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Perceptions of Career Advancement Factors Held by Black Student Affairs Administrators: A Gender Comparison

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PERCEPTIONS OF CAREER ADVANCEMENT FACTORS HELD BY BLACK STUDENT AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATORS: A GENDER COMPARISON

By

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of gender, institutional characteristics, years of professional experience in higher education, and highest earned degree on perceptions of career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female and male student affairs administrators. Midlevel Black female student affairs administrators were more likely than their Black male counterparts to perceive disparities related to career advancement factors. They perceived elevated professional standards, gender discrimination, underutilization of their skills, and negative societal attitudes regarding Black women.

Although women were more likely to perceive disparities in career advancement factors, women at medium institutions were less likely than men at medium institutions to perceive that they are subjected to negative societal attitudes about Black people of their gender group. When gender was removed from the analysis, all administrators at medium institutions were more likely than their counterparts at small institutions to perceive that they are included in decision-making processes. Additional findings beyond the scope of the original research questions indicate that years of experience and highest earned degree also impact the career advancement perceptions held by all of the participants in this study.

The sample population for this study were members of College Student Educators International (ACPA), the National Association of Student Affairs Professionals (NASAP), and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). Data was collected using an electronic version of the “Perceptions of Career Advancement Survey” adapted from Coleman’s (2002) “African American Student Affairs Administrator Survey”.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Various characteristics and factors influence the advancement of midlevel higher education administrators to senior-level positions. They include academic credentials, professional experience in higher education, institutional characteristics, promotion opportunities, organizational hierarchy, and traditional hiring practices (Armstrong, Campbell, & Ostroth, 1978; Harder, 1983; Mills, 1993; Sagaria & Johnsrud, 1992; Twombly, 1990). These characteristics and factors can serve as facilitators or barriers to career advancement (Coleman, 1988; Dingell & Maloney, 2002; Herbrand, 2001; Kanter, 1977; Kanter, 1993; Rickard, 1985; Smith, 1998; U.S. Department of Labor, 1991). The combination of the identified characteristics, along with race and gender, impacts career advancement for Black administrators. Researchers have identified gender, institutional characteristics, years of professional experience in higher education, and degree attainment as specific characteristics that potentially impact the career advancement perceptions of Black administrators (Banner, 2003; Bridges, 1996; Coleman, 2002; Collins, 2000; Gregory, 1995; Holmes, 2003; Singh, Robinson, & Williams-Green, 1995; Smith, 1998; Taylor, 2000). These characteristics were examined in this study to determine their impact on Black administrators’ perceptions of career advancement factors.

Midlevel Black female student affairs administrators were the focus of this study because they have been found to perceive various career advancement barriers and are likely to be employed in midlevel and lower-level student affairs positions at smaller, public institutions (Banner, 2003; Konrad & Pfeffer, 1991; Moses, 1997; Reason, Walker, & Robinson, 2002; Reason, 2003; Scott, 2003; Taylor, 2000). Coleman (2002) found that Black women administrators at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) were more likely to perceive career advancement barriers than Black women administrators at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). In addition to these findings, Black women administrators have also been found to be under-represented as senior student affairs officers (SSAOs) in most higher education institutions (Evans, 1988; Hamrick & Carlisle, 1990; Jones & Komives, 2001; McEwen, Engstrom, & Williams, 1990; Twale, 1995). These perceptions and trends indicate the need to focus scholarly attention on factors that could prevent Black women administrators from advancing into senior-level positions at certain types of institutions (Banner, 2003; Coleman, 2002; Gregory, 1995; Moses, 1997; Scott, 2003; Singh, Robinson, & Williams-Green, 1995, Taylor, 2000).

Career advancement has been defined as the progression of an individual into employment positions with increased responsibilities and/or compensation (Mills, 1993; Sagaria & Johnsrud, 1988). In this study, career advancement factors are individual issues, ideas, behaviors, or practices that impact career advancement. Coleman (2002) identified 27 career advancement factors that are relevant for Black women administrators. They include gender discrimination, networking opportunities, mentoring, and education level. Each of the career advancement factors are discussed in the “Conceptual Framework Overview” section of this chapter.
Researchers have identified several characteristics that impact career advancement for Black women administrators in higher education institutions. Gender, institutional characteristics, years of professional experience in higher education, and highest earned degree are included among these characteristics and were examined to determine if they impact perceptions regarding career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female and male student affairs administrators. The framework for this study is illustrated as a conceptual map in Table 1.

Table 1
Impact of Gender, Institutional Characteristics, Years of Experience, and Highest Earned Degree on Perceptions of Career Advancement Factors
Before discussing individual characteristics and career advancement factors, it is important to address issues that contribute to fundamental differences in career advancement for women, men, and minorities in various professions. Several researchers have used Kanter’s (1977; 1993) analysis of men and women in a corporate organization as a foundation for understanding the career experiences of college and university administrators (Banner, 2003; Herbrand, 2001; Holmes, 2003; Johnsrud, Heck, & Rosser, 2000; Komives, 1990; Kulis, 1997; Moore, 1990; VanDerlinden, 2003; Wong, 2002). Kanter’s analysis of the structure of opportunity and the proportional representation of employees indicates that these phenomena shape conditions in which women and minorities often have limited opportunities for career advancement. Kanter’s work is relevant for the current study and was used as the foundation for the conceptual framework.

Kanter (1977; 1993) defined opportunity as potential career “mobility and growth” (p. 246). Opportunity is influenced by an individual’s position within an organization and her/his access to career advancement opportunities. Opportunity is also tied to power, which is defined as the ability to pool and utilize important organizational resources such as financial and human resources. Proportions “refer to the social composition of people in approximately the same situation. It is a simple quantitative matter of how many people there are of relevant social types in various parts of the
organization” (p. 248). Although women and racial/ethnic minority employees often have numerical minority status in some organizations, it is important to recognize that these groups can have numerical majority status. Kanter argues that individuals with numerical majority status are more likely to experience career advancement and inclusion in professional settings. Although White men often have numerical majority status in organizations, studies have shown that they have experienced career advancement barriers and exclusion in the nursing profession where they were numerical minorities (Kanter, 1977; 1993).

Based on these organizational phenomena, Kanter found that opportunity was often structured in ways that systematically excluded women and minorities from advancement opportunities. For example, organizational leaders sought to promote employees who resembled the collective leadership demographic because employees with these traits were believed to be trustworthy. The study also showed that numerical minority group members, who are often women and racial/ethnic minorities, faced additional challenges that limited their career advancement opportunities such as colleagues’ underestimation of their professional abilities and exclusion from professional networks that often lead to promotion. Kanter’s findings provide important contextual information about gender differences in career advancement.

