations surrounding familial needs. The challenge for higher education institutions is to help women by incorporating their families (Gumport, 2007). Females from all different backgrounds have faced some of the same obstacles of social exclusion and judgement (Robinson, 2012).

Women of color have experienced additional challenges at gaining meaningful employment within higher education (Cobb-Roberts, 2012). These women not only endure the sexism that Caucasian women experience, but they also face racism (Everett, 2014). Women of color are often depicted as the "modern mammy" (Seo & Hinton, 2009, p. 204), or people who are great as nurturers and supporters but lack the ability to lead. Therefore, many individuals in higher education propagate false stereotypes and assumptions that view women of color as incompetent and inadequate for leadership roles. (Seo & Hinton, 2009).

Cultural norms and beliefs perpetuated during the formative years may also be factors that hinder African American women from advancement into higher education

leadership positions. African American women grew up with images of slaves, maids, and housekeepers that may have, consequently, influenced their image of self. Women of color are presumed incompetent and not considered as viable leaders, professors, and participants in higher education (Gutiérrez y Muhs, Flores Niemann, González, & Harris, 2012). This presumed incompetence, coupled with low self-efficacy and familial influence, can render an African American woman nearly helpless in changing the false perceptions of her in the higher education, particularly as only a supporter.

There has been an influx of African American students in higher education since 2007 (Robinson, 2012). African American women earned almost 6% of bachelor's and master's degrees, and over 3% of doctoral degrees (Robinson, 2012). In the latter part of 2013, African Americans comprised 13.4% of the entire population of students at higher education institutions receiving Title IV funding (Black Enrollments in Higher Education Continue to Decline, 2014). This increase in African American students brings about a need for African American women in positions of leadership who will serve as guides, mentors, even role models. They will also help train the next group of supports as higher education institutions prepare for the increase in African American student enrollments. African American women in leadership can diversify, forecast, and guide institutions of higher education in multicultural environments of readiness for the global marketplace.

The absence of guidance, mentorship, and assistance by key people at an institution hinders women and those who identify with underrepresented groups from gaining leadership roles (Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995). Higher education institutions tend to ignore the needs of women and underrepresented groups, deny issues of safety, and provide them with less than adequate resources to do their jobs. Academics

illustrate that faculty of color stand as foreigners in the historical and administrative arena of higher education (Collins, 2000). African American women are least likely to be selected as administrators or included on decision-making teams; they are most likely to leave professorships due to lack of peer support and opportunities for tenure and advancement (Robinson, 2012).

African American women are torn between their responsibilities at home and their careers (Crocco & Waite, 2007). These concerns may also be a catalyst for adopting poor examples of those in positions they desire to obtain, neglecting ethical considerations and adopting attitudes of harshness, meanness, and intimidation. Taking this a step further women in both the business world and the higher education are often viewed as sex beings who have to conform in some sexual manner (Penny & Gaillard, 2006). Currently, African American women have to be militaristic, driven, and rigid to be successful at joining the male-dominated system. African American women face issues just as Caucasian women; however, they face intersectionality, negative images, and unwelcoming environments that affect their day-to-day activities, attention, and focus. The conversations about race, culture, and ethnicity in leadership are continuous. Diversity is identified as a significant opportunity for leaders, but the change in the identity of those leaders has yet to show significant growth.

Current Findings

Two thematic areas comprise the review of current literature. First, research about the barriers facing women from attaining higher education administrative positions is reviewed. Second, the barriers unique to African American women seeking administration positions will be explored. These two thematic areas provide research on the barriers and

obstacles women, and African American woman face in their pursuit of higher education administrative positions.

Barriers Facing Women to Attaining Higher Education Administration Positions

The purpose of a qualitative research study completed by Nakitende (2012) was to recognize the attributes women displayed as they pursued leadership positions in higher education. This phenomenological study involved 11 participants who were senior/executive-level employees at higher education institutions and who shared their experiences as they advanced into their leadership roles. The researcher interviewed and observed these women in interviews to triangulate the data for this study.

The researcher identified a trend of positive attributes associated with the success of women in higher education leadership (Nakitende, 2012). Recognizing positive attributes that women display, including drive and focus, helps to understand their desire to obtain leadership roles in higher education and the intrinsic values that continue to move them forward against any barriers they face. Positive attributes can be armaments against the obstacles women face in their pursuit of leadership positions in higher education. While presenting information suggesting positive attributes that accompany women as they move into leadership positions in higher education, the researcher also briefly acknowledged common barriers they face in the process. Women face barriers that affect their movement into higher education including career accountabilities, and familial concerns (Nakitende, 2012). Further research on the barriers that women face in their pursuits of leadership roles can also be used to identify positive attributes common to these women, as identified in Nakitende' s study. Nakitende identified several positive attributes women have that assist in overcoming the barriers to higher education

leadership. Ramirez expands the findings of Nakitende, exploring barriers that affect the career ladder climb of African American women in higher education

The quantitative research study completed by Ramirez (2012) was designed to review the obstacles that affect women leaders in higher education. The study was limited to women at four public institutions in Texas, and the researcher used a cross-sectional survey approach to identify the experiences of these women. The independent variable is university type, and the dependent variables are highest degree and familial values, including marital status and children. The researcher surveyed 288 women leaders in higher education to complete this study.

A strength of this research is the data gathered to support the slowly growing trend of women gaining higher education administrative positions (Ramirez, 2012). The researcher acknowledged that despite the upward movement for these women, there is still a discrepancy between women and men in leadership roles. This research might be important to researchers seeking data on the lack of women in leadership positions in higher education. The participants' experiences, as far as their pursuit of leadership roles occurred several decades ago and may have been influenced by factors that are currently less relevant. Issues such as generation, family size, and age could have built a better foundation for the transferability of this research. A weakness of this research is the use of women who are already leaders in higher education administration and not those who are working to become leaders (Ramirez, 2012). Ramirez researched barriers women face in their pursuit of leadership in higher education; Lee (2015) goes on to discuss the barrier motherhood may play on women's pursuit of higher education administrative positions.

The purpose of the qualitative research study completed by Lee (2015) was to review the impact that motherhood played on women who pursued and obtained leadership positions in higher education. This naturalistic study included the experiences of women in higher education, and the effect motherhood had on their journey into higher education leadership. The researcher gathered data by holding interviews of 5 women who hold senior-level roles in higher education to gather the data (Lee, 2015).

A strength of this study was the opportunity for the researcher to identify how motherhood affects women and their pursuit to higher education leadership (Lee, 2015). It is the researcher's opinion, from the data gathered, that motherhood is a typical component in the lives of women that should not hinder their opportunities at becoming leaders in higher education (Lee, 2015). The researcher presents information that supports the notion of women as mothers, pursuers of leadership positions, and future leaders in higher education. A weakness of this qualitative study is the naturalistic design (Lee, 2015). The naturalistic design allows the researcher's personal beliefs to be a driving factor in the research and involves seeing participants through the researcher's eyes, not through research data analysis (Lee, 2015). This study heavily incorporated the researcher's perceptions, which can lead to a possible lack of credibility depending on what the researcher believes and a potential lack of transferability based on that belief. Lee discussed how motherhood is a possible barrier to women obtaining leadership positions in higher education. Jarmon (2014) discusses women who overcame barriers and who were the first to obtain leadership opportunities at some higher education institutions.

The purpose of the qualitative research study completed by Jarmon (2014) was to gather data on the experiences of women who became the first women to hold senior-level

positions in higher education previously held only by men, otherwise termed the glass-ceiling barrier. In this phenomenological study, the researcher gathered data through interviews conducted with seven women in administrative positions at higher education organizations in the Midwest who had experienced and overcame the glass-ceiling barrier.

The strength of this study is the researcher's identification of resources the participants utilized to help overcome the glass ceiling barrier. This information could assist other women who are pursuing higher education leadership positions. The more research in the field containing data on tools and resources women can use to overcome the glass ceiling barrier, the more opportunity there may be for attaining gender equality in higher education. A weakness of the study is the use of the glass-ceiling barrier as the primary obstacle women face when pursuing higher education administrative positions (Jarmon, 2014). The glass ceiling barrier is an object of perception and can be viewed differently depending on who is experiencing and viewing it. While the glass ceiling barrier might be one obstacle women perceive to be keeping them from advancement, there are other issues based on race, gender, and prejudice to consider. Similar to the study by Jarmon, Cselenszky (2012) continues to explore how a woman's education and experience affects her pursuit of higher education leadership.

The purpose of the research study completed by Cselenszky (2012) was to gather information on the obstacles women leaders faced in their pursuit of higher education administration positions. In this qualitative phenomenological research study, the researcher set out to define and comprehend what these women leaders experienced in the process of becoming higher education administrators. The researcher gathered data by interviewing eight senior-level women leaders in higher education.

A strength of this research is the participants' education and experience. The researcher only interviewed women who hold doctoral degrees, as this is the standard requirement for a leadership position in a higher educator. The researcher increases the dependability and confirmability of the data by using women who meet the educational criteria for their roles and established in their positions. A weakness of this study was the participant size. The researcher utilized data collected from eight women who hold leadership positions in higher education (Cselenszky, 2012). Effective qualitative research requires the researcher to use a participant size that will generate enough data that can be used to observe a reasonable picture of the problem and identify themes for improvements in the field. The opportunities for change, adjustment, and growth may not emerge with the use of eight participants. Cselenszky discussed education and experience as assists to women working towards leadership positions in higher education. Kern (2015) continued to discuss what women in higher education leadership positions experience once in those roles.

The purpose of the research study completed by Kern (2015) was to obtain information on the experiences of women leaders in higher education to share with women who are seeking to advance their careers into higher education leadership roles. This mixed methods study involved sequential and explanatory methods to identify the experiences these women faced in their pursuit of higher education administrative positions. The researcher interviewed and surveyed 23 women in senior-level positions from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) with student populations of less than 3,000 students (Kern, 2015).

A strength of this study was the use of mixed method methodology. The use of mixed methods allowed the researcher to present initial information on the lived experiences of the participants. The qualitative portion of the study allowed for the researcher to present the specifics of the participants lived experiences gathering key data and information. This form of research design increased the credibility and dependability of the research data. A weakness of this study was the researcher's focus on mentoring (Kern, 2015). Mentoring is an opportunity for women in higher education to teach and support other women in their pursuits in higher education. Creating a study based on the success of mentoring can be difficult, as the level of mentoring can be different depending on the mentor and the mentee. The measurement of mentoring success can be difficult to quantify depending on the historical foundation and experiences of the mentor. Similar to the study by Kern, Diehl (2014) discussed women in higher education administration and the obstacles they faced and overcame in their pursuit,

In 2014 Diehl published a qualitative study in which she interviewed 26 women in higher education administration to better understand the obstacles women as administrators in higher education face in their pursuit of leadership positions. Using a naturalistic inquiry method, Diehl was able to both identify specific obstacles common to these women and explore the psychology of how these women made sense of the obstacles they faced.

A strength of this study was the use of a naturalistic research design (Diehl, 2014). This design method gives the researcher an opportunity to receive organic data that do not need to meet any preconceived expectations. This design method presents an opportunity for the researcher to gather raw data from the participants' lived experiences without

24

conforming the data to themes and specific parameters. A weakness of this study is the use of women from the mid-Atlantic region of the United States (Diehl, 2014). These women may or may not live in this region; therefore, their experiences and outlook may be different from others outside the region. Introducing lived experience data of participants with similar demographics from a different region might skew the results of the data, thus limiting the data's credibility.

The purpose of the research study completed by Costello (2015) was to identify how gender and the structures of higher education institutions affected women as they pursue leadership positions. This qualitative study gathered data from women on lower levels in staff positions who were interested and worked towards administrative positions in higher education. This phenomenological study included 20 women who worked in staff and professional positions. The researcher interviewed these women by telephone and email to gather the information on their experiences.

A strength of this study is the intent to identify organizational influences that encourage or discourage advancement of professional and women holding classified staff positions in higher education. The data from this research can be used to identify obstacles women face in their pursuit of higher education leadership roles. Researchers might be able to use the data to examine further the obstacles these women face and identify opportunities for higher education institutions to increase their promotion efforts. A weakness of this study was the use of classified and professional staff (Costello, 2015). Classified staff who may be interested in the pursuit of leadership positions hold a different point of view on advancing into leadership roles. Women who have achieved leadership roles may have advanced from faculty positions without holding a classified

25

staff position. The different experiences and barriers professional and classified staff encounter might decrease the confirmability of this research.

Hankinson (2013) conducted a qualitative research study on the experiences of professional women who held middle-management positions. The researcher interviewed women who were a part of the "Management and Leadership in Education (MLE) Institute at Harvard University from 2010 to the present and attendees of the Office of Women in Higher Education (OWHE) national and regional leadership forums from 2009 to the present" (Hankinson, 2013, p. 81). From the data gathered in this phenomenological study, the researcher gained insight into the experiences of women who had achieved management positions to understand their point of view on their work and life experiences (Hankinson, 2013).

The strength of this study is the use of middle managers in higher education. Women in middle-management roles provide a perspective from the process of progressing into leadership positions in higher education. They have overcome the obstacle of being considered classified staff but have yet to reach the ranks of an administrator. This perspective is one of progression and may be helpful in identifying means to overcome obstacles. A weakness of this study is the researcher's focus on themes that emerged from the data. Using a phenomenological design allows the researcher an opportunity to discover more about a specific time in the lives and experiences of the participants. Thematic analysis supports the findings of themes that emerge due to participants' experiences. The researcher refers to themes identifying that thematic analysis would have been a better research design for this study.

The purpose of the qualitative research study completed by Lewis (2012) was to gain a better understanding of the literature available on gender effects in higher education leadership. The researcher utilized textbooks to create the study with the goal to uncover the bias experienced by women within higher education working with female and male leaders. Content analysis was the design used by the researcher, who utilized 33 textbooks on higher education leadership to gather data for this study (Lewis, 2012).

A strength of this research study was the use of leadership textbooks to identify gender biases women experience in higher education administration (Lewis, 2012). Textbooks contain background information that offers historical data that can display years of gender inequality in higher education leadership. Textbooks present reliable and credible data for use in studies. A weakness of this study is the male perspective from the data presented in the textbooks (Lewis, 2012). The experiences of men and their pursuit of higher education may provide a different perspective than that of women and is not relevant to the focus of Lewis' study. The male perspective might be a catalyst to the hindrances women face. The perspectives of these individuals might benefit a study based on each gender separately.

