African American Women Administrators

Exploring Access and Agency

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Objectives

- Introduce the study
  - Chapter I, II, and III
- Discuss findings
  - Chapter IV
- Share conclusion and recommendations
 - Chapter V

Chapter I - Introduction

➢ Institutions of higher education (HIED) have become a cornerstone to career progression in the United States (U.S.). Even with the twentieth-century technological revolution, colleges and universities remain the doorway for educational and career advancement.

Statement of the Problem

➢ In academic environments where the demographics of students are rapidly changing, very little is known about how HIED strategizes to diversify its workforce by recruiting and retaining minority staff and administrators, specifically African American women.

They Exist….

but in very few numbers.
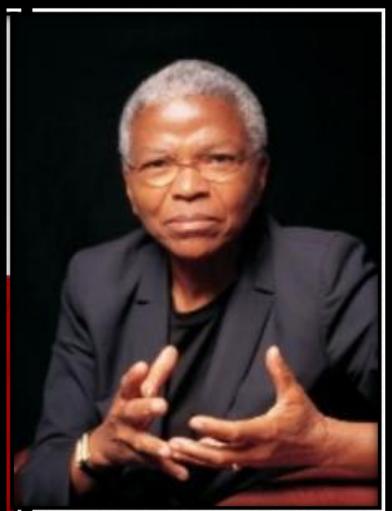
Theoretical Frameworks

Critical Race Theory

- Overarching power to vividly explain broad experiences of a collective group

- Storytelling

- Use of voice or naming your reality is a way that CRT links form and substance in scholarship

Black Feminist Theory

- Illuminating common experiences of being an African American woman in a discriminatory society.

- Encompasses theoretical interpretations of Black women's reality by those who live it.

Research Questions

1. What contributes to the lack of representation of African American women in leadership and administrative roles in the academy?

2. What recruitment strategies would participants suggest to increase the number of AAWA in the academy?

3. What retention strategies would participants suggest to increase the representation of AAWA in the academy?

4. What rewards do AAWA receive from their position in the academy?

Chapter II – Literature Overview

From 1986 to 2006 ----

- ➢ The percentage of women in presidencies had increased from 10 percent to 23 percent.

- ➢ The percentage of ethnic or racial minorities had increased from 8 percent to 14 percent.

In public research universities ---

- ➢ African American faculty hold 5.2 percent of full-time faculty positions and 3.6 percent in ladder-rank positions.

Scope of the Research

➢ Limited research

    ➢ Access to higher education

    ➢ Coping mechanisms

    ➢ Importance of mentorship

Wolfman (1997) *while black women administrators remain virtually invisible in white academia, they are accorded high status and respect in the African American community"* (p. 158)

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory

- Has an overarching illuminating power due to storytelling.

- Ability to analyze myths,, presuppositions, and received wisdom.

Black Feminist Theory

- Examine the distinctive voices while illuminating common experiences.

- Ability to "encompass theoretical interpretations of Black women's reality by those who live it" (Collins, 1991, p.22)

General Comparison

Black women

➤ **34%** more likely to work in management

➤ **45%** headed by a woman w/out spouse

➤ **75%** working w/children under the age of 18

➤ Earned a median wage of **$592**

White women

➤ **42%** more likely to work in management

➤ **15%** headed by a woman w/out spouse

➤ **71%** working w/children under the age of 18

➤ Earned a median wage of **$684**

Historical Advances

- **The Women's Movement** – advanced opportunities for women
  - National Association of Colored Women
  - Rosa Parks – boycotts
  - Fannie Lou Hamer – voter registration
  - Coretta Scott King – opposing nuclear arms
  - AA women were deliberately kept out "marginalized" from early efforts

The Civil Rights Act & Affirmative Action

- Permitted lawsuits on behalf of African Americans
- Prohibited federal funds to colleges and universities that discriminated based on protected classes
- Prohibited racial discrimination in public places such as cinemas, restaurants, and hotels
- Required employers to provide equal employment opportunities

The Academy

- Institutional racism has become less obvious since the enactment of AA

- Restrict opportunities for minorities to gain fair employment access

- Permit AAW to begin their higher education career in an entry-level position

- Employ double standards between:

  - men and women,

  - black women and white women

Educational Climate … as Employee

➢ **Feeling isolated and underrepresented.**

❑ *Hired or promoted to a management position, she is usually the 'only one' of a few.*

➢ **The double edge sword: race and gender.**

❑ *Some questioned my ability to cut it because I am woman, my ability to cut it because I am an African American.*

➢ **Being 'other.'**

❑ *The position lacks the power and authority to propose real change.*

➢ **Being torn between family, community, and career.**

❑ *Sacrifice their family and commitments to their community to focus on advancing their career.*

Methodology

Highlight and examine the internal and external barriers of career progression, by documenting the voices of AAWA in higher education, through structured interviews.

- 6 Participants
- Presidents, vice presidents and deans
- Convenient sampling
- Minnesota, Georgia or other southern state
- Public or private
- Two-year or Four-year
- College or University

Instruments for Data Collection

Access Participants

- MnSCU Human Resources

- Web search

- Advisor, professional colleagues, and word of mouth

For Interviews

- Personal face-to-face interviews

- Telephone interviews

- Use of any type of audio recording device

  - One interview is required to be face-to-face

Analysis

- Hand-written notes

- Transcribe transcripts

- Common themes/patterns/topics

- Assigning words and phrases "coding"

All through the two theoretical frameworks: BFT and CRT

BFT

African American women as a group may have experiences that provide us with a unique angle of vision.

Collins, 1991, p. 25

1. AA women have common experiences based on race and gender.
2. Variation of responses to core themes.
3. Personal and professional experiences of AAW and their exposure to cultural experiences.
4. Self-consciousness and understanding multiple complexities of their unique struggle.

CRT

Evoke the personal, the professional, and the political to illuminate issues of race, class, and gender.

Chapman, 2007, p. 157

1. Emphasize discrimination from the perspective of people of color.

2. Acknowledge the social construct of race shaped by political pressures.

3. Tackle other differences such as gender, class, and inequities experienced by a person.

Research question	CRT Tenet	BFT Tenet
1 What recruitment strategies are used to attract African American women to leadership and administrative positions in the Academy?	**1** Emphasize discrimination from the perspective of people of color.	**1** African American women have common experiences based on race and gender.
2 What retention strategies are incorporated to support African American women leaders and administrators in the Academy?	**2** Acknowledge the social construct of race shaped by political pressures.	**2** Using variation of responses to core themes. Variation recognizes the diversity of responses by African American women.
3 What are the perceived challenges of African American women leaders and administrators in higher education?	**3** Tackle other differences such as gender, class, and inequities experienced by a person.	**3** Highlighting the personal and professional experiences of African American women and their exposure to cultural experiences.
4 What rewards do African American women leaders and administrators receive from their position in the academy?		**4** Analyze collected data of self-consciousness and understanding the multiple complexities of their unique struggle.

Procedure

- Pilot

- Obtaining list of potential participants

- Send study invitation

- Selection of participants and alternates

- Scheduling first interview

- Send interview confirmation letter

- Conduct first interview
  - *Ask for second interview date*

- Send second interview confirmation letter

- Transcribe

- Send transcripts to participants for review and editing, if necessary

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