**Gender**

Black women have experienced a unique set of barriers to academic and professional growth that have been associated with their gender and race (Collins, 2000; Ihle, 1985; Vaz, 1995). Studies have shown that Black women administrators and other minority women educators experience a complex array of barriers to career advancement such as limited support for professional networking, unsupportive professional environments, and gender discrimination (Banner, 2003; Blackhurst, 2000; Coleman, 1998; Coleman, 2002; Singh, Robinson, & Williams-Green, 1995). Because Black women experience these gender challenges, it is important to examine the impact of gender on their perceptions of career advancement factors (Banner, 2003; Blackhurst, 2000; Carey, 2002; Coleman, 1998; Coleman, 2002; Collins, 2000; Holmes, 2003; Hyle, 1993; Ihle, 1985; Miller & Vaughn, 1997; Nelson, 1995; Perkins, 1983; Scott, 2003; Singh, Robinson, & Williams-Green, 1995).

**Institutional Characteristics**

Studies have shown that women administrators are more likely to experience career advancement at specific kinds of institutions (Konrad & Pf effer, 1991; Kulis & Shaw, 1996; Kulis, 1997; Moses, 1997; Reason, 2003). Within the student affairs profession, women are more likely to be represented as senior-level administrators in smaller, private, four-year institutions (CUPA, 1997; Evans & Kuh, 1983; Herbrand, 2001; Jones & Komives, 2001; Randall, Daugherty, Globetti, 1995; Rickard, 1985). Women administrators are hired more frequently at lower employment levels and at institutions with large female populations (Konrad & Pf effer, 1991; Kulis, 1997).
Black administrators are more frequently employed at smaller, public four-year institutions that are located in urban areas with large minority populations (Konrad & Pfeffer, 1991; Moses, 1997; Reason, Walker, & Robinson, 2002; Reason, 2003; Taylor, 2000). Black female student affairs administrators, like other women and minority administrators, tend to be concentrated in lower and midlevel positions and are under-represented as SSAOs in most colleges and universities (Evans, 1988; Hamrick & Carlisle, 1990; Jones & Komives, 2001; McEwen, Engstrom, & Williams, 1990; Twale, 1995).

In a study of Black women student affairs administrators who were employed at different types of institutions, Coleman (2002) found that administrators at PWIs were more likely to perceive limited opportunities for networking and mentoring than administrators at HBCUs. Findings reported by Coleman and other researchers (Jackson, 2003; Reason, Walker, & Robinson, 2002; Reason, 2003) regarding institutional type indicate the importance of examining the impact of institutional characteristics on perceptions of career advancement factors held by Black female and male administrators.

Years of Professional Experience in Higher Education

Higher education administrators who experience career advancement have often accumulated several years of professional experience in various employment positions at colleges and universities. Over half of the participants in Coleman’s (2002) study had at least ten years of professional experience in higher education. Studies have also shown that most SSAOs gained at least ten years of professional experience in higher education before being appointed to their first senior-level student affairs position (Herbrand, 2001; Lunsford, 1984).

Rickard (1985) found that most SSAOs held an average of three professional positions before entering their first SSAO position. Lunsford (1984) emphasized the importance of being employed in midlevel positions above the level of director. However no consensus has been reached regarding this issue. The impact of years of professional experience on career advancement for Black student affairs administrators is also unclear. Therefore, it is important to determine the impact professional experience on the career advancement of midlevel Black women and men in the student affairs profession.

Highest Degree Earned

In addition to gaining professional experience, earning a doctoral degree is perceived to facilitate career advancement (Banner, 2003; Coleman, 2002; Harder, 1983; Kuh, Evans, & Duke, 1983; Lunsford, 1984; Paul & Hoover, 1980; Scott, 2003; Smith, 1998). Smith (1998) found that Black female higher education administrators were more likely than their White female counterparts to believe that a doctoral degree promoted career advancement. However, the Black women in Smith’s study cited a master’s degree as their highest earned degree more often than White female administrators.
All participants in Rolle’s (1997) study of senior-level higher education administrators had doctoral degrees. Nearly 92% of participants in Bridge’s (1996) study of Black higher education administrators had earned graduate degrees; and over 65% of the respondents had earned doctoral degrees. In an analysis of the 1999-2000 National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Salary Survey, Reason et al (2002) reported that over half (53%) of the participants reported that a master’s degrees was their highest degree and about 31% reported that a doctoral degree was their highest degree.

Black and White administrators from both gender groups have earned graduate degrees and perceive that a doctoral degree facilitates career advancement (Banner, 2003; Bridges, 1996; Coleman, 2002; Harder, 1983; Kuh, Evans, & Duke, 1983; Lunsford, 1984; Paul & Hoover, 1980; Rolle, 1997; Scott, 2003; Smith, 1998). However, studies have continued to show that Black women administrators perceive career advancement barriers (Banner, 2003; Coleman, 2002; Gregory, 1995; Moses, 1997; Scott, 2003; Singh, Robinson, & Williams-Green, 1995, Taylor, 2000). These findings invite additional scholarly attention to the impact of education level on perceptions of career advancement factors held Black female and male student affairs administrators.

Career Advancement Factors

Coleman (2002) identified 27 career advancement factors that are relevant for Black women administrators. The factors are related to professional growth opportunities, competence, attitudes, exclusion and isolation, position demands, and position requirements (Banner, 2003; Blackhurst, 2000; Carey, 2002; Coleman, 1998; Coleman, 2002; Collins, 2000; Harder, 1983; Holmes, 2003; Howard-Hamilton & Williams, 1996; Hyle, 1993; Ihle, 1985; Kanter, 1977; 1993; Kuh, Evans, & Duke, 1983; Lunsford, 1984; Miller & Vaughn, 1997; Nelson, 1995; Paul & Hoover, 1980; Perkins, 1983; Rickard, 1985; Scott, 2003; Singh, Robinson, & Williams-Green, 1995; Smith, 1998). Individual career advancement factors will be identified in the “Definition of Terms” section of this chapter.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1) Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female and Black male student affairs administrators?

2) Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female and Black male student affairs administrators who are employed at different types of institutions (public/private; student enrollment size)?
3) Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female and Black male student affairs administrators based on years of professional experience in higher education?

4) Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female and Black male student affairs administrators based on highest earned degree?

Midlevel Administrators and Career Advancement

Several factors have been identified as barriers to career advancement for higher education administrators. They include poorly defined career paths and limited career advancement opportunities within the organizational hierarchy of higher education institutions. Career paths for higher education administrators are described as flat, short, and limited; midlevel administrative positions outnumber senior-level administrative positions. Administrative career paths have also been described as unclear because individuals enter senior-level administrative positions from a variety of positions within and outside academe (Twombly, 1990). Other career mobility issues include limited opportunities for employment across institutional types, competition for jobs among internal and external candidates, and the increasing need for a terminal degree (Armstrong, Campbell, & Ostroth, 1978; Harder, 1983; Twombly, 1990; Mills, 1993; Sagaria & Johnsrud, 1992; Johnsrud et al, 2000; Herbrand, 2001).

Most studies on career advancement for student affairs administrators examine the experiences of senior-level student affairs administrators. However, it is important to examine the mobility of midlevel administrators to completely understand career advancement within the student affairs profession (Sagaria & Johnsrud, 1988). Because the literature is limited regarding career advancement for midlevel student affairs administrators, it is useful to examine literature on SSAOs to gather information regarding the professional experiences they gained before they advanced into senior-level positions.