Barriers Unique to African American Women Seeking Administrative Positions

The purpose of the research study completed by Bennett (2013) was to identify the opportunities that may assist, hinder, or dishearten the journey African American women take to becoming leaders in higher education. The researcher used a qualitative method to present positive and negative experiences that African American women face in their pursuit of administration roles in higher education, specifically presidency positions. This phenomenological study included 30 African American women who were currently

27

holding, or have held, the office of president and other high-level administrator positions (Bennett, 2013).

The researcher used several different survey tools gathering data from various groups of participants. The researcher interviewed African American women who currently held, and who were aspiring to hold, leadership positions in higher education (Bennett, 2013). The researcher created a survey tool to gather data from the participants. In the process of creating the tool, the researcher asked the study participants how they felt about the research questions, time to complete, and if they had any questions to add. The participants had direct input on the survey before they completed it. The survey, therefore, could have been infused with the participant's personal and professional biases before commenting on the survey questions. The use of the study participants in the creation of the survey tool could cause question as to the dependability of the research.

Miles (2012) completed a quantitative research study where she examined the experiences of African American women and the heights they reach in leadership positions in higher education administration. This study included 642 participants identified through the use of the National Organization for Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (Miles, 2012). The researcher used surveys to collect data to identify possible marginalization and other barriers African American women face in their pursuit of administrative positions in higher education.

The independent variables included degrees earned, gender, race, and social support, which the researcher used to understand the dependent variable of professional success (Miles, 2012). The researcher provided independent variables that can be used to identify barriers that hindered the professional success of African American women in

higher education leadership. Participants in this study were men and women who were

White and Black (Miles, 2012). The researcher then limited the pool to White and Black

women. The weakness of Miles' study is the study's title *Left behind: The status of black*

women in higher education, which infers that the study is solely about the status of Black

women. This might mislead or confuse the reader, because the study focused on status

data from both Black and White women. In her phenomenological case study Davis

(2012) presented intersectionality as a possible hindrance to African American women in

their process of becoming leaders in higher education administration. Race and gender are

the identifiers Davis (2012) used in this phenomenological case study to determine

barriers that affect African American women. Eight African American women were

interviewed using semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions to identify themes

in the research.

The researcher included thematic analysis in her research to identify themes that

emerged from the participants experiences (Davis, 2012). Thematic analysis offered a

second level of credibility and transferability to the work by identifying themes based on

the participants' experiences. Davis included business participants as a part of the study,

which diluted the information presented about higher education. The theme of the

research, intersectionality, is viable and one that greatly affects African American women

in higher education. The focus of this research would have been better served as a

presentation solely based on the experiences of African American women in higher

education.

The ethnographic case study by Stewart (2012) presented information on the

perception of African American women's progress on the path to leadership positions in

higher education and business. This ethnographic case study presented barriers that

offered views surrounding the efforts of African American women as they pursued

leadership positions in the higher education and the corporate world. The researcher

interviewed thirty-six African American women to discover and investigate the barriers

they faced in their pursuit of higher education leadership positions.

A strength of this study was Stewarts' completion of field test before sending out

the survey mechanism to the research study participants (Stewart, 2012). The field-tested

survey established the efficacy of the survey tool to ensure it would provide the desired

results. A field test of the completed survey was administered to establish feasibility and

confirmability of the research findings. A weakness of the research was that it did not

adequately compare the experiences in the field of education with those in the field of

business. These experiences can vary, therefore, making the research less viable and

relevant to one field or the other. The researcher may have found focusing on one field of

employment to provide more persistent data.

In the qualitative research study by Hoertz (2013), stereotypes were identified as a

possible catalyst for hindrance to African American women in pursuit of leadership

positions in higher education. This multiple-case study included information gathered

from three African American women who commented on stereotypes as a hindrance to

their career pursuits. These three women were interviewed using semi-structured

interviews identifying themes surrounding stereotyping (Hoertz, 2013).

A strength of this study was the researcher's use of stereotypes as a barrier to

African American women who worked toward obtaining administrative positions in

higher education (Hoertz, 2013). The researcher presented stereotyping as impactful to

African American women and explained how the stereotypes were utilized to affect the advancement of these women into leadership roles (Hoertz, 2013). As a subordinate group that is negatively affected by stereotypes, African American women will interpret feedback received from any group as negative (Biernat & Danaher, 2012), thus affecting their view of themselves and their potential advancement into higher education administration. . A transferable and dependable qualitative research study depends on a wealth of data. While the basis of this qualitative research study was to engage participants in sharing their experiences from a sociological perspective, the weakness was that the researcher gathered information from only three participants. A study of Hoertz's size generates too little information on the phenomenon to be viable on a large scale.

African American women at North Carolina community colleges were the focus of a research study by Blumell (2015). The interpretive qualitative research design was the basis for this research, as data collected was from the experiences of these women and the environment they face as faculty. Blumells' data was collected from 10 African American women, 31 to 55 years of age, who work as leaders in their community college system.

A strength of this research was the use of semi-structured interviews to gather data from 10 African American women (Blumell, 2015). By using semi-structured interviews, the researcher was able to gather complete data at one time using a list of guided questions (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). The use of interviews that were semi-structured also provided the researcher an opportunity to ask additional questions or progress the interview in a way that was conducive to the information received from the participant (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). A weakness of this research was the use of qualitative interpretive design and the small sample size used to gather data. Ten women provide enough information to

gather thoughts around possible themes shared from their experiences. Data from ten women, however, is not sufficient to complete a thorough qualitative study.

Martin (2013) presented the role of African American women in leadership at higher education institutions in this qualitative research study. In this study, Martin focused on the influence and effect African American women have on other women as they pursued leadership positions in higher education (2013). A single case was the design of this study, as 11 African American women ranging from students to leaders were verified, selected, and interviewed.

A strength of this research study was that it utilized a new approach to barriers African American women face in becoming higher education administrators (Martin, 2013). The researcher examined the leadership style of the participants and hypothesized that this leadership style is rare in most higher education institutions. Leadership style may be a contributing factor to the underrepresentation of African American women in higher education leadership. This type of research may help researchers better understand why African American women are not prevalent in higher education administration. A weakness of this study was the use of participants who had an established relationship with the researcher. The researcher identified the participants as family members, coworkers, employees, and pupils (Martin, 2013). Family members and close associates to the researcher may be easily identifiable, which puts their identities in jeopardy.

Diversity in the form of race at community colleges was the focus of the research from Williams (2013). This qualitative study used 10 participants who were African American women and either administrator, managers, or previous leaders in Northern California community colleges (Williams, 2013). The African American women provided

data and shared their experiences through semi-structured interviews. The researcher who completed this study worked to identify the struggles African American women face in the pursuit of higher education leadership based in rural area schools offering 2-year degrees (Williams, 2013). Female African American administrators who live in remote locations was a focus of this study, providing information rarely included in studies about the experiences of these women. A weakness of this research is the neglect in identifying the research design used. This study used a qualitative methodology (Williams, 2013) and is a justified means to gather data the researcher was looking for; however, no specified design was utilized to delineate the research from basic qualitative to a richer methodology and design. Identifying the research design helps the researcher understand the intent of the research and the problem the research is intended to address.

In a study on mentorship, Walker (2016) examined mentoring and its effects on African American women in the process of obtaining a faculty or leadership position in higher education. By utilizing participants mentored within the past 6 months of the study, the research was purposeful in identifying a specific opportunity for African American women pursuing higher education administrative positions. The participants were African American women who currently or previously held higher education faculty or administrative positions, and who resided in Maryland, Virginia, and Texas. Twelve women were surveyed using semi-structured interviews conducted through a conference call (Walker, 2016).

This research study was created to identify the techniques specific to mentoring that were helpful to African American women in their pursuit of higher education administration roles. The researcher added to the current body of research on mentoring

by examining specific techniques used with the participants in their mentoring process. The researcher identified sponsorship, a personal relationship, and education policies as key parts of the mentoring process that were beneficial to the participants (Walker, 2016). This research study focused on mentoring effects that could assist the advancement of African American women in higher education leadership positions (Walker, 2016). While mentoring has a positive connotation and does supply some benefits, some obstacles can hinder African American women in their pursuit of a leadership position in higher education. This research is very specific and possibly misses other opportunities for research. Adedokun (2014) discusses opportunities for African American women and the leadership traits that they bring to the field of higher education.

The purpose of Adedokun's (2014) qualitative study was to gain a view into the lives of African American women faculty administrators in higher education and the relationship of "career mentoring, leadership behaviors, and career success" (Adedokun, 2014, p. 8). The researcher worked to identify if mentoring was a catalyst for success or failure in the pursuit of a role in higher education. "The data were collected by survey using three different techniques: Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5X (Short), Mentoring Functions Questionnaire (MFQ-9), and the Job in General (JIG) survey" (Adedokun, 2014, p. 46). The 99-member participant pool comprised African American women in higher education administration positions from the Pennsylvania Black College Conference.

This research was focused specifically on mentoring and African American women. The researcher identified a large pool of applicants to gain information on how mentoring affects the management actions and professional achievement of African

American women (Adedokun, 2014). The participants studied from the large pool of applicants offered sufficient data in the experiences of African American women and mentoring. The researcher used career success as a dependent variable. Career success is subjective and used to identify a relationship between mentoring and job fulfillment (Adedokun, 2014). The use of opinion may skew data causing issues with the validity and reliability of the research. The research on religious effects by Alexander-Lee (2014) contains information on how religion may positively assist African American women with their pursuit of higher education administration roles.

Alexander-Lee (2014) studied the effects of religion on African American women administrators in higher education. The researcher worked to understand if religion was an assist to these women in overcoming obstacles while being leaders in higher education. The participants of this study offered information on their experiences, including their education and background, about their obtaining administrative positions in higher education. Five senior-level African American leaders in higher education were interviewed using semi-structured interviews to complete this multiple case study.

The strength of the study was identifying the place of spirituality in the progression of African American women in attaining senior leadership positions in higher education (Alexander-Lee, 2014). The researcher identified a specific area in the journey of senior leadership that may assist African American women, or any women, who are working to obtain a senior leadership position in higher education. The research study was very specific to women in senior level administrative positions in higher education (Alexander-Lee, 2014). This population of African American women in higher education is very scarce; therefore, the population size is extremely small and hard to identify for research

purposes. Qualitative study population sizes have a tendency to be small, but to ensure the validity and reliability of the research, the researcher may need to expand the study to include additional participants (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013). The number of participants in this research study was five. Jordon's (2014) research examines strategies African American women use to address the obstacles they face in higher education leadership.

The purpose of Jordon's (2014) qualitative research study was to identify experiences of African American women at 2- and 4-year colleges who hold leadership positions in higher education and the strategies they used to get there. The participants' preparation for their career, as well as their growth as leaders, identified how they overcame obstacles that hindered their path to administrative positions in higher education. Data for this ethnographic case study were collected from 10 selected participants using in-depth face-to-face interviews (Jordon, 2014). The participants were African American women in senior-level higher education administrative positions at 2- and 4-year colleges and universities.

The researcher completed face-to-face interviews to gather the research. This approach to gathering data is helpful in making a connection between the researcher and the participants. The researcher is better able to observe facial expressions, physical behaviors, and emotions missed in other data gathering techniques (Snap Survey, 2014). The success, validity, and reliability of face-to-face interviews, and the data gathered depends on how well the interviewer can disconnect from his or her personal biases. Munden's (2015) study further examines the obstacles African American women

administrators face, and have faced, in their pursuit of administrative positions in higher education.

The purpose of Munden's (2015) qualitative research study was to examine further the obstacles and experiences of African American women administrators and the issues they face as leaders. Six African American women participated in this study to help identify the challenges they faced when developing their organizational leadership strategies in their positions as leaders. The data gathered from these mid-level administrators yielded between 6 and 15 years of experiences. In this phonological study, the researcher utilized pre-researched documentation and observation to gather data.

The researcher established rapport with the participants before the study (Munden, 2015), talking with them through various communication methods. The researcher gained insight into the environment, colleagues, and prior activities that would influence the research study by using rapport (Munden, 2015). This method of gathering information and making a connection with the participants helps with the reliability and validity of the research (Creswell, 2009). The completion of this research was with participants from various schools of higher education. The research was general in its findings and, therefore, not specific to one classification of higher education institution (Munden, 2015). The participants may have different experiences and biases based on the type of institution they are from, reducing the transferability of the research.

The purpose of the Mays (2013) study was to comprehend what African American women dealt with in their journey to becoming higher education administrators, and what they experienced while in their administrative positions. The research specifically examined the overall expertise, influence, and accountability (Mays, 2013, p. 4) about the

experiences of these women. Narrative inquiry was the research design for this qualitative study that gathered research from five participants. Data gathered by interview using questionnaires with open-ended questions (Mays, 2013).

The researcher used participants with very specific demographics. The researcher went to great lengths to identify women who were a specific race, age, marital status, education level; first generation students in Missouri; and working in higher education (Mays, 2013). The specific identification of these participants helps the credibility and dependability of the research. The researcher used the names of gems as pseudonyms for each participant. These pseudonyms were used to ensure the participants' anonymity was upheld (Mays, 2013). The use of gem names as pseudonyms may cause some confusion when reading and understand the research. The researcher could have identified her participants in a more scholarly way, possibly using numbers or coded titles.

The purpose of the Dowdy and Hamilton (2012) qualitative case study was to emphasize the experiences of a particular Black woman scholar as a chairperson and the learning she achieved during her journey. The study included the thoughts, opinions, and experiences of a Black woman who achieved a leadership position in a major, predominantly White, university that had never been occupied by an African American female. The research includes the participant's responses gathered by interview and video recording and included communication with the participant's mentors by interview and one by video recording. The participant had become the chair of an academic department that had never before held an African American female in that role in the university's 100 years of existence (Dowdy & Hamilton, 2012).

A strength of this research study included information on the researchers' biases and her connection to the subject. The researcher identified that she is an "immigrant to this country from Trinidad and Tobago" (Dowdy & Hamilton, 2012, p. 195) working to comprehend the survived experiences of African American women in administration in higher education (Dowdy & Hamilton, 2012). Sharing this information with the reader allowed an opportunity for the researcher to build credibility and validity in her work. This research study was original in that there was one respondent. The basis of this study was from the perspective and experiences of one person with supporting information from her mentors. This study would have been more informative and forward thinking if it had involved multiple participants. Gardner's, Barrett's, and Pearson's (2014) research focused on the experiences of African American women in student affairs at predominately-White institutions.

In their qualitative research study, Gardner, Barrett and Pearson (2014) explored the real-life views of Black women in student affairs at predominately-White institutions of higher education. The research was completed to identify the obstacles to the success of Black women at the specific institutions. The participants of this study were Black women and men who are administrators at higher education institution campuses comprising predominately White students, faculty, and staff (Gardner et al.2014). This phenomenological study included 14 participants whose career experiences varied from 5 to 27 years.

The researcher of this study utilized men and women to gain insight into the barriers to career success for African American individuals (Gardner et al., 2014). This research can be used to gain insight into what Black women and men face at

predominately White institutions (Gardner et al., 2014), offering these higher education institutions an opportunity for further research and discussions. The identification of barriers by men and women recognize a need for change. The researchers of this study applied consensual qualitative research theory to their research, which provided a constructivist approach (Gardner et al., 2014). The researchers acknowledged that this approach had not been previously used to study Black administrators in higher education at predominately White institutions (Gardner et al., 2014). The use of a new approach for this type of study could be misleading and cause misunderstanding, thus making it less credible. McManus (2013) turned her research toward African American women in specialty higher education institutions.

The purpose of the McManus qualitative study was to explore the views of African American women administrators working in Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the southwest region of the United States (2013). The research design of this study was a constructionist grounded theory. The researcher identified 30 participants utilizing 4 participants for the study (McManus, 2013). The participants were all education executives who held masters and doctoral degrees and employed in their current position for last least 3 years. The participants were surveyed using Skype or telephone, which provided the researcher with data that identified the perceptions of African American women in higher education leadership.

A strength of this study was in its pool of participants. The pool of 30 women participants provided a good foundation for a qualitative study. This pool of women identified the low numbers of African American women who are in higher education administration even at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (McManus, 2013).

A weakness of this research is that from a pool of 30 possible participants, only 4 were willing to participate. Scheduling conflicts, the sensitivity and controversy surrounding the topic, and a small number of African American women in higher education administration made the participant pool minuscule (McManus, 2013). Graham (2015) identified the challenges African American women face at community colleges.

The purpose of this qualitative research study completed by Graham (2015) was to identify the obstacles and perseverance techniques utilized by African American women in leadership positions at community colleges in Illinois. This research reviewed these challenges to identify opportunities for assistance and engagement of these women as they maintain their administrative positions. The participants of this ethnographic study were four African American women in senior-level positions from six of the community colleges in Illinois (Graham, 2015).

This research was specific to the state of Illinois with the intent of offering higher education institutions in Illinois data on the obstacles their African American population, particularly women, face as they pursue leadership positions (Graham, 2015). This type of research also offers the opportunity for all higher education institutions, regardless of state, to make changes that foster the career goals of this population. The population of this study was small, in that the researcher interviewed four African American women administrators in higher education (Graham, 2015). The sample size in qualitative studies tends to be smaller because of the deep connection between the researcher and participant; however, the researcher must ensure that the population will provide enough data to provide valid research (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013). The small

41

population used in this study is questionable possibly affecting the credibility of the research.

Critical Race Theory

The understanding and the confirmation that racism exists in American Society is defined in critical race theory. According to critical race theory, culturally diverse beings, such as African American women, are labeled by their race and, because of their race, receive unequal treatment, negative exceptions, and a lack of support. Holland (2012) who wrote deeply about critical race theory, queer theory, and black feminist theory believes that African Americans are still in a period of servitude. This servitude affects the holistic life of the African American individual including family, person, and tangibles (Holland, 2012). This comment recognizes that issues of slavery are not yet conquered or cured and that they still exists under a pretense or new name known as racism. African American women are still bearing the brunt of racial issues beget out of slavery. Critical race theory helps to identify how and why racism still exist in America, and it is the successor of slavery.

Critical race theory includes a number of race identifiers and traits that formulate racism. The racial undertones and unequal treatment that have changed from overt to covert and threaten to activate old racism with new technique are identified though critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). The denial of race as a primary diversity that affects individuals of color is a component of critical race theory. Character, acumen, and ethical conduct are the attributes one can have that is dominate over race (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Race is not identified as primary but as an aspect an individual of color has that makes them less than. Delgado and Stefancic explain that critical race theory is

used to educate on the plight of women, individuals of color, and their juncture between labels (2012)

Black Feminist Theory

Black feminist theory combines with critical race theory to expound on its elements that racism has already been established and is prearranged. Black feminist theory not only supports that racism exists but that it is even more extreme for African American women, who deal with racism along with issues of genderism, sexism, and the myriad of diversities African American women may represent. "Black feminism and critical race feminism provide socio-historical lenses into the experiences of Black women and their families in the United States" (Few, 2007, p. 453).

The experiences of African American women in their workplaces typically are not only based on racism but include gender issues and intersectionality. An authoritative lens that allows African American women another viewpoint of identifying the connection between the diversities of their intersectionality can be found in black feminist theory (Few, 2007). Black feminist theory also gives African American women a voice that identifies their struggle with racism and their struggle with being female. African American women can honestly relate to more than one existence (Few, 2007). They know what it is like to live being Black and female concurrently (Few, 2007). Black feminist theory gave African American women the authority to identify with their intersectionalitys' while confronting to historical issues of racism and sexism (Few, 2007, p. 454).

This utilization of critical race theory and its statements on the existence of racism is a part of this research which will then expound on black feminist theory by focusing on

the perceptions African American face in their pursuit of higher education leadership positions. Through this explanatory qualitative case study, Critical Race and Black Feminist theories provide a voice to the African American women respondents allowing them to tell their story on a case-by-case basis identifying cause and effect. The lived experiences of the participants, how they perceived their environments, and how they felt it hindered their progression into leadership will be identified in each case. African American women create a different personality and identity to cope with an environment of racism and genderism (Hooks, 1990). They create this personality and identity difference to be more vocal about who they are, transforming the space to one that is identifiable to self and a safe place to exist, grow, and build an understanding of who they are in reference to their environment.

Qualitative Case Studies

Case study research is a review of a specific moment in time-related to a specific topic (Hoon, 2013). Case studies can present findings that are reliable and dependable (Hoon, 2013). Relationships, variables, and conditions surrounding certain phenomenon are discovered during case study research (Hoon, 2013). Understanding these phenomena, individual's experiences, and how the phenomena affected their experiences is what a case study researcher seeks.

Qualitative case studies can be used to answer multifaceted everyday problems (Tetnowski, 2015). Modern-day occurrences with real world implications are a result of qualitative case study research (Tetnowski, 2015). By completing case studies, a researcher can identify interactions between respondents and their experiences relating to

44

a certain phenomenon (Tetnowski, 2015). Theoretical approaches and alignment in the researchers' field of study are encompassed within qualitative research (Studvent, 2016).

Based on the literature reviewed, qualitative research was the preferred research methodology. Obstacles to leadership positions in higher education, experiences at predominately White institutions as well as resources to overcome barriers were presented. The authors of the literature used qualitative research to help the reader understand the phenomena, experiences, and obstacles African American women faced in their pursuit to higher education administration. Mentorships, organizations, and conferences were presented as opportunities for African American women to use as methods to combat and overcome the obstacles they faced. The lived experiences of African American women, their understanding of these experiences, and the obstacles they faced during these experiences explain why qualitative research methodology was used by the authors (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Synthesis of Literature

Research on the challenges women and African American women faced in the pursuit of higher education leadership positions was presented in Chapter 2. The barriers and possible solutions to the phenomenon were identified and discussed. Some researchers (Dowdy & Hamilton, 2012; Walker, 2016) found that women needed to have mentors as they rise through the ranks of higher education leadership. Other researchers (Kern, 2015; Hankinson, 2013; Miles, 2012) found that women needed to be a part of professional organizations. Barriers included the glass ceiling, which is faced by many women in the pursuit of leadership positions; however, the researchers further discussed additional barriers African American women encounter.

Research about the obstacles women and African American women have faced in pursuit of leadership position in higher education has been consistent (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). Obstacles include sexism, racism, the glass ceiling, lack of opportunity, and hindrance based on familial situations. The literature included possible solutions for these obstacles including mentoring, guidance, and membership in professional organizations.

The general problem is that African American women holding leadership positions in higher education institutions are severely underrepresented (Robinson, 2012). Senior leadership positions remain deficient of African American women regardless of the attempts made to diversify equality in terms of race and gender, in the United States (Beckwith, Carter, & Peters, 2016). Different obstacles and solutions were presented in Chapter 2 to identify why African American are women missing from leadership posts in higher education administration.

All women, including African American, face obstacles in higher education that hinder movement into leadership positions in higher education (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). While there is some momentum of change, there remains an imbalance between universities and community colleges. The community college system has incorporated women, including African American women, into their leadership roles at a higher rate than universities.

The researched information presented in Chapter 2 identifies some issues faced by women and African America women in higher education. Specific roles within a university system are not identified in the research. Identifying the barriers faced by all women and, in particular, African American women in specific positions may shed light

on how to overcome the obstacles they embark on their journey into administrative positions.

The scope of Chapter 2 is focused on barriers women and African American women face while pursuing leadership positions in higher education. Many articles were researched, and relevant articles were presented as evidence to the obstacles women, namely African American women, face while pursuing an administrative position in higher education. Solutions to the barriers and resources for these women to use were presented in Chapter 2.

Summary

As identified in the literature review the lack of African American women leading institutions of higher education affects the institutions opportunity to have these women as role models (Dowdy & Hamilton, 2012). Due to obstacles that include discrimination, lack of support, and segregation, African American women remain hindered from progressing to higher education leadership positions (Chaney, Davis, Edwards, Gines, & Thompson-Rogers, 2012). African American women are slowly attaining leadership positions in higher education institutions, but issues of discrimination, racism, and sexism continue to stifle their advancement (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). The findings from this study will help higher education institutions understand the obstacles African American women face in their pursuit of leadership positions. The contents of Chapter 3 will provide a foundation for this study's data collection and analysis possibly leading to a better understanding of the barriers African American women face in higher education leadership.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The general problem is that African American women holding leadership positions in higher education institutions are severely lacking in numbers (Robinson, 2012, p. 13). "Despite the great progress our nation has made in terms of gender and racial equality, there continues to be a pervasive lack of African-American women in senior leadership positions" (Beckwith, Carter, & Peters, 2016, p. 115). The specific problem is that African American women face significant barriers that inhibit their ability to progress in their careers and obtain administrative positions in higher education institutions (Gamble & Turner, 2015). The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the perceptions held by African American women, who have attained administrative positions in 2- to 4-year higher education institutions, about the gender and race-based factors that may have inhibited their progress. Chapter 3 includes the research method and design appropriateness, research questions, population, sample, informed consent, confidentiality, geographic location, instrumentation, credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, data collection, data analysis, and a summary.

Research Method Appropriateness

Qualitative research methodology was selected for the study because the data obtained can be used by higher education institutions to understand more about the barriers and obstacles African American women face in their pursuit of leadership positions. Additionally, institutions of higher education may be able to use the cause-and-effect relationship identified in this qualitative study to create strategies that support African American women. Findings based on participant experiences, phenomena, and

cause and effect are the bases for qualitative data (Algozzine & Hancock, 2011). Quantitative data based on statistical measures would be inappropriate for understanding the lived experiences of African American women who have successfully attained leadership roles in higher education.

Education is a focus of qualitative research and a reason for its use in this explanatory qualitative research study. Complexities in social constructs and situations that occur in current society were also catalysts for case study research. Information was presented on the barriers faced by African American women in their pursuit of leadership positions. Understanding the phenomenon will assist higher education institutions in diversifying their leadership identity.

Thick, rich detailed descriptions are important features of qualitative data because the information obtained is from profound and diverse sources (Algozzine & Hancock, 2011). The experiences of African American women in their pursuit of higher education leadership positions will come from understanding the barriers they face. Statistical information based on the number of African American women in higher education leadership and their retention and attrition rates is a derivative of quantitative research. Background information and rich data are not functions of quantitative research, which results in the identification of correlations through numerical data.

Research Design Appropriateness

In an explanatory case study, a holistic view of each research participant is necessary to understand the effect of the occurrence experienced. African American women administrators shared their experiences and the obstacles they faced in pursuit of higher education leadership roles in this explanatory case study. The purpose of this

49

explanatory case study was to establish cause and effect (Algozzine & Hancock, 2011). The use of explanatory case study helped explain the effects African American women experience as they pursued higher education leadership positions. As the participants advanced into leadership roles, they experienced barriers that may have inhibited their progress.

In case study research, questions based on purposeful action and reasoning are required. The opportunity to identify a social phenomenon or occurrence is a foundation of case study research. Case study research is appropriate for this study because the researcher would like to address the lack of African American women in higher education leadership positions. The research was used to explain this occurrence in a way that will assist higher education institutions in recruitment and retention efforts for African American women leaders.

Research Questions

Two research questions guide the proposed study.

1. How have gender- and race-based factors hindered African American women's pursuit into leadership positions in higher education?

2. Why did African American women gain leadership positions in higher education despite the barriers they possibly experienced?

Population

The population of this study were women who are members of African American Women in Higher Education (AAWHE) who identify as African American and have attained an administrative position of dean or above in higher education. The age of the

participants was 21 year of age of older; any participant 21 or younger was disqualified from the study.

The use of an organization that represents African American women in higher education offered insight into the experiences of African American women from public and private, 2- to 4-year institutions and higher education organizations. Incorporating experiences from the members of an organization that represents African American women builds credibility and transferability in this study. The AAWHE was appropriate for this study, as it offered a network of African American women in higher education that spans the United States. Members range from entry-level administrators through presidents and chancellors; for this study, researcher remained focused on mid-level administrators and higher. The AAWHE has 63 members, all of whom were sent an invitation to participate in this research study.

Sample

The population of this study were women who were current members of AAWHE, who identified as African American, and have attained an administrative position of dean, vice-presidents, provosts, presidents, and chancellors. The use of an organization that represents African American women in higher education offered insight into the experiences of African American women from public and private, 2- to 4-year institutions higher education institutions. Incorporating experiences from members of an organization that represents African American women built credibility and transferability in this study. The AAWHE was appropriate for this study, as it offered a network of African American women in higher education that spanned the United States. The AAWHE has 63 members, all of which were sent an invitation to participate in this research study. Data collection

would continue until there were 30 participations, saturation had been reached, or extenuating circumstances arose.

Informed Consent

Members of the AAWHE who were invited to in this research study received the University of Phoenix (UOPX) Informed Consent form (see Appendices B and E) imbedded in the questionnaire. The participants completed the informed consent by indicating that they agreed before moving through the questionnaire process. Participants were given the guidelines as to the intent of this research study, expectations of being a participant in the study, the withdrawal process, assurance of confidentiality, and information on the informed consent process. The dissemination of the informed consent form gave an explanation to participants as to their voluntary participation in the research study, the scope of the research study, and any potential risks of the study (Corti, Day, & Backhouse, 2000).