Midlevel student affairs administrators are defined as non-academic employees who have supervisory responsibilities in at least one student affairs unit. They are usually employed as “directors and associate directors of functional departments, facilities, and programs such as admissions, residence life counseling center, student center, alcohol education, and recreation” (American Council on Education, 1992; Johnsrud, Heck, & Rosser, 2000; Mills, 1993, p. 122). They also hold titles such as assistant directors, assistant deans, associate deans, and deans.

Unlike faculty members, who can experience career advancement in one employment position (as they move from non-tenure to tenure status), administrators usually change employment positions to experience increases in responsibility, compensation, and status. For many midlevel administrators, these changes might include lateral moves to positions that provide a higher salary and/or increased responsibilities. However, the employment title might be similar to the individual’s previous title.
In a study of career mobility among student affairs professionals, Sagaria & Johnsrud (1988) found that 26% of the student affairs professionals in their study changed employment positions approximately every two years during the 1970s. However, mobility declined throughout the decade. Sagaria & Johnsrud’s findings regarding declining mobility are similar to the results of studies on career mobility among midlevel student affairs administrators and SSAOs (Harder, 1983; Ostroth, Efird, & Lerman, 1985; Sagaria & Moore, 1983). Researchers have also found that women were more mobile than men, but they were more likely than men to be promoted to SSAO positions from within their current institutions (Evans & Kuh, 1983; Sagaria & Johnsrud, 1988).

In addition to other career advancement issues, Rhoades (1995) found that midlevel administrators perceive that they are not appreciated (Rhoades, 1995). Midlevel administrators also have limited decision-making authority, although they have expertise in their administrative areas (Henkin & Persson, 1992 cited in Johnsrud, Heck, & Rosser, 2000). Johnsrud, Heck, & Rosser (2000) also found that the morale of midlevel administrators is associated with “their perceptions that they are treated fairly, that they and their opinions are valued, and that their work is meaningful” (p. 54). Midlevel administrators experience various professional challenges that impact their perceptions of career advancement opportunities.

Statement of the Problem

Very few empirical studies approach the subject of career advancement for midlevel Black student affairs administrators with an emphasis on gender. Sagaria & Johnsrud (1988) argued that “the literature has not produced an overview of career mobility of persons holding key student affairs positions such as directors and deans, as well as SSAOs (p. 31).” They added that “studying SSAOs does little to increase understanding of the career advancement of the larger population of student affairs administrators” (p. 31). Because Black women are often concentrated in midlevel student affairs positions, the identification of characteristics that impact their perceptions of career advancement factors could contribute to the removal of obstacles that hinder qualified Black women administrators from advancing to senior-level positions.

It is even more difficult to identify studies that examine differences in perceptions of career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female student affairs administrators who are employed at different types of institutions, have varying amounts of professional experience, and have different levels of education. This study built upon the work of other researchers who have identified differences in career advancement for women administrators, minority administrators, and Black women administrators at various types of institutions (Coleman, 2002; Evans & Kuh, 1983; Herbrand, 2001; Howard-Hamilton & Williams, 1996; Johnsrud, 1991; Johnsrud, 1994; Johnsrud, Heck, 2000; Mills, 1993; Sagaria, 1988; Sagaria & Johnsrud, 1988; Twombly, 1990).
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of gender, institutional characteristics, years of professional experience in higher education, and highest earned degree on perceptions of career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female and male student affairs administrators. Black female student affairs administrators were the focus of this study because they perceive various career advancement barriers and are likely to be employed in midlevel and lower-level student affairs positions at smaller, public institutions (Banner, 2003; Konrad & Pfeffer, 1991; Moses, 1997; Reason, Walker, & Robinson, 2002; Reason, 2003; Scott, 2003; Taylor, 2000). Studies have associated the career advancement barriers perceived by Black women administrators with their limited advancement into senior-level positions (Banner, 2003; Coleman, 2002; Gregory, 1995; Moses, 1997; Scott, 2003; Singh, Robinson, & Williams-Green, 1995, Taylor, 2000). It is important to study career advancement among Black women administrators so that barriers can be identified and eliminated for this group of individuals who are qualified to enter positions at various institutional types and administrative levels.

Methodology Overview

Participants

This study focused on Black midlevel administrators. However, data from individuals in various employment categories were collected and participants were asked to indicate the category that best described their employment classification. This approach was used to avoid pre-selection of midlevel participants by the researcher, which could have led to the exclusion of useful data from administrators who self-identify as midlevel employees.

The sample population for this study came from various locations across the United States. Participants were drawn from the membership of three organizations that are geared toward advancing knowledge and professional practice in student affairs. These organizations are College Student Educators International (ACPA), the National Association of Student Affairs Professionals (NASAP), and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). Organizational members are employed as administrators, faculty, and paraprofessionals in colleges and universities.

The mission of ACPA is to “support and foster college student learning through the generation and dissemination of knowledge, which informs policies, practices and programs for student affairs professionals and the higher education community” (ACPA, 2005). In 2003, ACPA data indicated that nearly 9% of all 7,139 members were Black (ACPA, 2003 cited in Tull, 2004). Data from ACPA (2005) indicated that nearly 3% of
organizational members were midlevel Black administrators at four-year institutions; of this number, approximately 63% were women and 37% were men (ACPA, 2005).

The NASAP organization “serves as a beacon for student affairs personnel addressing the issues and needs of today’s college students. With a varied membership spanning across academic, administrative, corporate, and student affairs boundaries, the organization offers a variety of resources, and experiences (NASAP, 2005).

The organization serves the “unique nature and needs of African American and minority students” (NASAP, 2005). Approximately 55 individuals and 10 institutions are members of NASAP. Approximately 73% of the members are women. About 75% of midlevel NASAP administrators employed at four-year institutions are women and 25% are men.

The mission of NASPA is to “provide professional development and advocacy for student affairs educators and administrators who share the responsibility for a campus-wide focus on the student experience” (NASPA, 2005). In 2005, the organization had approximately 9,221 members and about 15% of those members were Black. Approximately 62% of Black NASPA members were women and 38% were men.

Approximately 1,117 people were surveyed. However, the survey was successfully delivered to only 1,082 people because 35 email addresses were not valid. Individuals who received the survey were asked to indicate their employment category (senior-level, midlevel, entry-level, paraprofessional, or other) so the researcher could identify midlevel administrators. The following discussion describes the demographic profile of the whole group before midlevel administrators were extracted for analysis.

Approximately 62% of the individuals who were surveyed were women and 38% were men. About 102 ACPA members were surveyed. ACPA provided a list of 127 midlevel, Black student affairs administrators. After eliminating individuals who were not employed at four-year institutions and had unavailable email addresses, the original list was narrowed to 102 individuals.