There was no expectation of foreseeable risks to the participants. Participants were allowed to withdraw from the research study at any time through communicated means—such as verbally or written—without retaliation or repercussion. Any participant data collected from participants who would elect to withdraw from the research study would be removed. Participants submitted electronic signatures confirming their willingness to participate in the study through email. Data collected from the participants will be conserved for three years.

Confidentiality

The information provided by the participants was known only to the researcher. The use of Survey Monkey ensured the collected electronic data remained in a secure

password protected file. All recorded, printed, and collected data was stored in a safe, secure location only accessible by the researcher. Electronic data was preserved on a lock box secure data service and printed data was saved in a secure locked file cabinet. The data collected will be conserved for three years then permanently destroyed. Electronic data was destroyed by permanently deleting all associated Internet caches, links, and files. Printed documents were destroyed by the use of a shredder and a document destruction service.

Geographic Location

Participants for this study work or have worked for higher education institutions across the United States. The institutions of higher education included public, private, for-profit, non-profit, and 2- to 4-year institutions. All participants were members of AAWHE.

Instrumentation

A field test of the questionnaire (see Appendix B) was completed to determine the reliability of the questions and if the questionnaire tool would produce the necessary data to complete the research. The field test was completed with three experts in the field and the results were incorporated to ensure the questionnaire would achieve the stated purpose of the research. Two changes were identified in the field test results. First, minor wording changes were needed to enhance readability. Second, a question was added to the questionnaire for participants who answered no to facing barriers and obstacles if they would be interested in sharing their experiences with the researcher. The researcher gained information from this question that provided insight into how African American

women, who faced no obstacles or barriers, obtained their positions in high education administration.

Interview questions were formulated after data collection and analysis was completed for Phases 1 and 2. The open-ended interview questions were designed to seek clarification and ensured that the research questions were adequately answered. The interview questions were field tested with higher education experts to ensure answerability and accuracy.

Data Collection

The data collection process occurred in 3 phases. Phase 1 was the questionnaire. Phase 2 was a review of documents. Phase 3 was comprised of interviews.

Phase 1: Questionnaire

A recruitment email was sent by the AAWHE secretary asking for participants who were interested in participating in the research study. Interested participants contacted the researcher directly by email, and a spreadsheet of participants interested in completing the questionnaire was created. Interested participants were sent an introduction letter (see Appendix C) through SurveyMonkey that explained the purpose of the study, questionnaire process, possible interview, and informed consent. Those who agreed to informed consent proceeded to the eligibility screening questions followed by the questionnaire (see Appendix C).

Phase 2: Documentation

The Internet was used to look for sample documents and best practices for hiring diverse people. The following websites were reviewed for resources and documents applicable to this research study: ed.gov, aacu.org, naspa.org, dol.gov, jbhe.com,

aaaed.org, blacksinhighered.org, hrweb.mit.edu, aascu.org, shrm.org, abwhe.org, calstate.edu, uchicago.edu, stanford.edu, and diverseissues.com. The articles were collected from aacu.org, calstate.edu, naspa.org, psycologicalscience.org, and shrm.org.

The websites used in the data collection process included information on the hiring practices of African American women and diverse individuals in higher education. Documents included affirmative action policies, hiring procedures, and best practices. The identified documents were downloaded, printed and labeled 1 through 16, and saved in a folder labeled documentation retrieval. The document collection process ended with a collection of 16 articles relevant to this research study. The data was used for document analysis.

Phase 3: Interviews

Interview questions were formulated after data collection and analysis was completed for Phases 1 and 2. Interview questions were designed to seek clarification and ensured that the research questions were adequately answered. Additional interview questions were asked for clarification and explanatory purposes.

Participants who responded yes to the 17th question in the questionnaire were sent an email asking them for a date and time to complete the interview. A total of 5 participants said yes to the 17th question; 4 participants were interviewed. The researcher contacted all 5 of the participants for an interview. One of the participant emails was returned as undeliverable and that participant was not interviewed. The researcher contacted the participants by email, congratulated them on being selected for an interview, and invited them to be a part of the process. Interviews were scheduled based on the availability of the participants' and researcher's schedules.

Skype, and its recording function, was used to conduct the interview for transcription. The researcher emailed participants the informed consent form for an electronic or written signature. Interviews were not scheduled for any participant who neglected to return the informed consent. The researcher contacted the participant on the day of the interview and the interview protocol (Appendix H) was read verbatim. Interview questions were structured and asked of each participant in a consistent manner to provoke responses allowing for the exploration of the subject (Harris, 2014). The interview script was read (see Appendix F). Probing questions were asked as needed. The researcher then thanked the participant for her time and ended the interview.

<div align="center">**Data Analysis**</div>

The data collection process occurred in 3 phases. Phase 1 was the questionnaire. Phase 2 was a review of documents. Phase 3 was comprised of interviews.

Phase 1: Questionnaire

Data were compiled from Survey Monkey in preparation for analysis. The data were coded and classified using the constant comparative technique of examination. The coding was completed on all responses and individually titled. A data review was completed to create a word tree of specific words identified in the questionnaire questions. Codes of data were then created for each question and reviewed for connection to data trees identified in the questionnaire questions. The codes of data were analyzed by word frequency to identify similar words mentioned by each respondent. The words were grouped and compared to data sets to ensure congruency. The information from the word tree was pulled together to identify themes in the data. These themes were compiled into a spreadsheet for use in Chapter 4.

Phase 2: Documentation

The data were coded and classified using the constant comparative technique of examination. Notes were taken on the documentation found that related to the research study. The notes included words with similarity to those of the research questions. The notes were used to create a spreadsheet of data trees. The data sets were then coded and categorized into data themes. Each data theme was created out of similarities which focused on the design and vision related to the purpose of this research study and its research questions. The data sets were analyzed by word frequency to identify similar words mentioned in each document. The words were grouped with stemmed words to obtain similar words. The information from the word set was pulled together into a data themes. These themes were compiled into a spreadsheet for use in Chapter 4.

Phase 3: Interview

The interview data were recorded and replayed. The interview data were analyzed for the purpose of triangulating the data gathered in the questionnaires and documents. A word-for-word transcript was created on participant responses received for each question asked, including follow-up and clarifying questions. Interviews were transcribed then coded and analyzed to align with relevant themes from Phases 1 and 2 of the data collection processes. The coded data resulted in rich, thick descriptions thereby enhancing the credibility of the research findings.

Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability

To ensure the study had credibility, three steps were taken. The first step was to provide a safe, non-threatening environment for the participants. In second step, questions were asked as written then followed up with probing questions for clarification. The third

step in the process of credibility assurance is through triangulation and the identification

of research that related to this research study. Credibility and consistency were established

through these three steps.

Transferability was achieved in the study through rich, thick descriptions and field

data collected by gathering related research and reviewing journal articles, theses,

dissertations, and book materials. Using triangulation transferability was generated as

data were collected and analyzed for consistency in their findings. The assurance of

consistent data that is strong, rich, and all-inclusive happened through triangulation.

Selecting participants who met the requirements of the research study and who

represented purpose sampling assisted in achieving transferability. This research study

gave higher education institutions, stakeholders, and affiliates insight into opportunities

for improvement with African American women and their pursuit into higher education

leadership. Information on the relationship of this study to the field of higher education is

presented in Chapter 5.

Dependability was achieved in the proposed study using an audit log. Using an

audit log ensured the retention of a relevant secure chronological list of records utilized in

this research. The experiences of African American women in higher education

administration was the basis of this research. Assurance of all steps taken with

participants, researcher bias, and decisions relating to this research study was established

in the audit log

Confirmability was achieved through reflexive journaling. The journal was

created and maintained to maintain awareness of personal biases. The identification of

biases through this journal assisted in keeping those biases out of the research process. A

journal was used regularly to keep track of decisions made during the research process. The data in this research study was collected in an unbiased format, connected with similar research studies, relevant to the field of research. Credibility was established by confirming its content is useful, relevant, valid and free of researcher bias.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the perceptions held by African American women, who have attained administrative positions in higher education institutions, about the gender- and race-based factors that may have inhibited their progress. A case study design was appropriate for the study because it focuses on an individual representative of a group, an organization or organizations, or phenomenon (Algozzine & Hancock, 2011). The population of the study was African American women who have obtained administrative positions in higher education and are members of the AAWHE.

Chapter 3 of this research study included a discussion of the research method appropriateness and research design appropriateness. The population, sample, informed consent, confidentiality, and geographic location were presented. Chapter 3 ended with the instrumentation; data collection; data analysis; and credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability methodology. Chapter 4 contains information on the research findings from the data collection and data analysis processes.

Chapter 4

Findings

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the perceptions held by African American women, who have attained administrative positions in higher education institutions, about the gender and race-based factors that may have inhibited their progress. Chapter 4 includes the steps used for data collection and data analysis, along with study findings presented thematically. The conclusion and summary follow at the end of Chapter 4.

Data Collection

Data in this research study were collected in three phases. The data collection tools were questionnaires, document reviews, and interviews. Three different methods of data collection allowed for triangulation of the data.

Phase 1: Questionnaire

Participants in this research study were United States citizens, African American women, 21 years of age or older, a member of the AAWHE organization, and currently or previously employed as a .5FTE or higher education administrator dean level or above. Upon completion of sign-offs from the AAHWE board, the leadership team provided approval and, the AAWHE secretary sent the solicitation emails. A recruitment email (see Appendix G) was sent by the AAWHE secretary soliciting participants who were interested in participating in the research study. The members who received the email were directed to contact the researcher directly to express interest in participating in the study. In the Phase 1, 63 members of the AAWHE were sent the request for survey

participants, 14 responded to the solicitation, and 4 completed the survey. A spreadsheet of interested participants was created so that the survey could be sent at one time.

The first email from AAWHE to its members resulted in a low response rate (14 out of 63). The researcher sent a second email reminder (see Appendix D) to non-respondents 2 weeks after first reminder email. This email stimulated responses, and two additional participants responded to the survey request. Two weeks into the data collection process the researcher asked the AAWHE to resend the email and was told they would resend the email at a later date. At week 7, the researcher sent another request to the AAWHE for a resend of the invitation email with no response. The AAWHE sent an email 2 months after the initial email which generated no additional respondents.

After 4 months of data collection within the AAWHE, the pool of candidates were no longer responding to solicitations to complete the survey. A total of 14 respondents completed the survey, 5 of which finished the survey, and of the 5, 4 were interested in providing additional information. Due to a low response rate from members of the AAWHE, participant solicitations were sent out via Facebook, LinkedIn, and PhoenixConnect to ensure enough responses were received and participation was adequate. The same recruitment email used to contact AAWHE participants was sent to potential participants using the social media tools. The following groups were contacted via Facebook: NPHC Higher Education Network, SGRho Sorors Only, Prhofessors *[sic]* in Academia, Black Educators Rock, and SGHRO Moms. Participants contacted via LinkedIn were solicited one by one and were sent the email with direct communication (see Appendix C). The following groups were contacted via PhoenixConnect: African American Women, Pursuing EdD, and African American Women at UOP. The

recruitment email and respondent responses were kept private via the LinkedIn, Facebook, and PhoenixConnect social media sites. The respondents received the link to the questionnaire and the informed consent form. The first six questions of the questionnaire were used for screening to ensure participants satisfied the demographic requirements required to participate in this study. These questions included asking participants about their location, race, gender, age, current or previous employment in higher education, and amount of FTE in administration.

The solicitation of participants through Facebook, LinkedIn, and PhoenixConnect begat 25 additional respondents for a total of 39. Reminder emails were then sent every other day to solicit enough responses to accrue 20 completed surveys. Out of 39 respondents, 20 completed the survey; out of the 20, 5 were interested in providing additional information.

Phase 2: Documentation

The Internet was used to look for sample documents and best practices for hiring diverse people. The following websites were reviewed for resources and documents applicable to this research study: ed.gov, aacu.org, naspa.org, dol.gov, jbhe.com, aaaed.org, blacksinhighered.org, hrweb.mit.edu, aascu.org, shrm.org, abwhe.org, calstate.edu, uchicago.edu, stanford.edu, and diverseissues.com. The following websites were used to collect the researched articles: aacu.org, calstate.edu, naspa.org, psycologicalscience.org, and shrm.org. The authors of the articles used for this research and triangulation were: Musil, 2015; Renn, 2015; Behr & Schneider, 2015; di Bartelo, 2015; Albertine, 2015"Thomas & Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2015; California State University Institute for Teaching and Learning, 2013; Farmer, 2013; Hudson, 2017; Zonana, 2017;

NASPA, 2015; Crossley, 2015; Livingston, 2012; Gurchiek, 2017; Russell, 2015, Cooper, 2011.

The websites used to collect the documentation gathered for data collection included information on the hiring practices of African American women and diverse individuals in higher education. Documents, as detailed in the previous paragraph, included affirmative action policies, hiring procedures, and best practices. The process ended with a collection of 16 documents relevant to this research study. The identified documents were downloaded, printed and labeled 1 through 16, and saved in a folder labeled documentation retrieval.

Phase 3: Interviews

Interview questions were formulated after data collection and analysis was completed for Phases 1 and 2. Interview questions were designed to seek clarification and ensured that the research questions were adequately answered. Five participants were interested in completing the interview. Four participants were part of the interview process.

The interview schedule was determined upon completion of the analysis of data from the questionnaire and documentation review. Interview questions were structured and asked of each participant consistently to provoke responses allowing for the exploration of the subject. Skype was used to conduct and record the interviews. The interview script was read (see Appendix F). Probing questions were asked as needed. The interview ended with a message explaining that the study findings would be provided to the interview participants.

Data Analysis

Phase 1: Questionnaire

Data were downloaded from Survey Monkey in preparation for analysis. The data were coded and classified using the constant comparative technique of examination. The coding was completed on all responses and individually titled. Each participant was assigned a generic label and was subsequently coded using open coding. Each questionnaire was assigned a code using "Q" and the number assigned to ensure the participant's confidentiality (Q1, Q2, and so on). Each question was analyzed one by one. The constant comparative method of analysis was used to ensure that each piece of data was analyzed comparatively with all other pieces of collected data. A data review was run to create data codes of specific relevant words identified in the questionnaire questions. Codes of data were then created for each question and reviewed for connection to data trees identified in the questionnaire questions. The codes of data were analyzed by word frequency to identify similar words mentioned by each respondent. The words were grouped and compared to data codes to ensure congruency. The information from the data codes was pulled together to identify themes in the data. These themes were compiled into a spreadsheet for use in Chapter 4.