Thirty-two (32) NASAP members were surveyed. After eliminating individuals who were not employed at four-year institutions and administrators who had unavailable email addresses, the original list of approximately 55 individual members was reduced to 32 individuals.

Approximately 983 NASPA members were surveyed. NASPA provided the researcher with a list of all Black members in the organization, including senior-level administrators, midlevel administrators, entry-level professionals, faculty, and paraprofessionals. After eliminating individuals who were not employed at four-year institutions and those individuals with unavailable email addresses, the original list of 1,392 members was narrowed to 983 individuals.
Approximately 487 people responded to this study—a 45% response rate. Midlevel administrators were the focus of this study. After midlevel participants were extracted for analysis, the researcher found that 223 midlevel administrators provided usable data. Midlevel administrators comprised over half (51.9%) of the total respondents to the study.

Instrument

The survey instrument used for this study was originally developed by Coleman (2002). Coleman (2002) studied Black women student affairs administrators in Alabama to determine if significant differences existed in the career advancement perceptions of women who were employed at different types of institutions (PWIs and HBCUs), had varying amounts of professional experience, and had different levels of degree attainment. Coleman found that women administrators at PWIs were more likely to perceive career advancement barriers than were their counterparts at HBCUs. This study expanded Coleman’s work by expanding the category of institutional characteristics to include institutional control and student enrollment size. Also, Coleman studied Black female student affairs administrators. This study will include a gender comparison of Black student affairs administrators.

The original instrument had 34 items, including three demographic items and 31 Likert scale items. After Coleman calculated the instrument’s reliability, four Likert scale items were eliminated and the revised instrument had 27 Likert scale items. These items examined administrators’ perceptions of career advancement factors.

The instrument for this study included the same 27 Likert scale items. However, the demographic section of the instrument was expanded to eight items to address gender, race, and additional institutional characteristics including control (public or private), type (PWI or HBCU), student enrollment size, employee classification (entry level, midlevel, senior level, paraprofessional, or other), and employment title. The items about race and gender were added to ensure that the researcher accurately identifies the sample population for the study. The item about employment classifications was added to identify midlevel administrators. One open-ended item was added so participants could elaborate on factors that were addressed by the questionnaire and discuss factors that the questionnaire did not address (Gay & Airasian, 2000).

Data Collection

Each member of the sample population received an electronic mail invitation to participate in an online survey. The text of the message included the link to the survey. The Informed Consent statement is the first item on the survey. Participants were asked to read the consent information, explaining the study and their rights as participants in the study. Individuals had the option of accepting or declining the invitation to participate in the study. The consent information explained that, by completing the electronic survey, they are providing their consent to have their responses used only in aggregate analysis.
Significance of the Study

This study examined the impact of various characteristics (gender, institutional characteristics, years of professional experience in higher education, and highest degree earned) on perceptions of career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female and Black male student affairs administrators. Black women are underrepresented in senior-level student affairs positions and they perceive barriers to their advancement into such positions. Findings from this study can be used by leaders in colleges, universities, and professional associations to develop strategies that increase positive career advancement perceptions among Black female student affairs administrators and create advancement opportunities for this group of educators.

Definitions of Terms

Career advancement factors are individual issues, ideas, behaviors, or practices that impact career advancement. For this study, the following career advancement factors have been identified as being relevant for Black student affairs administrators:
- lack of networking opportunities;
- lack of mentoring;
- gender discrimination;
- being held to higher performance standards than White administrators of the same gender;
- being held to higher performance standards than White administrators of the opposite gender;
- being hired to satisfy racial quotas;
- unfair criticism by co-workers and other administrators;
- placement in positions that hold no real power;
- limited placement in positions with top administrative titles;
- conformity with behaviors of the majority population of employees;
- not being taken seriously by co-workers and other administrators;
- being excluded from the decision-making process;
- having to work twice as hard as others to be viewed as a competent employee;
- feeling isolated;
- feeling underutilized;
- being subjected to negative societal attitudes regarding race and gender;
- unclear expectations of supervisors;
- unclear understanding of organizational culture;
- being held to higher performance standards than Black administrators of the opposite gender;
- having professional accomplishments ignored;
- feeling unappreciated;
- being perceived as an aggressive individual;
- administrators’ role as liaison between black students and other institutional administrators;
the need for professional experience in higher education and a master’s degree; 
choosing between work and family responsibilities; 
the need for a doctoral degree; 
the need for professional experience in higher education and a doctoral degree 

An entry-level student affairs professional is a full-time employee with frequent, 
direct student contact. Entry level professionals are usually responsible for student 
programming and usually have no supervisory responsibility for full-time professional 
and/or support staff (Burkard, Cole, Ott, & Stoflet, 2005).

Institutional size refers to the student enrollment at colleges and universities. An 
institution with a student enrollment of 20,000 or more is a large institution. An 
institution with a student enrollment of 5,000 to 19,999 is a medium institution. An 
institution with a student enrollment of less than 5,000 students is a small institution 

A midlevel student affairs administrator is a college or university employee who 
has supervisory responsibilities for full-time professional and/or support staff in one or 
more “functional departments, facilities, and programs such as admissions, residence life 
counseling center, student center, alcohol education, and recreation” and usually has a 
title such as Assistant/Associate Director, Director, Assistant/Associate Dean, or Dean 

A paraprofessional is a graduate student who is employed part-time in an 
administrative unit within a college or university.

A senior student affairs officer (SSAO) is one of the highest-ranking student 
affairs administrators at an institution who has responsibility for a student affairs 
division. Position titles usually include Assistant/Associate Vice President or Vice 
President.

Limitations

A survey instrument was used to collect data from midlevel Black student affairs 
administrators at four-year institutions who are members of ACPA, NASAP, or NASPA. 
Efforts were made to ensure that the highest possible response rate was achieved and that 
participants completed the survey in its entirety. In addition to non-respondents and 
missing responses to specific items, some respondents may not have answered the 
questions truthfully for several reasons. However, the reliability of the survey instrument 
should have minimized the impact of inaccurate responses.
Delimitations

The population for this study was limited to midlevel Black student affairs administrators at four-year institutions who are members of ACPA, NASAP, and NASPA. The results of the study cannot be generalized to all midlevel Black student affairs administrators at four-year institutions because it is unclear if the demographic profiles of the sample population is representative of the entire population of midlevel Black student affairs administrators in the United States. The study excluded administrators who were not members of ACPA, NASAP, and NASPA. Finally, the study did not include a comparison of non-Black female or non-Black male student affairs administrators because this study focused on gender differences in career advancement among Black student affairs administrators.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Career advancement has been defined as the progression of an individual into employment positions with increased responsibilities and/or compensation (Mills, 1993; Sagaria & Johnsrud, 1988). Career advancement factors are individual issues, ideas, behaviors, or practices that impact career advancement. Coleman (2002) identified 27 career advancement factors that are relevant for Black women administrators. They include gender discrimination, networking opportunities, mentoring, and education level.

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of gender, institutional characteristics, years of professional experience in higher education, and highest earned degree on perceptions of career advancement factors held by Black female and male student affairs administrators. Black female student affairs administrators were the focus of this analysis because they perceive various career advancement barriers and are likely to be employed in lower to midlevel student affairs positions at smaller, public institutions (Banner, 2003; Konrad & Pfeffer, 1991; Moses, 1997; Reason, Walker, & Robinson, 2002; Reason, 2003; Scott, 2003; Taylor, 2000).

Each of the career advancement factors identified by Coleman (2002), and addressed by Kanter (1977; 1993) and other researchers (Banner, 2003; Coleman, 2002; Gregory, 1995; Johnsrud, Heck, & Rosser, 2000; Moses, 1997; Scott, 2003; Singh, Robinson, & Williams-Green, 1995, Taylor, 2000), are listed in Table 2.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Advancement Factors</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of networking opportunities</td>
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<td>Being hired to satisfy racial quotas</td>
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<td>Unfair criticism by co-workers and other administrators</td>
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<td>Conformity with behaviors of the majority population of employees</td>
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<td>Not being taken seriously by co-workers and other administrators</td>
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<td>Being excluded from the decision-making process</td>
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Table 2 continued

- Having to work twice as hard as others to be viewed as a competent employee;
- Feeling isolated
- Feeling underutilized
- Being subjected to negative societal attitudes regarding race and gender
- Unclear expectations of supervisors
- Unclear understanding of organizational culture
- Being held to higher performance standards than Black administrators of the opposite gender
- Having professional accomplishments ignored
- Feeling unappreciated
- Being perceived as an aggressive individual
- Administrators’ role as liaison between black students and other institutional administrators
- The need for professional experience in higher education and a master’s degree
- Choosing between work and family responsibilities
- The need for a doctoral degree
- The need for professional experience in higher education and a doctoral degree (Banner, 2003; Coleman, 2002; Gregory, 1995; Johnsrud, Heck, & Rosser, 2000; Kanter, 1977; 1993; Moses, 1997; Scott, 2003; Singh, Robinson, & Williams-Green, 1995, Taylor, 2000).

This chapter provides an historical overview of female student affairs administrators and discusses the representation of Black women administrators in higher education. The chapter also includes a review of literature related to the factors presented in Table 2 and specified characteristics for this study. A summary of the literature review is included at the conclusion of this chapter.

**Women in Student Affairs: An Historical Perspective**

Deans of women are considered to be the first student affairs practitioners. These educators were responsible for facilitating intellectual, social, and vocational development in female college students. Deans of women served as advocates for female students and worked to counter resistance from men in coeducational settings who assumed that women were not able to handle the intellectual demands of academic life. The presence of deans of women in American higher education has been traced back to the last decades of the nineteenth century (Bashaw, 1999; Nidiffer, 2000; Schwartz, 1997).

Lucy Diggs Slowe was employed as the first dean of women at Howard University from 1922 to 1937. Slowe is, perhaps, the most prominent Black dean of women. During her tenure at Howard University, she worked to elevate the status of women at the institution and in society (Perkins, 1996). Slowe mentored several Black women who, later, became deans of women or had other roles as educators in colleges.
and universities (Perkins, 1996). Slowe’s former student, Thelma Preyer Bando, worked as the assistant dean of women and “head of the Department of Education” at Virginia Seminary in Lynchburg before serving as the assistant dean of women at Morgan State College in Maryland (Perkins, 1996).

Black deans of women were also hired at other historically Black institutions. Women students at Fisk University argued that a Black woman administrator “would best identify with their needs and goals” (Neverdon-Morton, 1989, p. 59). As a result of the students’ petitioning, Fisk University hired its first dean of women in 1929 (Neverdon-Morton, 1989).

During the late 1800s, historically Black institutions were established for the purpose of educating Blacks (Anderson, 1988; ACE, 1992). The passage of the second Morrill Land Grant Act initiated a period of tremendous growth for historically Black institutions. In 1890, this federal legislation provided funding to southern states for the development of higher education institutions that focused on agricultural, mechanical, industrial, and normal training. The Morrill Act of 1890 “led to the establishment of agricultural and mechanical institutions for White men”, “industrial and normal institutions for White women”, and “agricultural and industrial institutions for Blacks in the region” (McCandless, 1999, p. 11-12). Despite the growth in higher education for Blacks that has been associated with the second Morrill Act, the legislation reflected the fragmentation that permeated American society at that time by facilitating racial and gender separation. In addition to supporting separate education for Blacks and Whites, the legislation supported the relegation of White women into educational tracks that reflected conventional gender roles. Despite this questionable practice, gender separation in higher education institutions was valued. However, Blacks did not receive the same consideration when institutions were established to educate them.

Black deans of women, like their White counterparts, had a significant impact on higher education (Bashaw, 1999; Nidiffer, 2000; Perkins, 1996). However, Black women were often excluded from professional networks for deans of women. The National Association of Deans of Women (NADW) was founded to address the concerns of women students and educators who were often marginalized in higher education institutions (Nidiffer, 2000). Although this organization provided crucial support and resources to women educators, its members often excluded Black women from full participation in organizational activities (Perkins, 1996; Nidiffer, 2000).

Despite attempts made to exclude Black deans of women from participating in professional activities that were geared toward White deans of women, the National Association of Deans of Women and Advisors of Colored Schools was established in 1929, followed by the National Association of Personnel Deans of Men in Negro Educational Institutions in 1935. The organizations merged in 1954 to become the National Association of Personnel Workers, “which evolved into the National Association of Student Affairs Professionals (NASAP) in 1993” (Traylor, 1998, p. 10).
Deans of women provided leadership in campus administration and scholarly pursuits. Despite their successes, the number of deans of women began to decrease during the latter half of the 20th century. According to Schwartz, (1997), factors including the presence of deans of men and backlash from the women’s suffrage movement contributed to a hostile environment for some deans of women; but it was the overwhelming number of men who returned to college campuses after World War II during the 1950s that led to the eventual disappearance of deans of women. More specifically, the positions gave way to emerging “dean of students” positions which were almost always filled by men (Schwartz, 1997).

**Representation of Black Women Administrators in Higher Education**

Like many other women and minority professionals, Black female higher education administrators are disproportionately underrepresented (Moses, 1997; Touchton & Davis, 1991; Wolfman, 1997). Gregory (1995) reported that Black women represented less than 4% of all higher education administrators. Wolfman (1997) reported that Black women represented less than 5% of all higher education administrators. Data from the Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac (2006-2007) indicated that Black women represented approximately 5.6% of all executive, administrative, and management level employees in colleges and universities. These figures seem to indicate little improvement in the representation of Black women administrators.