Phase 2: Documentation

Each of the 16 documents found through the data collection process were read and analyzed for connection with this research study. Each document was assigned a code using "#D" and the number assigned to ensure the participant's confidentiality (#D1, #D2, and so on). Each document was reviewed for key terms relating to African American

women, higher education leadership, and possible barriers. All 16 documents were found to be relevant; therefore, they were used as part of the document analysis in this research study. A red pen was used to underline key words and phrases, taking notes in the margins of each document. Once each document was analyzed, the words and phrases were compiled into a spreadsheet.

Phase 3: Interviews

The Skype recorded data from interviews were transcribed into a Word document. Each interviewee was assigned a code using "I" and the number assigned to ensure the participant's confidentiality (I1, I2, and so on). This coding scheme was used in the transcription so that data shared by each participant were easily identifiable by the researcher while maintaining the confidentiality of the participant.

The interview data were analyzed to triangulate the data gathered in the questionnaires and documents. Interview transcriptions were reviewed through the lens of the themes identified in Phases 1 and 2 of data collection: the questionnaire and document phases. The data gathered through the interview process enhanced the study findings specific to factors inhibiting the success of African American women attempting to move into higher education leadership.

<div align="center">

Study Findings

</div>

Three themes in the data collection process emerged during the questionnaire and documentation phases: institutional structures, personality traits, and Caucasian men as mentors. Institutional structure was the first major theme with 86% of the respondents discussing this obstacle. Personality traits and Caucasian men as mentors emerged as the

second and third obstacles. Triangulation of the three themes ended with the interview

responses (see Table 1).

Table 1

Major Themes

	Questionnaire	Documents	Total	Percentages
Themes	n=20	n=16	n=36	
Institutional Structures	17	14	31	86%
Personality Traits	14	15	29	81%
Caucasian men as mentors	13	14	27	75%

Note. N = number of completed questionnaires, number of documents researched, and number of interview respondents.

Theme 1: Institutional Structures

Nearly 86% of the aggregated questionnaire and document review findings were

centered on institutional structures, making it a major theme. Many of the obstacles were

in the form of institutional structures and included racism, sexism, and a predominance of

Caucasian males in higher level leadership positions. The African American women

participating in the study perceived that racism, sexism, and the predominance of

Caucasian males in leadership roles negatively affected their pursuit into higher education

administration. These obstacles caused them to find alternative resources to accomplish

their goals.

The questionnaire respondents felt that institutional racism was an obstacle. They

shared that the traditional structure, where many higher education institutions have

predominately White male leadership, posed a barrier. Q37 (questionnaire participant)

shared that males often had difficulty in looking past her race and culture to see her skills

at being a leader in higher education. Q8 explained that higher education was structured to

assist and defend middle/upper-class White males keeping African American women subjugated and in non-administrative roles.

Ongoing unequal treatment, grounded in sexism, is reflective of some higher education institutions that favor men. The questionnaire respondents felt that often they were downgraded and not seen as equals because they are women. Q16 believed she was conspired against by the institution she worked for and not given any opportunity for ascent into a leadership role. Q18 experienced a lack of professional development opportunities and support in career advancement by male leaders at her institution.

The document analysis uncovered that institutional sexism was still very prevalent in higher education administration. In all 15 documents reviewed, women felt like they were seen as unequal to males, therefore not able to lead or be higher education administrators. The presence of White males and their effect on African American women obtaining leadership positions in higher education remains dominant as found in 11 of the research documents. "It will take until the year 2085 for women to reach parity with men in leadership roles in or country" #1D.

The lack of opportunities and institutional racism stood out as major obstacles in the document analysis. African American women were often not seen in the administrative landscape of higher education institutions as stated in #1D. These women were passed over for promotion, given additional tasks without matched compensation, and overlooked when it came to making institutional decisions, as discussed in #2D. Institutional racism made it hard to find mentors and support systems to support the efforts of these women on their ascent into higher education administration. Mentors were often found at other institutions or organizations these women belonged to due to the lack of African American

women at their institutions. Men retained the jobs in administration while hiring others who looked like them due to historical institutional structures and norms as stated in #5D.

The interview respondents agreed that institutional structures were a barrier. The need to have higher education institutions hold themselves accountable for the racist barriers that exist in the institution was discussed by the interview respondents. I1 (interview respondent) discussed traditional, predominately White institutions, saying that these institutions should confess that they are racist but were unwilling to share that information and make a change. "This system that they put together and they may think of themselves as, I don't know, progressive or whatever, but in fact they are deeply prejudice [sic]" (personal communication, May 14th, 2018).

I2 shared "I just had some great bosses along the way who saw potential in me and thought, oh, you would be great for this position" (personal communication, May 15th, 2018). However, she felt that the administration didn't believe in her skills and abilities. Often when she accepted roles, especially early in her career, she would be accused of doing unethical acts to get administrative positions. Men, especially White men, were always in the institution I2 worked at and were a common part of the administration in the higher education landscape that made it harder for her skills to show.

Both I1 and I2 believed that higher education institutions need to show equality to people of color, especially for American women who want to pursue administrative positions. I3 and I4 discussed the need for higher education institutions to provide professional development opportunities to help develop leadership skills in African American women. I3 commented that she was not selected for a position in diversity and inclusion because her competitor was a Caucasian male, despite that he had fewer skills

68

and less talent. She shared that he declined the position offered to him and that the job was subsequently offered to and accepted by a White female. Historical norms of the institution and Caucasian male professionals, as I3 discussed, displayed organizational prejudice believing that it was the way they were brought up and a catalyst for how they treated African American people. She believed that being a woman added to this disparity. I3 felt that higher education institutions should be more hospitable and more welcoming to people of color by helping them navigate into higher education leadership roles. Only two African American women are in academic affairs at the institution where I4 works. She believed the lack of African American women in her department and higher education leadership showed that some obstacles remained. I4 believed that institutions of higher education needed to finance training and provide leadership information to African American women, thereby fostering their acceptance and success in higher education leadership.

Theme 2: Personality Traits

Personality traits theme showed 81% prevalence in the questionnaire and document analysis. African American women found that these perceptions came from stereotypical observations. These obstacles included the characteristics of being less educated, agitators, and tokens. The study participants perceived that Caucasian males received better support and more favor. Their perceptions of the favoritism afforded the men arose as barriers to the African American women in this study, who reported that they sometimes change their personas in reaction.

Questionnaire respondents found that being strong in their faith and educated were a potential threat in their workplace. Q2 discussed that perceptions of her were different

than Caucasian men the "Belief was that I surely could not be as smart as the White male next to me." Q8 felt that her faith helped her stay focused in her administrative pursuit. "Prayer, faith, perseverance and a constant acknowledgment of my self-worth. I also make a point to remember what my ancestors endured during and after the middle passage as a reminder that there is nothing too hard in the higher education to overcome" was stated by Q8. Q11 went on to discuss that accomplished, resilient, and expressive women were seen as less than favorable by higher education institutions and intimidated Caucasian males.

Stereotyping was a major trait identified in the analyzed documents discussing African American women are too feminine and stout. The perception of a woman's femininity as being unaspiring as stated in #6D. Flexibility and determination are traits women need to enter higher education administration as discussed by #6D. Black women are immovable, able to withstand any adversities they face as discussed in #11D. This perception diminishes the need black women have to be encouraged and promoted.

The interview respondents believed that perceptions of who they were as individuals and being seen as disagreeable or difficult to work with were a threat to their ascent in higher education administrative positions. I1 felt she was the top candidate for a position but did not get it because of the perception of her being a troublemaker. Not being more forceful like other administrators was also a barrier I1 felt. Tokenism was a barrier to I2 who felt that other administrators would look at her only to fulfill a gender or diversity role and not truly capable of doing the job. I3 shared that she had to overcome the view of her being a woman not strong enough to do higher education administrative jobs well by her Black male counterparts. Being a southern woman was a benefit for I3

70

because she used her charm to bring down others' walls and help them to be more accepting of her.

Theme 3: Caucasian Men as Mentors

Caucasian men as mentors were the third major theme identified with 75% of the questionnaire and document findings centered on their presence. Research respondents stated that Caucasian men were a catalyst for gender bias but at times served as mentors, helping them navigate higher education administrative positions expectations. Mentorship and the need for support in the climb to leadership positions became prevalent among the research respondents.

Questionnaire respondents discussed that White males were often a catalyst for the lack of equality they faced in their pursuit of leadership roles, these men became welcome supporters when they needed skills or advisement regarding leadership opportunities. Q1 discussed mentors were giving advice, being role-models, and listening in her time of need. Q13 stated that the president of her institution, who was White, served as a mentor. She discussed that "For change to occur it must come from the top down."

Gender bias was experienced and frequently mentioned in the document analysis in regards to Caucasian men and their disallowance of African American women in administrative positions. #5D stated, Equality in higher education necessitates complex and conscience decision making about inequalities and stratification (Albertine, 2015). Gender bias is a catalyst for the disparity of women in administrative higher education positions discussed by #9D.

Interview respondents stated that even though Caucasian men were often a catalyst for the barriers they faced in their pursuit of higher education administrative positions,

71

they were also supporters of them. Often their mentors were from different backgrounds as well as different institutions. I2 stated as an African American woman, her positive mentors did not look like her and came from different backgrounds. Interviewee I2 had mentors who were White. She also noted that White males had helped her find positions in higher education leadership as well as prepare for new roles. Interviewee I4 discussed that a mentor doesn't have to mirror one's complexion to do an excellent job of investing effort and energy into their higher education leadership abilities.

Summary

Data were collected three ways. First, 39 questionnaires were sent to participants then reviewed for completion, 20 of which were completed. Second, 16 documents were identified, collected, and analyzed for the documentation phase of this research study. The third collection method was interviews. The interview phase of this research study was completed with four respondents identified in the questionnaire phase. The researcher used Skype to complete the interviews asking the participants pre-selected question in a semi-structured format. Additional questions were asked for clarification and a deeper understanding. The interviews were recorded, and the information was transcribed. Three themes emerged in the analysis of the transcribed interviews: institutional structures, personality traits, and Caucasian men as mentors. These themes were consistent with the themes found in the questionnaire and interview phases.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the perceptions held by African American women, who have attained administrative positions in higher education institutions, about the gender and race-based factors that may have inhibited their progress. Chapter 5 includes the study findings presented thematically, the research questions, theoretical framework, limitations, implications, recommendations, suggestions for future research, and conclusions.

Findings

Three themes emerged from this qualitative case study: institutional structures, personality traits, and Caucasian men as mentors. Each of these themes stood out as major barriers and possible opportunities that affect African American women in their pursuit of higher education administration positions. A comparison of the identified themes and current literature is presented in Chapter 5.

Theme 1: Institutional Structures

Institutional structures represented 86% of the collected data. The major obstacles found within this theme were racism, sexism, and the prevalence of Caucasian men in administrative higher education positions. The questionnaire respondents' stated how the higher education leadership landscape historically and continuously supports White male dominance. Each questionnaire respondent felt the perceptions of not being viewed as leaders. Major obstacles that affect African American women including pay gaps, lack of promotion opportunities, and not being included in significant institutional decisions where presented in the researched documents. These obstacles proved to be major barriers that prevented obtainment of leadership roles and the possibility of helping the institution diversify when it comes to major institutional decisions. In

73

discussion with the interview respondents, they agreed that responsibility from higher education organizations was important. The need to eliminate institutional prejudice and show equality in hiring practices and leadership support was significant. The interview respondents felt that training and identification of the obstacles was key to making changes in higher education administration.

The findings of the study are consistent with the current literature. In the literature review, institutional structures were a major barrier for African American and their pursuit of higher education administration. Jarmon (2014) reported that the glass ceiling is a barrier as well as men holding administrator positions in higher education. The glass ceiling was a barrier that included a women's experience and education as components of this barrier. Cselenszky (2012) found that women met the educational requirements of higher education administrators. Institutional barriers affected women's movement into leadership positions including stereotyping regarding their experience and paternalism (Cselenszky, 2012). The glass ceiling was also mentioned by Diehl (2014), who interviewed women of color on the adversities they face in higher education leadership. Racism, lack of advancement opportunities, and lack of support are major institutional obstacles that not only hindered the ascent of these women into higher education leadership positions, but these issues continued to plague them once they were in leadership. The current literature is consistent with this study's findings with 86% of the collected data identifying that institutional structures are a major barrier to the advancement of African American women and their pursuit into higher education administration positions. Institutional structures serve as the largest barrier to African American women and their ascent into higher education administrative positions as identified in this research.

Theme 2: Personality Traits

The top characteristics identified in personality traits were those of being seen as less educated, agitators, and tokens. This theme was the second most prevalent, with 81% of the research respondents stating that personality traits served as obstacles in their climb

to administrative higher education positions. African American women, at times, needed to change who they were due to the perception of their personalities.

African American women perceived that biased support and favoritism toward the personality traits of Caucasian men were a hindrance to their advancement into higher education administrative ranks. Questionnaire respondents identified faithfulness and living out their faith as personality traits that could help them overcome the barriers they faced. Personality traits such as confidence, perseverance, and resilience were viewed not as strengths, but as detriments to higher education administration and perceived as intimidation by White males. Document analysis corroborate these perceptions and how African American women's strength is seen as immovable causing those around them and the institutions they support to withhold support and uplift. The perception of being an agitator or someone incapable of being an administrator were also perceived personality traits discussed in the interviews. I3 stated her southern charms as a personality trait that worked to soften her appearance toward administrative higher powers with whom she was working.

Personality traits were found in the literature review to be a barrier to the ascent of African American women into higher education leadership positions. Women of color are often depicted as the "modern mammy" (Seo & Hinton, 2009, p. 204), or people who are great as nurturers and supporters but who cannot lead. Women of color are presumed incompetent and disregarded as viable leaders, professors, and participants in the higher education (Gutiérrez y Muhs, Flores Niemann, González, & Harris, 2012). This research and the review of literature were consistent identifying personality traits as a barrier. 81% of the participants in this study felt that they were often overlooked as leadership material

and perceived by stereotypes that often affect African American women. Lack of leadership skills, tokenism, and the concept of being "less than" were consistent perceptions that this study's participants experienced with those obstacles identified in the literature review.

Theme 3: Caucasian Men as Mentors

Caucasian men have been identified in each of the previous two themes and are the main focal point if Theme 3. Caucasian men as mentors came in 3rd place with 75% of the questionnaire and document analysis. Caucasian men have been seen as barriers to African American women in pursuit of higher education administrative positions but also identified as mentors.