It is difficult to identify the total number of Black women in the United States who work in student affairs administration. However, figures from professional organizations that focus on the student affairs profession provide useful data about the representation of Black women in the profession. Based on data from the 1999-2000 National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Salary Survey, approximately 10% of the respondents were members of a minority racial or ethnic group. This finding is similar to NASPA salary surveys from previous years (Walker, 2001). In 2003, approximately 9% of ACPA members were Black (ACPA, 2003 cited in Tull, 2004). In addition to this finding, ACPA data from 2005 indicated that fewer than 3% of members were classified as midlevel Black administrators at four-year institutions. Of that number, approximately 65% were women. The 1999-2000 NASPA Salary Survey showed similar results regarding the gender composition of Black administrators in that organization; approximately 55.5% were women and 45.5% were men (Jackson, 2003; Reason et al, 2002; Reason, 2003). However, approximately 86% of Black respondents to the 1999-2000 NASPA Salary Survey could be classified as midlevel administrators (Jackson, 2003). Minorities and women remain underrepresented in senior-level student affairs positions (Hamrick & Carlisle, 1990; Jones & Komives, 2001; McEwen et al, 1990; Twale, 1995; Reason et al, 2002; Reason, 2003).

Studies have also shown that Black women administrators are concentrated in student affairs positions and other support positions in which they have direct responsibility for promoting diversity initiatives and are expected to serve as advocates for Black students (Howard-Hamilton & Williams, 1996; Konrad & Pfeffer, 1991; Moses, 1997). The strong representation of Black women administrators in student affairs
positions is reflected in Taylor’s (2000) study. Taylor studied midlevel Black women administrators who worked in a single metropolitan area of the United States and found that 50% of the participants were student affairs administrators. The other participants were distributed among different administrative areas.

Women and Minority Professionals in the United States

Women and minority professionals experience various barriers to career advancement. Some of these barriers are associated with metaphors such as the “glass ceiling.” The glass ceiling is defined as a set of invisible barriers that hinder the advancement of qualified professionals into leadership positions (Dingell & Maloney, 2002). The United States Department of Labor (1991) examined this phenomenon in nine corporations and found that women and minorities were underrepresented in management positions. The study also showed that minorities were concentrated in lower levels of organizational hierarchies than women.

Dingell and Maloney (2002) investigated the impact of the glass ceiling on women managers in various industries. The study showed that, although women represented over 46% of the workforce, only 12% of female employees had leadership positions in corporate organizations. These findings indicated continued disparities in career advancement for women.

Coleman (1998) studied the career advancement barriers of women administrators employed in various industries within the state of Minnesota. Black respondents cited racism, limited career advancement opportunities, exclusion from male-dominated networks, and negative perceptions regarding women administrators as barriers to career advancement. White respondents cited barriers including exclusion from male-dominated networks, employers’ negative perceptions about women, limited networking opportunities, and negative perceptions regarding women administrators. Although both groups cite similar barriers, Black women administrators cite the additional barriers of racism and limited career advancement opportunities.

Career Advancement and Related Factors

Kanter’s (1977; 1993) analysis of female and male employees at one corporation provides a foundation for understanding disparities in the career advancement of men, women, and minorities in different professions. Although Kanter’s work is relevant to corporate organizations, her analysis is appropriate for colleges and universities. Various researchers have used her work as a foundation for understanding disparities in career advancement for women, men, and minorities who work as higher education administrators (Banner, 2003; Herbrand, 2001; Holmes, 2003; Johnsrud, Heck, & Rosser, 2000; Komives, 1990; Kulis, 1997; Moore, 1990; VanDerlinden, 2003; Wong, 2002).

Kanter (1977; 1993) argued that the structure of opportunity and proportional representation of employees shaped conditions that limit career advancement opportunities for women and minorities. Opportunity is defined as an employee’s
expectation for future career “mobility and growth” (p. 246). It is influenced by an individual’s position within an organization and her/his access to career advancement opportunities. Opportunity is also tied to power, which is the ability to pool and utilize important organizational resources such as financial and human resources (Kanter, 1977; 1993).

People with high opportunity have significant prospects for mobility and growth. These individuals have high career aspirations, are confident about their professional competence, and are committed to their organizations. They understand and value their connection with “the larger organization rather than the local unit” (Kanter, 1977; 1993, p. 247). They perceive inherent opportunities for learning and skill development in their employment positions and they view their positions as vehicles for career advancement and mobility. Most higher education administrators would be characterized as high opportunity employees. However, opportunity can be diminished for women and minorities in leadership positions because of “cycles of advantage” that promote advancement for majority group members (often White men) and “cycles of disadvantage” that limit career advancement for minority group members (p. 158).

Proportions “refer to the social composition of people in approximately the same situation. It is a simple quantitative matter of how many people there are of relevant social types in various parts of the organization” (p. 248). Women and racial/ethnic minority employees often have numerical minority status in some organizations. However, it is important to recognize that these groups also have majority numerical status in some organizations (Kanter, 1977; 1993). As in many professional settings, White men had numerical majority status in the organization that Kanter examined and they benefited from cycles of advantage. These cycles are perpetuated when organizational leaders seek to promote employees who resemble the collective leadership demographic. Employees with these familiar traits are believed to be trustworthy and they receive more advancement opportunities. Employees who do not possess these traits enter cycles of disadvantage and are often excluded from career growth opportunities. These patterns lead to “homogeneity”, which is described as “selection criterion for managers” that “promotes social conformity as a standard of conduct” (p. 158).

Kanter described four types of groups with regard to social composition. In a “uniform” group, there is only representation from one gender and/or racial group, so the ratio is 100:0. In a “skewed” group, there is dominant representation of one group and the ratio of majorities to minorities is approximately 85:15. The minority group members are identified as “tokens” who “are often treated as representatives of their category, as symbols rather than individuals” (p. 208). In a “tilted” group, the minority group members increase and the ratio of majorities to minorities is approximately 65:35. In this type of group, minorities can create alliances that can “affect the culture of the group” and begin to dismantle cycles of disadvantage. In a “balanced” group, the ratio of majorities to minorities can range between 60:40 and 50:50. In this group, “majority and minority turn into potential subgroups that may or may not generate actual type-based identifications. Outcomes for individuals in such a balanced peer group will depend more on
other structural and personal factors, including formation of subgroups or differentiated roles and abilities” (pp. 208-209).

Minority members of skewed and, perhaps, tilted groups experience isolation, additional criticism of their professional performance, and conflicting messages from supervisors and colleagues.

Minority group members, who are often women and/or ethnic minorities, also experience pressure to conform to the behaviors of the majority population. They might feel compelled to dress in a manner that reflects the style of the majority population or to change their names to mask their ethnic origins. Women and minorities also tend to believe their accomplishments are ignored or unappreciated; and their colleagues often make assumptions about them based on negative stereotypes associated with their racial, ethnic, or gender group. These factors can create situations in which women and minorities experience limited career advancement opportunities (Kanter, 1977; 1993; Holmes, 2003).