Existing gender bias in institutions was identified as a barrier to African American women, as Caucasian men were predominantly shown preference for higher education administrative positions. Caucasian men were found to be favored and supported more than African American women, but they were also identified as mentors. Questionnaire respondents saw Caucasian men advising African American women and supporting them in their higher education administration pursuit. Respondents identified support received from Caucasian men by means of offering advice, serving as role-models, and providing a listening ear. In the document analysis, gender bias was frequently mentioned and found as a disparity to women. Equity appeared as a key opportunity to combat gender bias. Support from Caucasian men was identified among the interview respondents. The interview respondents mentioned that mentors did not have to mirror their mentees and that Caucasian males often helped African American women who had a completely

different background. I4 stated that Caucasian men did a great job of providing support and energy in her leadership skills.

In the review of the literature, Allen, Jacobson, and Lomotey, (1995) discussed the absence of guidance, mentorship, and assistance by key people at an institution hinders women and those who identify with underrepresented groups, from gaining leadership roles. Dowdy and Hamilton (2012), and Walker (2016) found that women needed to have mentors as they rise through the ranks of higher education leadership. Caucasian men as mentors was found to be a theme in this research with 75% of the data corresponding to this issue which is consistent with the literature review. The respondents of this study found that Caucasian men are barriers because of the favoritism they receive in the institutional structure, but these men are often supporters of their pursuit. As stated in the researched literate, African American women need mentors to support their ascent and progress into leadership positions. The information in this study is consistent with the reviewed literature.

Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the perceptions held by African American women, who have attained administrative positions in higher education institutions, about the gender and race-based factors that may have inhibited their progress. Two research questions guided the study.

RQ1: How have gender- and race-based factors hindered African American women's pursuit into leadership positions in higher education? In this study, race and gender were identified as major barriers preventing African American women from attaining administrative positions in higher education. Questionnaire respondents,

researched documents, and interview participants all identified that race and gender were a catalyst for the lack of African American women in higher education as well as the overall higher education landscape. The support and favoritism given to Caucasian men, glass ceiling, and personality stereotypes were all identified as obstacles by the respondents and documents. Often these women were perceived as troublemakers, agitators, and tokens, which led them to be seen in a less-than category and, thus, not fit for leadership.

RQ 2: Why did African American women gain leadership positions in higher education despite the barriers they possibly experienced? The research in this study supports evidence that the barriers that African American women face in obtaining leadership positions in higher education administration can be overcome. Research findings show that despite the struggle African American women faced due to the prominence of Caucasian men in leadership roles, the men also served as mentors. These men have helped African American women learn skills and build relationships that support their ascent into higher education leadership roles, helping them to overcome many of the barriers they face. Perseverance, faith, and familial support helped these women move forward in their pursuit and accomplish their goals.

Theoretical Framework

Critical race theory and black feminist theory are the foundation for this qualitative case study. The experiences of underprivileged groups in societal terms, recognizing societal constructs smaller than the greater society and underprivileged connection to power is found in critical race theory (Yancy-Tooks, 2012). Black feminist theory is an effort to fight against societal and organizational gender and race issues (Hoffman, 2016).

The study findings are consistent with critical race theory, which theorizes the existence of racism in America. The perceived lack of equality and barriers within intuitional structures, discussed by the questionnaire and interview respondents, are also traits identified within critical race theory. Personality traits held by the respondents and obstacles to leadership they faced implicate that race is a critical factor in the upward movement in their pursuit of higher education leadership positions. These characteristics are significant to critical race theory, which represents the plight of African American women and people of color regarding racism in the United States.

The study findings contrasts with critical race theory because the questionnaire and interview respondents found that the mentors who were most significant to them in their gain of leadership knowledge and skills were Caucasian. The significance of Caucasian mentors differs from critical race theory and its belief that racism still exists. Persistence was a focal point for both questionnaire and interview respondents who shared that persistence is a key factor in combating the barriers they faced. Critical race theory theorizes that acumen and character are used by the dominate race to dominate over people of color. Character building and acumen are less of a factor when there is persistence coupled with mentors, and a gain of knowledge by African American women as they move up the ranks into higher education administration.

The study findings are consistent with black feminist theory because this theory takes critical race theory a step further identifying that African American women are treated with more racism than their male and Caucasian counterparts. The questionnaire and interview participants agreed that they are often perceived as less than and that they had to fight harder than their White counterparts to overcome the obstacles they

encountered. Equality and institutional structures were themes presented by all of the respondents discussing the racism that exists against them as African American women. Intersectionality and gender issues are key components of black feminist theory. The questionnaire and interview respondents shared that men, especially Caucasian men, often were chosen over them for positions where they were the top candidates. Institutional structures and the foundations within them founded on racist traits provided support for intersectionality and the disadvantages the questionnaire and interview respondents encountered.

The study findings conflict with Black feminist theory because the questionnaire and interview respondents felt the majority of the support they received were from leaders in higher education who were Caucasian men. Black feminist theory contends that because of historical views African American women are treated as less than by the majority race based on gender and race. The respondents also explained that race, at times, was more of a dominate barrier than gender. Contrary to Black feminist theory, which states that the majority race is the dominant perpetrator, the respondents also identified African American men as individuals who created obstacles for them.

<div align="center">**Limitations**</div>

Five limitations were initially identified. During the course of the study, two additional limitations emerged: time constrains and sample size. First, time seemed to be a major factor for participants. Participants were allotted 3 months to participate in this research study. Respondents were slow to complete the questionnaires, and the researcher had to end the survey due to lack of responses and participation. This led to the second

limitation, a small sample size. Of the 20 questionnaire participants who completed the survey, only 5 were interested in participating in the interview phase of the study.

Limitation number two was identified in the interview phase of this research study. Only 5 of the 20 participants who responded to the questionnaire were interested in participating in the interview phase of the study. The researcher contacted the five respondents; however, one email bounced back and was identified as undeliverable. This left four participants as part of the interview pool. This limitation may have affected the saturation of the study and the need to have data that is similarly repeated amongst the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Implications

Studies have been conducted about the barriers African American women face when pursuing administrative position in higher education. Previous research supported the findings that African American women lacked guidance, mentors, and leadership skills. Despite the research, the lack of African American women in higher education leadership continued. The lack of institutional support and the perceived personality traits discovered in this study, if unaddressed, may continue to result a deficiency in African American women as leaders in higher education. If higher education institutions intend to prioritize adding African American women to their administrative ranks, then they must ensure that race- and gender-based equality is established.

Recommendations

Higher education institutions can benefit from African American women in higher education administration. To support these efforts, six recommendation were identified:

1. Review research studies based on African American women in higher education leadership to better understand the barriers they face. A review of this information can help African American women and higher education institutions work to eliminate the barriers.

2. Determine how the barriers African American women face can be eliminated or decreased to foster success in their attainment of administrative positions. Higher education institutions can identify the barriers present in their institutions and use this research to eliminate those barriers.

3. Understand the barriers African American women face and create pathways for those barriers to be overcome. Pathways will help these women advance into higher education leadership roles giving them knowledge and the skills they need to be successful leaders.

4. Support African American women in their rise to higher education administration by offering a mentorship program specifically to support them. Mentors can be found on campus, eliminating costly mentoring programs, and should be familiar with leadership and the institution.

5. Create diversity trainings and workshops to acclimate the campus population on inclusion of African American women. Most institutions of higher education have a diversity officer who can help to create viable programs for teaching and supporting diversity efforts.

6. Create consistent hiring teams that are trained in diversity hiring. Hiring teams can receive institutional training on diversity to ensure hiring practices are equitable and consistent with the needs of the institution.

Suggestions for Future Research

Obstacles to leadership was the basis of this research study and how the obstacles affected the advancement of African American women in higher education administration. Obstacles to leadership were identified in the data collection and analysis sections of Chapter 4. Future research can be conducted on gender factors, African American men and women, personality traits, and major versus minor obstacles:

1. Conduct a thematic analysis case study based on gender barriers faced by women in higher education administration.

2. Conduct a quantitative research study on how many African American men and/or women leave higher education administration because of the barriers they faced.

3. Conduct an ethnographic case study on how personality traits can be a predictor of success for African American women in obtaining a leadership position in higher education.

4. Conduct a phenomenological case study on specific obstacles to delineate from major or minor obstacles and how they affect the movement of African American women in higher education administration.

Higher education institutions have ample opportunities to better understand how to retain and support African American women and men. These opportunities for future research will help higher education institutions better understand the barriers African

American women and men face as they move into higher education leadership as well as how to assist them in overcoming these barriers.

Conclusions

This qualitative case study explored the perceived barriers that African American women face in their pursuit of higher education leadership positions, the race- and gender-based factors that facilitated and impeded their ascent, and how they worked to overcome barriers. African American women recognized their barriers and responded to what they faced as they made their ascent while discussing the tools they used to overcome these barriers. Three themes identified as barriers emerged from the research: institutional structures, personality traits, and Caucasian men as mentors.

Black feminist and critical race theories used in this research study helped to identify how the perceived barriers are systemic and affect not only the campus community but society as a whole. Critical race theory can be used as a lens for higher education institutions to see the barriers African American women face in their pursuit of leadership roles. Researching to understand the perceived barriers and combat them is also a use of critical race theory. Black feminist theory exists to identify that African American women face significant gender and race issues. As found in this research and in black feminist theory, these issues are major barriers to the ascent of African American women into higher education leadership positions. Black feminist theory identifies the stereotypes, the institutional structures, and the perceived personality traits that inhibit African American women's movement into higher education administration.

Institutional structures in the form of favoritism for Caucasian men, race and gender issues, and the glass ceiling arose as barriers. Personality traits through stereotypes

84

surrounding African American women and their troublemaking, tokenism or intimidation arose as barriers that prevent these women from being seen as leaders. Caucasian men were found to be a catalyst for many of the barriers African American women face in their pursuit of higher education administration, but have also posed themselves to be supporters and mentors. This situation makes for an interesting dichotomy and provides an opportunity for higher education institutions to utilize resources they have in place to diversify their leadership teams.

African American women are not a prevalent part of the leadership teams in higher education. They face obstacles and barriers that prevent them from moving through the ranks and becoming higher education administrators. These barriers pose as struggles and opportunities for higher education institutions and the higher education providing them with a blueprint to make changes and work towards more diverse leadership teams. Barriers identified in this research present a small picture of what African American women face in their pursuit but can be foundational in the plan for higher education intuitions to change the administrative landscape.

References

Adedokun, A. D. (2014). *Mentoring, leadership behaviors, and career success, of African American female faculty and administrators in higher education* (Order No. 3611841). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Full Text. (1504639769)

Albertine, S. (2015). Gender equity in higher education: Calling for equitable, integrative and intergenerational leadership. *Association of American Colleges & Universities, 18*(2), 1-9.

Retrieved from http://aacu.org/diversitydemocracy/2015/spring/albertine

Alexander-Lee, M. (2014). *A qualitative study of African-American female administrators in the higher education: Identification of characteristics that contribute to their advancement to senior level positions of authority* (Order No. 3584503).

https://aquila.usm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1047&context=dissertations

Algozzine, B., & Hancock, D. R., (2011). *Doing case study research: A practical guide for beginning researchers* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press

Allen, K., Jacobson, S., & Lomotey, K. (1995). African-American women in educational administration: The importance of mentors and sponsors. *The Journal of Negro Education, 64*(4), 409-422. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/2967264

American Psychological Association, Presidential Task Force on Educational Disparities. (2012). *Ethnic and racial disparities in education: Psychology's contributions to understanding and reducing disparities.* Retrieved from http://www.apa.org/ed/resources/racial-disparities.aspx

Bartman, C. (2015). African-American women in higher education: Issues and support

strategies. *College Student Affairs Leadership*, *2*(2), 1-9. Retrieved from

http://scholarworks .gvsu.edu

Beckwith, L. A., Carter, D. R., & Peters, T. (2016). The underrepresentation of African

American women in executive leadership: What's getting in the way?. *Journal of*

Business Studies Quarterly, 7(4), 115-134. Retrieved from https://jbsq.org/wp-

content/uploads/2016/06/June_2016_9.pdf

Behr, M., & Schneider, J. (2015). Gender and the ladder to the deanship. *Association of*

American Colleges & Universities, 18(2).

Retrieved from https://www.aacu.org/diversitydemocracy/2015/spring/behr

Bennett, V. A. (2013). *The female African American presidents in higher education: Is*

there a particular journey toward their presidencies? (Order No. 3579727).

Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Full Text.

(1510656558)

Biernat, M., & Danaher, K. (2012). Interpreting and reacting to feedback in stereotype-

relevant performance domains. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 48*(1),

271–276. doi: 10.1016/j.jesp.2011.08.010

BlackChen, M. M., (2015). To lead or not to lead: Women achieving leadership status in

higher education. *Advancing Women in Leadership, 35*, 153–159.

Black Enrollments in Higher Education Continue to Decline. (2014). *The Journal of*

Blacks in Higher Education, Retrieved from http://www.jbhe.com/2014/11/black-

enrollments-in-higher-education-continue-to-decline/

Blumell, C. A. (2015). *The climate experiences of African American women community college faculty in North Carolina* (Order No. 3710575). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Full Text. (1703728723)

Boun, T. (2014). *Examining transformational leadership traits between Asian and Caucasian Americans in higher education* (Order No. 3648294). https://search.proquest.com/openview/c1c8cd45a36cb052c900b411c80d33de/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y

Calafell, B. M. (2012). Monstrous femininity constructions of women of color in the higher education. *Journal of Communication Inquiry, 36*(2), 111-130. doi:10.1177/0196859912443382

Chaney, C., Davis, D. J., Edwards, L., Gines, K. T., & Thompson-Rogers, G. (2012). Academe as extreme sport: Black women, faculty development, and networking. *Negro Educational Review, 62/63*(1-4), 167–187, 265–266. https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1P3-2618675441/academe-as-extreme-sport-black-women-faculty-development

Cobb-Roberts, D. (2012). Betwixt safety and shielding in the higher education: Confronting institutional gendered racism-again. *Negro Educational Review, 62/63*(1-4), 89–113, 265. Retrieved from https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1007&context=esf_facpub

Cobb-Roberts, D., & Agosto, V. (2012). Underrepresented women in higher education: An overview. *Negro Educational Review, 62/63*(1-4), 7–11, 265.

https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.

com/&httpsredir=1&article=1000&context=els_facpub

Cohen, D., & Crabtree, B. (2006) Qualitative Research Guidelines Project.

http://www.qualres.org/HomeSemi-3629.html

Collins, P. H. (2000). *Black feminist thought: knowledge, consciousness, and the politics

of empowerment* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Cooper, M. (2011). Stereotypes may help black women succeed. *The Clayman Institute

for Gender Research,* (), Retrieved from https://gender.stanford.edu/news-

publications/gender-news/stereotypes-may-help-black-women-succeed

Corti, L., Day, A., & Backhouse, G. (2000). Confidentiality and informed consent: Issues

for consideration in the preservation of and provision of access to qualitative data

archives. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social

Research, 1*(3). Retrieved from http://www.qualitative-

research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1024/2207

Costello, C. A. (2015). *Women in the trenches: Barriers to female staff's advancement in

higher education* (Order No. 3582032). Available from ProQuest Dissertations

and Theses Global. (1655458363)

Creswell, J. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods

approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Crocco, S. M., & Waite, C. L. (2007). Education and marginality: Race and gender in

higher education, 1940-1955. *History of Education Quarterly, 47*(1), 69–91.

doi:10.1111/j.1748-5959.2007.00075

Crossley, A. D. (2015). https://gender.stanford.edu/news-publications/gender-news/women-leaders-does-likeability-really-matter. *The Clayman Institute for Gender Research,* (), Retrieved from https://gender.stanford.edu/news-publications/gender-news/women-leaders-does-likeability-really-matter

Cselenszky, M. P. (2012). *Phenomenological study of empowering women senior leaders in higher education* (Order No. 3505677). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global. (1013831695)

Cubillo, L., & Brown, M. (2003). Women into educational leadership and management: international differences? *Journal of Educational Administration, 41*(3), 278–291.