Tokens, described as one of the few minority members of a skewed group, face a complex array of challenges in professional settings. Tokens are extremely underrepresented, so their presence is readily noticed by their colleagues. They believe they must “work twice as hard” as majority group members to succeed and be viewed as competent professionals (p. 236). This visibility creates additional professional performance pressures for them. Tokens report that they are underutilized, often overlooked by colleagues and supervisors, and their accomplishments are overshadowed by their demographic differences. The behaviors of token employees are often magnified and believed to be reflections on their entire group. For example, if a token woman becomes known for her pursuit of career advancement, she risks being labeled as an aggressive individual (Kanter, 1977; 1993; Nelson, 1993; Holmes, 2003).

As a result of their unique position within organizations, tokens must contend with conflicting messages from supervisors and colleagues regarding their role and behavior in professional settings. Tokens are expected to serve as representatives or symbols of exceptional talent from their gender and/or racial groups. Kanter (1977; 1993) found that token women were expected to behave in a manner that demonstrates their professional competence, while maintaining their stereotypical gender roles. Token women, for example, were measured by two yardsticks: how they carried out the sales or management role; and how as managers believed they lived up to images of womanhood. In short, every act tended to be evaluated beyond its meaning for the organization and taken as a sign of “how women perform”” (Kanter, 1977; 1993, p. 214).

In addition to these expectations, some women were told that their performance could impact the career advancement and mobility of other women employees.

The token employee role involves a great deal of ambiguity and ambivalence (Kanter, 1977; 1993). It is important for token employees to understand the complex organizational culture in which they work; and they should also understand the
organizational factors that can hinder or facilitate their career advancement. When token employees understand these phenomena, they can navigate organizational hierarchies more successfully (Kanter, 1977; 1993).

Studies have also cited family responsibilities as a career advancement factor for women. Women are more likely to interrupt their careers to relocate because of their spouses’ careers or to focus on their parenting responsibilities. However, men are less likely to disrupt their careers for these reasons (Arnold, 1982; Diamond, 1987; Valdez & Gutek, 1987). In addition to these findings, Kanter (1977; 1993) found that some male supervisors did not hire married women for positions that required travel or other activities that the hiring supervisors believed would require the women to spend extensive amounts of time away from their homes and families.

Within the student affairs profession, married women were less likely to remain in the profession than unmarried women (Gross, 1978; Lawling, Moore, & Groseth, 1982; Randall et al, 1995). In a study of SSAOs, Scott (1992) found that the majority (97%) of the male participants in her study were married. Only 41% of the women in the study were married.

In studies of Black women administrators employed at two-year colleges in South Carolina, Banner (2003) found that family responsibilities were frequently cited among participants as a career advancement barrier. However, in a study of women administrators from across the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, Smith (1998) found that fewer Black respondents were married and fewer Black respondents cited marriage as a career advancement barrier.

Mentoring is considered to be a facilitator of career advancement for women and minorities. Batchelor (1993) argued that “because there are proportionally fewer women and minorities in upper-level positions who can serve as mentors, cross-gender and cross-cultural mentoring possibilities can be exploited instead” (p. 385). Mentoring has been described as a continuous relationship, based on “trust, mutual agreement, respect, and confidentiality” in which the mentored individual enhances critical professional skills that are considered to be necessary for career success and advancement into leadership positions (Batchelor, 1993, p. 380). Mentoring relationships can be established in informal and formal ways. Potential mentors can be identified through informal means such as observing other administrators who have specific skills that an individual would like to develop or acquire. Mentoring relationships can also be initiated in formal settings such as the meetings of professional organizations (Batchelor, 1993).

Bridges (1996) found that over 53% of Black higher education administrators who participated in his study indicated that they had mentors. Over 94% of the participants reported that a mentoring relationship was important for career achievement of Black administrators. Over 86% of participants reported that they mentored other Black administrators. Nearly 80% had male mentors. The majority of the participants were male (76%).
VanDerLinden (2003) found that the majority (62%) of the female respondents in her study on the career advancement of community college administrators reported having mentors. Only 2% of respondents to Herbrand’s (2001) study on the career paths of SSAOs cited lacking mentors as a barrier to career advancement. However, in a study of Black SSAOs, Scott (2003) found that the participants cited limited mentoring opportunities as a professional challenge. Coleman (2002) and Banner (2003) reported similar findings regarding limited mentoring opportunities in their studies of Black women administrators. In contrast to these findings, Taylor (2000) found that over half (56.7%) of the respondents in her study on midlevel Black women administrators cited having at least one mentor. In fact, nearly 27% cited having two mentors. Approximately 33% of their mentors were female; and the most frequently cited races of the participants’ mentors were Black and White. In a study of Black women professionals from various fields, the participants indicated they received support from mentors (Miller & Vaughn, 1997).

Characteristics that Impact Career Advancement and Related Factors

Gender, institutional characteristics, years of professional experience in higher education, and highest earned degree have been identified as characteristics that could impact career advancement for higher education administrators and their perception of career advancement factors. Each characteristic will be discussed along with related career advancement factors.

Gender and Related Career Advancement Factors

Career advancement trends for female student affairs administrators demonstrate the potential impact of gender on career advancement factors. For example, female student affairs administrators usually advance to senior-level positions at private institutions after gaining at least ten years of professional experience in higher education (Coleman, 2002; Herbrand, 2001; Kuh & Evans, 1983; Randall et al, 1995). In addition to these patterns, earning a doctoral degree is commonly perceived to promote career advancement among female (and male) administrators in colleges and universities (Banner, 2003; Coleman, 2002; Harder, 1983; Kuh, Evans, & Duke, 1983; Lunsford, 1984; Paul & Hoover, 1980; Scott, 2003; Smith, 1998). However, studies have shown that fewer women earn terminal degrees (Rickard, 1985; Singh et al, 1995).

Issues related to gender are often cited as career advancement barriers for women administrators. Women administrators from various racial and ethnic backgrounds experience exclusion, isolation, and discrimination in their professional settings (Blackhurst, 2000; Coleman, 2002; Coleman, 1998; Holmes, 2003; Miller & Vaughn, 1997; Singh, Robinson, Williams-Green, 1995). Coleman (1998) found that Black and White administrators from educational institutions and other professional settings cited exclusion from male-dominated networks and negative perceptions about women administrators as barriers to career advancement. Women administrators also cite family responsibilities (Arnold, 1982; Banner, 2003; Groseth, 1982; Gross, 1978; Lawling, Mooore, &; Scott, 1992; Smith, 1998) and mentoring (Banner, 2003; Herbrand, 2001;
Miller & Vaughn, 1997; Scott, 2003; Taylor, 2000; Vanderlinden; 2003) as factors that potentially impact their career advancement.

In a study of female student affairs professionals, Blackhurst (2000) found that non-White women (Hispanic and Asian American) perceived more gender discrimination than their White counterparts. Hyle (1993) found that White and Black women faculty and administrators perceived unclear expectations regarding their professional performance. They perceived expectations to satisfy different professional requirements than their male counterparts. These expectations included assumptions that Black and White women would serve on committees that addressed multicultural and gender issues on campus. Minority women administrators experience similar challenges (Howard-Hamilton & Williams, 1996). Black male administrators, like their Black female counterparts, have expressed similar experiences regarding unclear professional expectations (Moore & Wagstaff, 1974 cited in Smith, 1980).