Davis, D. D., & Maldonado, C. C. (2015). Shattering the glass ceiling: The leadership development of African American women in higher education. *Advancing Women In Leadership, 35*, 48–64.

Davis, D. R. (2012). *A phenomenological study on the leadership development of African American women executives in academia and business* (Order No. 3553634). Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED552478

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2012). *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: New York University Press.

di Bartolo, A. N. (2015). Rethinking gender equity in higher education. *Association of American Colleges & Universities, 18*(2), Retrieved from https://www.aacu.org/diversitydemocracy/2015/spring/dibartolo

Diehl, A. B. (2014). *Making meaning of adversity: Experiences of women leaders in higher education* (Order No. 3589972). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Full Text. (1430903991)

Dowdy, J. K., & Hamilton, A. (2012). Lessons from a black woman administrator: "I'm

    still here". *Negro Educational Review, 62/63*(1-4), 189–212, 265–266. Retrieved

    https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1P3-2618675461/lessons-from-a-black-

    woman-administrator-i-m-still

Everett, S. J. (2014). *Rising to the top: Experiences of African American women in US*

    higher education (Order No. 3682210). Available from ProQuest Dissertations

    and Theses Full Text: Social Sciences. (1657426618)

Farmer, A. (2013). Myth of the 'wonder woman' is holding women back. Retrieved from

    https://gender.stanford.edu/news-publications/gender-news/myth-wonder-woman-

    holding-women-back

Few, A. (2007, April). Integrating black consciousness and critical race feminism into

    family studies research. *Journal of Family Issues, 28*(4), 452–473. doi:

    10.1177/0192513X06297330

Gamble, E. D., & Turner, N. J. (2015). Career ascension of African American women in

    executive positions in postsecondary institutions. *Journal of Organizational*

    Culture, Communication and Conflict, 19(1), 82–101. Available from ProQuest

    Dissertations and Theses Full Text. (1015350983)

Gardner, L., Jr., Barrett, T. G., & Pearson, L. C. (2014). African American administrators

    at PWIs: Enablers of and barriers to career success. *Journal of Diversity in Higher*

    Education, 7(4), 235–251. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0038317

Graham, M. A. (2015). *African American women administrators at the community*

    colleges of Illinois: An investigation of obstacles and persistence (Order No.

3739510). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Full Text: Social
Sciences. (1748656686)

Gumport, P. J. (Ed.) (2007). *Sociology of higher education: Contributions and their
contexts*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Gurchiek, K. (2017). Is Your Organization on Target in Developing Women for Senior
Leadership Roles?. *Society for Human Resource Management,* (),
Retrieved from https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/organizational-
and-employee-development/pages/is-your-organization-on-target-in-developing-
women-for-senior-leadership-roles.aspx

Gutiérrez y Muhs, G., Flores Niemann, Y., González, C. G., & Harris, A., P.
(2012). *Presumed incompetent: The intersections of race and class for women in
academia*. Boulder, CO: Utah State University Press.

Hankinson, M. (2013). *Understanding the work-life experiences and goals of women
middle managers in higher education* (Order No. 3599186). Available from
ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global. (1461456266)

Harris, B. N. (2014). *Talented tenth: A phenomenological investigation why black men
are missing in college* (Order No. 3648809). Available from ProQuest
Dissertations and Theses Global. (1652839936)

Harvey, W. B. (2014). Chief diversity officers and the wonderful world of
academe. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 7*(2), 92-100.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0036721

Hoffman, L. (2016). Black woman, white movement: Why black women are leaving the
feminist movement [Web log posts]. *The Huffington Post*.

Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lindsay-hoffman/black-woman-white-movemen_b_8569540.html

Holland, S., P. (2012). *The erotic life of racism,* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Hooks, B. (1984). *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. Cambridge, MA: Boston: South End Press.

Hooks, B. (1990). Postmodern blackness. *Postmodern Culture, 1*(1) Retrieved from http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Postmodern_Blackness_18270.html

Hoon, C. (2013). Meta-Synthesis of Qualitative Case Studies. *Organizational Research Methods, 16*(4), 522-556. doi: 10.1177/1094428113484969

Howard-Baptiste, S., & Harris, J. C. (2014). Teaching then and now: Black female scholars and the mission to move beyond borders. *Negro Educational Review, 65*(1-4), 5-22. Retrieved from https://search.proquest.com/docview/1650640977?accountid=458

Hudson, W. (2017). Plenty of Work Remains in Effort to Close Higher Ed Gender Pay Gap. Retrieved from http://diverseeducation.com/article/93821/

Jarmon, L. (2014). *Cracking the glass ceiling: A phenomenological study of women administrators in higher education* (Order No. 3627407). Retrieved from https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=4796&context=etd

Jordon, S. N. (2014). *African American women in higher education: Their leadership preparation, career paths, and perceived obstacles* (Order No. 3645827). Retrieved from https://julac.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-

explore/fulldisplay?docid=HKU_IZ51532725750003414&context=L&vid=hku_e

r&search_scope=HKU_ER&tab=er&lang=en_US

Kern, J. M. (2015). *Lessons learned from women leaders in higher education* (Order No.

3700116). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

(1680014868)

Lee, S. (2015). *Disrupting the discourse of motherhood and leadership: The experiences*

of women with children in senior-level higher education administration (Order

No. 3700298). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

(1682251370)

Lewis, H. H. (2012). *Barriers to women in roles of leadership in higher education: An*

examination of leadership texts (Order No. 3515005). Available from ProQuest

Dissertations and Theses Full Text. (1019241362)

Ley, D. F., & Paisley, P. O. (2004). Developing and nurturing excellence in African

American male adolescents. *Journal of Counseling and Development:*

JCD, 82(1), 10–17. Retrieved from

https://www.changemakers.com/sites/default/files/BaileyAAM%20MonographPr

oof[1].pdf

Livingston, R. W. (2012). Black Women Leaders Approved for Assertiveness in the

Workplace. *Association for Psychological Science,* (),

Retrieved from https://www.psychologicalscience.org/news/releases/black-

women-leaders-approved-for-assertiveness-in-the-workplace.html

Madhlangobe, L., & Gordon, S. P. (2012). Culturally responsive leadership in a diverse

school: A case study of a high school leader. National Association of Secondary

School Principals. NASSP Bulletin, 96(3), 177-202. Retrieved from

http://citation.allacademic.com/meta/p523298_index.html

Malterud, K., Dirk Siersma, Volkert, & Dorrit Guassora, A. (2015). Sample Size in

Qualitative Interview Studies: Guided by Information Power. *Qualitative Health*

Research, 26(13), 1753 - 1760.

Mapping a strategy for faculty diversification. (2013). *The California State University*

Institute for Teaching & Learning, (),

Retrieved from http://blogs.calstate.edu/itl/?p=206

Marshall, B., Cardon, P., Poddar, A., & Fontenot, R. (2013). Does sample size matter in

qualitative research?: A review of qualitative interviews in is research. *The*

Journal of Computer Information Systems, 54(1), 11–22.

DOI: 10.1080/08874417.2013.11645667

Martin, R. L. (2013). *African American leadership in urban institutions of higher*

education: A case narrative of the social, cultural, and institutional impact of an

individual leader at a historically white institution (Order No. 3597616).

Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global. (1458310205)

Mays, V. A. (2013). *African American women in public higher education administrative*

leadership in the state of Missouri: Perspectives on a half century of

progress (Order No. 3576029). Retrieved from

https://mospace.umsystem.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10355/37794/research.pdf

?sequence=2

McDonald, W. M. & Associates. (2002). *Creating campus community: In search of*

Ernest Boyer's legacy. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

McManus, K. L. (2013). *Career aspirations versus career actualizations of African American executive level administrators in higher education at historically black colleges and universities in a state in the southeast: An exploratory study* (Order No. 3563206). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Full Text. (1377545515)

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Miles, S. (2012). *Left behind: The status of black women in higher education administration* (Order No. 3519353). Retrieved from https://diginole.lib.fsu.edu/islandora/object/fsu:183012/datastream/PDF/view

Miles, R. M., Hu, R., & Dotson, K. (2013). Perceptions of diversity in higher education. *Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, *61*(2), 74-82. doi:10.1080/07377363.2013.796244

Munden, S. D. (2015). *Starting at the top: Increasing African American female representation at higher education administration in the United States* (Order No. 3703574). Retrieved from https://repository.library.northeastern.edu/files/neu:rx915c608/fulltext.pdf

Musil, C. M. (2015). Breaking Ranks. *Association of American Colleges & Universities, 18*(2), Retrieved from https://www.aacu.org/diversitydemocracy/2015/spring/musil

Nakitende, M. (2012). *Senior women leaders' motivation and success in higher education administration in the United States* (Order No. 3552631). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Full Text. (1312339606)

NASPA. (2015). Centering the experiences of back undergraduate women in

    college. Retrieved from https://www.naspa.org/about/blog/centering-the-

    experiences-of-black-women-undergraduates

National Center for Education Statistics. (2007). Fast facts: Degrees conferred by sex and

    race. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=72

Penny, J., and Gaillard, L. (2006). Mentoring African American women in higher

    education administration. *Race, Gender and Class, 13*(1), 191–200. Retrieved

    from https://www.jstor.org/stable/41675232?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

Ramirez, D. M. (2012). *Women in leadership: Factors that affect the achievement of*

    women in higher education administration at four-year public and private

    universities in Texas (Order No. 3525005). Retrieved from

    https://books.google.com/books/about/Women_in_Leadership.html?id=BMzcswE

    ACAAJ&hl=en&output=html_text

Renn, K. A. (2015). Colleges and universities of their own: Women's higher education

    institutions worldwide. *Association of American Colleges & Universities, 18*(2),

    Retrieved from https://www.aacu.org/diversitydemocracy/2015/spring/renn

Robinson, K. A. (2012). *Institutional factors contributing to the underrepresentation of*

    African American women in higher education: Perceptions of women in

    leadership positions. Retrieved from Electronic Theses and Dissertations. (Paper

    811)

Russell, A. (2015). Revitalizing our commitment to gender equality. *The Clayman*

    Institute for Gender Research, (),

Retrieved from https://gender.stanford.edu/news-publications/gender-news/revitalizing-our-commitment-gender-equality

Schneider, B. Z., Carden, W., Francisco, A., & Jones, T.O., (2011). Women 'opting out' of academia: At what cost? *Forum on Public Policy: A Journal of the Oxford Round Table, 2011*(2), Special section p 1.

Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ944197.pdf

Seo, B., & Hinton, D. (2009). How the see us, how we see them: Two women of color in higher education. *Race, Gender, and Class, 16*(3-4), 203–217.

Retrieved from http://www.rgc.uno.edu

Snap Survey Software, Solutions & Services. (2014). Retrieved from https://www.snapsurveys.com/

Stewart, R. (2012). *A comparison of the barriers midlevel management African American women face in negotiating through the labyrinth in education and business to corporate-level positions* (Order No. 3535772). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Full Text. (1286745342)

Studvent, L. (2016). *A narrative inquiry of African American women's experience aspiring to presidency in a career college* (Order No. 10148323). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Full Text. (1830476874)

Tetnowski, J. (2015). Qualitative case study research design. Perspectives on fluency & fluency disorders, 25(1). 39-45 doi:10.1044/ffd25.1.39

Thomas, N., & Kawashima-Ginsberg, K. (2015). Run like a girl … for office: How higher education can advance gender equity in politics. *Association of American*

Colleges & Universities, 18(2),

Retrieved from https://www.aacu.org/diversitydemocracy/2015/spring/thomas

Tienda, M., (2013). Diversity ≠ Inclusion. Educational Researcher, 42(9), 467-475. doi: 10.3102/0013189X13516164

Trotman Reid, P. (2012). Black and female in academia. *Diversity in Leadership, Spring Supplement.* Retrieved from http://www.acenet.edu/the-presidency/columns-and-features/Pages/Black-and-Female-in-Academia.aspx

Turner, C. S. (2013). Advancing diversity in higher education. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 6*(3), 155-157. Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/advancing-diversity-inclusion.pdf

United States Census Bureau. (2010). State and county quickfacts. Retrieved from http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48000.html

University of California Los Angeles. (2009). *What is critical race theory?* [Web page from UCLA School of Public Affairs/ Critical Race Studies]. Retrieved from https://spacrs.wordpress.com/what-is-critical-race-theory/

Walker, A. L. (2015). *Examining perceptions of the underrepresentation of African American faculty in higher education administration* (Order No. 3734402). Retrieved from https://research.phoenix.edu/dissertation-abstract/examining-perceptions-underrepresentation-african-american-faculty-higher

Walker, G. N. (2016). *Missing in leadership: Mentoring African American women in higher education* (Order No. 10099584). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Full Text: Social Sciences. (1783102017)

Wilder, J., Bertrand Jones, T., & Osborne-Lampkin, L. (2013). A Profile of Black Women in the 21st Century Higher education: Still Learning from the "Outsider-Within. *Journal of Research Initiatives, 1*(1), 25–38. Retrieved from http://digitalcommons.uncfsu.edu/jri/vol1/iss1/5

Williams, M. M. (2013). *Why can't we get more minority applicants for our openings? African American leadership at rural and least culturally diverse community college administrations: Staying or leaving* (Order No. 3596970). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Full Text. (1449815979)

Wolfe, B. L., & Patterson Dilworth, P. (2015). Transitioning Normalcy. *Review of Educational Research, 85*(4), 667 - 697. doi: 10.3102/0034654314565667

Yancy-Tooks, B. (2012). *Impact of selection practices on career advancement of African American women in community college administration* (Order No. 3510599). Retrieved from https://search.proquest.com/openview/3c8ebde08bf348e5e74324ff1d5a8c1a/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y

Zonana, K. (2017). Pursuing parity: A new generation of female faculty is gathering data on why there should be more of them. Retrieved from https://stanmed.stanford.edu/2017spring/women-faculty-use-data-to-seek-parity-in-academic-medicine.html

Appendix A

Informed Consent

Informed Consent: Participants 18 years of age and older

Dear_____,

My name is Tadzia Dennis-Jackson and I am a student at University of Phoenix working on a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration. I am doing a research study entitled African American Women and Their Perceived Barriers to Attaining Leadership Positions: A Qualitative Case Study. The purpose of the research study is to investigate the perceptions held by African American women, who have attained administrative positions in higher education institutions regarding the gender and race-based factors that may have inhibited their progress.

Your participation with this research study and will consist of a questionnaire. The questionnaire will take approximately 5-10 minutes depending on your responses. You can remove yourself from this study at any time without fear of retaliation or repercussion. All data received during the process will be destroyed. The questionnaire data will be gathered and retained using Survey Monkey. You can decide to be a part of this study or not. Once you start, you can withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits. The results of the research study may be published but your identity will remain confidential and your name will not be made known to any outside party.

In this research, there are no foreseeable risks to you.

Although there may be no direct benefit to you, a possible benefit from your being part of this study is by helping to make impact on higher education institutions and their ability to recruit, promote, and retain African American women in leadership roles.

If you have any questions about the research study, please contact me at ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇ or at tadjackson@yahoo.com. For questions about your rights as a study participant, or any concerns or complaints, please contact the University of Phoenix Institutional Review Board via email at IRB@phoenix.edu.

As a participant in this study, you should understand the following:

1. You may decide to not be a part of this study or you may want to withdraw from the study at any time. If you want to withdraw, you can do so without any problems. Participants can withdraw verbally or by written communication.

2. Your identity will be kept confidential.

3. Tadzia Dennis-Jackson, the researcher, has fully explained the nature of the research study and has answered all of your questions and concerns.

4. Data will be kept secured through password protected files. The data will be kept for three years then destroyed through file deletion and erasure of recordings.

5. The results of this study may be published.

"By checking the accept box, you agree that you understand the nature of the study, the possible risks to you as a participant, and how your identity will be kept confidential or anonymous if the study does not involve personal identifiers. By checking the accept box, you are certifying that you are 18 years old or older and that you give your permission to volunteer as a participant in the study that is described here."

(☐) I accept the above terms.   (☐) I do not accept the above terms.

(CHECK ONE)

Signature of the research participant _____ Date _____

Tadzia Dennis-Jackson _____ Date _____

Appendix B

Questionnaire Tool

1. Do you ACCEPT or DO NOT ACCEPT the information provided in the * informed consent?

- ACCEPT
- DO NOT ACCEPT

2. What is your current location?

- In the United States
- Outside of the United States

3. Are you Black or African American?

- Yes
- No

4. Are you female?

- Yes
- No

5. Are you 21 years of age or older?

- Yes
- No

6. Are you a member of African American Women in Higher Education (AAWHE) Organization?

- Yes
- No

7. Are you currently employed, or were previously employed, at a .5FTE or higher as a higher education administrator at the dean level or above?

- Yes
- No

8. How long have you been in this position?

9. In the process of moving into an administration position did you encounter obstacles or barriers?

- yes

- no

10. Did these obstacles or barriers hinder your journey into higher education administration?

- Yes
- No

11. Since you answered yes to the previous question please give examples of how these obstacles hindered you.

12. Since you answered no to the previous question what skills do you feel helped you earn a position in higher education administration?

13. What factors do you feel contributed to the barriers and obstacles you have faced?

14. Do you feel the barriers and obstacles you faced hinder other African American women? If so, why?

15. How did you overcome the barriers and obstacles you have faced in your assent to a higher education administration position?

16. List your top three resources for combating the barriers and obstacles you faced. Please explain each resource.

17. Do you have any additional information you would like to share about your experience obtaining an administrative position in higher education that pertains to this research?

- Yes
- No

If you are interested in talking more about your experiences pursuing a position in higher education administration in a 30-45 minute interview, please email the researcher at tadjackson@yahoo.com.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey; it is very much appreciated.

Appendix C

Introduction Letter

From: Tadzia Dennis-Jackson
Sent:
To:
Subject: African American Women in Higher Education Research Study

Dear Participant,

I am writing to ask for your help with a research study titled African American Women and their Perceived Barriers to Attaining Leadership Positions: A Qualitative Case Study. You are part of a random sample of African American women who currently hold a leadership position in higher education or have previously held a leadership position in higher education. You have been chosen to complete a brief questionnaire about your experience as a leader in higher education. The goal of this questionnaire is to gain information on the barriers African American women faced in their pursuit of a leadership position in higher education. I am especially interested in learning more about you as a participant to identify the possibility of you moving forward in this study.

The questionnaire is short, contains 16 questions, and should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. To begin the survey, click on this link:

This questionnaire is confidential. Your participation is voluntary, and if you come to any question you prefer not to answer please skip it and go on to the next. Should you have any questions or comments please contact Tadzia Dennis-Jackson, the doctoral student in charge of this study, at tadjackson@yahoo.com or (928) 853-4812.

I truly appreciate your help with this survey and your willingness to participate in this research.

Many Thanks,

Tadzia Dennis-Jackson

Appendix D

Reminder Letter

From: Tadzia Dennis-Jackson
Sent:
To:
Subject: African American Women in Higher Education Research Study

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your willingness to support my research by completing this questionnaire. This email serves as a reminder; please complete the questionnaire as soon as possible. The questionnaire is short, contains 16 questions, and should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. To begin the survey, click on this link:

This questionnaire is confidential. Your participation is voluntary, and if you come to any question you prefer not to answer, please skip it and go on to the next. Should you have any questions or comments, please contact Tadzia Dennis-Jackson, the doctoral student in charge of this study, at tadjackson@yahoo.com or (928) 853-4812.

I truly appreciate your help with this survey and your willingness to participate in this research.

Many Thanks,

Tadzia Dennis-Jackson

Appendix E

Informed Consent - Interview

University of Phoenix ®

Informed Consent: Participants 18 years of age and older

Dear_____,

My name is Tadzia Dennis-Jackson and I am a student at University of Phoenix working on a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration. I am doing a research study entitled African American Women and Their Perceived Barriers to Attaining Leadership Positions: A Qualitative Case Study. The purpose of the research study is to investigate the perceptions held by African American women, who have attained administrative positions in higher education institutions regarding the gender and race-based factors that may have inhibited their progress.

Your participation with this research study and will consist of an interview. The interview will take approximately 15-20 minutes depending on your responses. You can remove yourself from this study at any time without fear of retaliation or repercussion. All data received during the process will be destroyed. The interview data will be gathered and retained using an electronic media tool. You can decide to be a part of this study or not. Once you start, you can withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits. The results of the research study may be published but your identity will remain confidential and your name will not be made known to any outside party.

In this research, there are no foreseeable risks to you.

Although there may be no direct benefit to you, a possible benefit from your being part of this study is by helping to make impact on higher education institutions and their ability to recruit, promote, and retain African American women in leadership roles.

If you have any questions about the research study, please contact me at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or at tadjackson@yahoo.com. For questions about your rights as a study participant, or any concerns or complaints, please contact the University of Phoenix Institutional Review Board via email at IRB@phoenix.edu.

As a participant in this study, you should understand the following:

6. You may decide to not be a part of this study or you may want to withdraw from the study at any time. If you want to withdraw, you can do so without any problems. Participants can withdraw verbally or by written communication.

7. Your identity will be kept confidential.

8. Tadzia Dennis-Jackson, the researcher, has fully explained the nature of the research study and has answered all of your questions and concerns.

9. Data will be kept secured through password protected files. The data will be kept for three years then destroyed through file deletion and erasure of recordings.

10. The results of this study may be published.

107

"By checking the accept box, you agree that you understand the nature of the study, the possible risks to you as a participant, and how your identity will be kept confidential or anonymous if the study does not involve personal identifiers. By checking the accept box, you are certifying that you are 18 years old or older and that you give your permission to volunteer as a participant in the study that is described here."

(☐) I accept the above terms.   (☐) I do not accept the above terms.

(CHECK ONE)

Signature of the research participant _____ Date _____

Tadzia Dennis-Jackson _____ Date _____

Appendix F

Interview Questionnaire

Research Questions:

1. How have gender- and race-based factors hindered African American

   women's pursuit into leadership positions in higher education?

2. Why did African American women gain leadership positions in higher

   education despite the barriers they possibly experienced?

Interview Questions:

1. Tell me about a time you encountered a barrier as you were trying to enter administrative ranks in higher education.
2. Did gender and race hinder your pursuit of a higher education leadership positions, if so how?
3. What barriers have you experienced that prevented your upward mobility into higher education leadership?
4. Tell me more about how you overcame those barriers?
5. What resources did you use to help you overcome the barriers you encountered?
6. How have you supported African American women in their pursuit of higher education administration positions?
7. What do you think higher education institutions can do to reduce the barriers you faced?
8. What advice would you give African American women who are pursuing higher education leadership positions?

Appendix G

AAWHE Recruitment Email

Dear**,**

One of our members, Tadzia Jackson, is looking to connect with women to interview to complete her research for her dissertation. Tadzia is a Ph. D. student at the University of Phoenix.

Tadzia's dissertation topic is African American Women and their Perceived Barriers to Attaining Leadership Positions: A Qualitative Case Study. Below please find a copy of the first chapter of Tadzia's dissertation for your review.

Please contact Tadzia Jackson directly at tadjackson@yahoo.com with questions and/or if you are interested in participating in this study.

The specific problem is that African American women face significant barriers

that inhibit their ability to progress in their careers and obtain administrative

positions in higher education institutions (Gamble & Turner, 2015). The purpose

of this qualitative case study is to investigate the perceptions held by African

American women, who have attained administrative positions in higher education

institutions, about the gender and race-based factors that may have inhibited their

progress. The population of the study is American Women in Higher Education;

identify as African American; and have attained an administrative position of

dean or above in higher education. Data will be collected through a questionnaire

of AAWHE members; interviews of a subset of the sample; and an analysis of

historical data gathered from websites that will provide historical data based on

African American women in higher education administration.

Thank you,

Appendix H

Interview Protocol

Introduction

My name is Tadzia Dennis-Jackson and I am a Ph.D. student at University of

Phoenix. I am writing my dissertation on African American women and their perceived

barriers to attaining leadership positions in higher education: A case study. Thank you for

completing the phase 1 questionnaire and your willingness to participate in phase 3, the

interview.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the perceptions held

by African American women, who have attained administrative positions in higher

education institutions, about the gender and race-based factors that may have inhibited

their progress.

Purpose of the Interview

The purpose of this interview is to assist the researcher in completing phase 3 of

the data collection process titled interviews. You have been identified as an African

American female who works in or has worked in higher education administration. This

interview and your responses will be used to identify possible themes that exist among

African American women who are leaders in higher education. The researcher hopes to

provide this research to institutions of higher education showing them what African

American women experience as they pursue leadership in higher education.

Protocol

This interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes. To ensure your questions are transcribed properly this interview will be recorded using the Skype system. The researcher will stick to the prescribed interview questions but will ask additional questions as needed for clarification. Once the interview is complete the researcher will code the responses and will not use any identifying information for this research. The researcher will then use the coded responses to complete the dissertation.

Informed Consent

Your signed informed consent has been received however, please review the informed consent form that is showing on the screen. Do you have any questions before the interview begins?

Informed Consent: Participants 18 years of age and older

Dear_____,

My name is Tadzia Dennis-Jackson and I am a student at University of Phoenix working on a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration. I am doing a research study entitled African American Women and Their Perceived Barriers to Attaining Leadership Positions: A Qualitative Case Study. The purpose of the research study is to investigate the perceptions held by African American women, who have attained administrative positions in higher education institutions regarding the gender and race-based factors that may have inhibited their progress.

Your participation with this research study and will consist of an interview. The interview will take approximately 15-20 minutes depending on your responses. You can remove yourself from this study at any time without fear of retaliation or repercussion. All data received during the process will be destroyed. The interview data will be gathered and retained using an electronic media tool. You can decide to be a part of this study or not. Once you start, you can withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits. The results of the research study may be published but your identity will remain confidential and your name will not be made known to any outside party.

In this research, there are no foreseeable risks to you.

Although there may be no direct benefit to you, a possible benefit from your being part of this study is by helping to make impact on higher education institutions and their ability to recruit, promote, and retain African American women in leadership roles.

If you have any questions about the research study, please contact me at ███████ or at ████████████████. For questions about your rights as a study participant, or any concerns or complaints, please contact the University of Phoenix Institutional Review Board via email at IRB@phoenix.edu.

As a participant in this study, you should understand the following:

11. You may decide to not be a part of this study or you may want to withdraw from the study at any time. If you want to withdraw, you can do so without any problems. Participants can withdraw verbally or by written communication.

12. Your identity will be kept confidential.

13. Tadzia Dennis-Jackson, the researcher, has fully explained the nature of the research study and has answered all of your questions and concerns.

14. Data will be kept secured through password protected files. The data will be kept for three years then destroyed through file deletion and erasure of recordings.

15. The results of this study may be published.

"By checking the accept box, you agree that you understand the nature of the study, the possible risks to you as a participant, and how your identity will be kept confidential or anonymous if the study does not involve personal identifiers. By checking the accept box, you are certifying that you are 18 years old or older and that you give your permission to volunteer as a participant in the study that is described here."

(☐) I accept the above terms.   (☐) I do not accept the above terms.

(CHECK ONE)

Signature of the research participant _____ Date _____

Tadzia Dennis-Jackson _____ Date _____

Interview Questions:

1. Tell me about a time you encountered a barrier as you were trying to enter administrative ranks in higher education.

2. Did gender and race hinder your pursuit of a higher education leadership positions, if so how?

3. What barriers have you experienced that prevented your upward mobility into higher education leadership?

4. Tell me more about how you overcame those barriers?

5. What resources did you use to help you overcome the barriers you encountered?

6. How have you supported African American women in their pursuit of higher education administration positions?

7. What do you think higher education institutions can do to reduce the barriers you faced?

8. What advice would you give African American women who are pursuing higher education leadership positions?

Thank you

Thank you for participating in this research study. Once the research is complete and the researcher has published the information you will be privately notified on where you can view the completed study.