Stereotypes are often applied to women in professional settings (Kanter, 1977; 1993). Kanter (1977; 1993) identified four categories of female employees based on gender stereotypes. Women who have reputations as being “tough” and straightforward are classified as “iron maidens.” Women who appear to be nurturing are categorized as being “mother” figures. Women who appear to exhibit flirtatious behavior are classified as “seductresses.” Women who support their male colleagues without directly competing with them are considered to be endearing individuals who are categorized as “pets” (p. 233-236).

Ihle (1985) argued that “Black women have been expected to live up to cultural stereotypes both of what it means to be Black and what it means to be female” (p. 69). The image of Black women as depraved, aggressive individuals can be traced to efforts to manipulate Black women since slavery (Ihle, 1985; Vaz, 1995). Nelson (1995) addressed her deliberate attempts to behave in a manner that shattered stereotypes of Black women as aggressive individuals. Holmes (2003) reported similar findings in her study of Black female student affairs administrators. One administrator expressed concern that her comments or behaviors could be “perceived as overly-aggressive and intimidating” (p. 53).

Collins (2000) addressed the issue of gender as it relates to Black women. She argued that Black women occupy a unique position in U.S. society because they are members of gender and racial groups that have endured severe, collective injustices. Blacks in the U.S. continue to endure the effects of institutional racism, in which various laws and policies have served to maintain and support discriminatory practices against minorities (Tate, 1997). As female members of society, Black women must also contend with the challenges that many women experience such as gender discrimination. Ihle (1985) described this phenomenon as “the dual burden of sex and race” (p. 69).

Gender group membership presents a complex array of challenges for Black women because they can experience similar gender challenges in predominantly White and predominantly Black settings. Throughout the history of the United States, Black
men (like their non-Black counterparts) have espoused chauvinistic views regarding women (Perkins, 1983; 1996). Coleman (2002) found that Black female student affairs administrators in, both, PWIs and HBCUs perceived that women were less likely to be appointed to top senior-level administrative positions (such as vice-president instead of assistant or interim vice-president).

In a study on the career experiences of Black women in various professions, the participants perceived racial and gender discrimination in addition to the following common themes: colleagues’ underestimation of their abilities; expectations of gratitude for career advancement; and support from family, friends, mentors, and Black colleagues (Miller & Vaughn, 1997). This study also showed that respondents believed they were held to higher professional standards than their White female and male colleagues (Coleman, 2002).

Singh, Robinson, and Williams-Green (1995) studied Black female and male faculty and administrators in Virginia and found significant differences among the gender groups. Black women exhibited lower levels of professional satisfaction and they perceived fewer opportunities for collaborative research with colleagues. The male participants had higher levels of education and held positions with higher rank than their female colleagues. Over half (52%) of the male participants had terminal degrees, while 39% of women had terminal degrees. Approximately 39% of the male respondents held tenured positions and 21% of the female respondents had tenure. Women were significantly less likely to perceive collegiality and they were significantly more likely to perceive racial discrimination at their employing institutions.

Several studies have shown that Black professional women perceive and experience significant gender challenges. However, their presence and success as leaders in higher education provides evidence that Black women do overcome barriers and experience career advancement (Carey, 2002).

Institutional Characteristics and Related Career Advancement Factors

Black and non-Black women administrators are more likely to experience career advancement at certain types of institutions (Jackson, 2003; Konrad & Pfeffer, 1991; Kulis, 1997; Moses, 1997; Randall et al, 1995). Coleman (2002) found significant differences in perceptions of career advancement factors held by administrators who were employed at PWIs and HBCUs. The study showed that Black women student affairs administrators at PWIs in Alabama perceived limited opportunities for mentoring and networking. The respondents who were employed at PWIs also believed that Black women administrators had limited authority, were hired to satisfy quotas, were expected to meet higher professional performance standards, and perceived that earning doctorate was necessary for career advancement. Administrators from both types of institutions (PWI and HBCU) believed that women “are given the title of assistant, associate, or acting instead of the top administrative title” (p. 66).
In a study of the career paths of women senior student affairs officers, Herbrand (2001) found that over half of the respondents reported that their first SSAO appointments were at private institutions. In addition to this finding, over half of the respondents reported that they were employed at private institutions at the time they participated in the study. The study also showed that the largest percentage of respondents reported that their first SSAO appointment was at an institution with student enrollments between 2,000 and 10,000. The largest percentage of respondents reported that, at the time they participated in the study, they were employed at institutions with similar student enrollment numbers. Similarly, Randall et al (1995) found that most of the female SSAOs they studied were employed at smaller, private, four-year institutions.

In their analysis of the findings of a 1997 College and University Personnel Association (CUPA) study, Jones & Komives (2001) reported that “the numbers of women exceed the mean percentage in virtually every position studied in general baccalaureate institutions and are below the mean in every category in doctoral institutions” (p. 236). In addition to their findings on institutional characteristics, Jones & Komives also reported that female representation of SSAOs had increased from 17% in 1985-1986 to 33% in 1995-1996. However, women have made smaller gains in positions that “reflect a broad span of leadership, supervision, and budget authority” such as positions in career planning and placement offices, counseling centers, and registrars offices (p. 236).

Based on data from the 1999-2000 NASPA Salary Survey, Jackson (2003) reported that Black female and male respondents were overwhelmingly represented (71%) in public, four-year institutions with small to medium sized student enrollments (fewer than 20,000). Studies have shown that Black women were also more likely to be employed in institutions that have high minority enrollment (Konrad & Pfeffer, 1991; Moses, 1997). Similarly, studies have shown that women were more likely to be employed at institutions that have high female enrollments (Konrad & Pfeffer, 1991; Kulis, 1997).

Professional Experience in Higher Education and Related Career Advancement Factors

Studies have shown that student affairs administrators who have advanced to SSAO positions often have at least ten years of professional experience in higher education (Coleman, 2002; Herbrand, 2001; Lunsford, 1984; Randal et al, 1995). Over half the participants in Coleman’s (2002) study had gained at least ten years of professional experience in higher education. Herbrand (2001) found that the largest percentage of participants in her study of women SSAOs had accumulated between 10 and 19 years of professional experience in higher education before being appointed to their first senior-level student affairs position. Lunsford (1984) found that the SSAOs in his study had been employed in their current position for an average of about 7.5 years and they had been employed at their current institutions for an average of approximately 12 years. Rickard (1985) found that student affairs administrators had an average of three positions before their first appointment as a SSAO.
Although researchers have identified the importance of professional experience for career advancement, it has been difficult to identify a clear career path from midlevel to senior-level student affairs positions (Evans, 1988; Rickard, 1985; Twombly, 1990). In contrast to arguments regarding unclear career paths for higher education administrators, Lunsford (1984) asserted that evidence of a clear path to the SSAO position existed for midlevel administrators and other student affairs professionals to follow. His study showed that over half the participants in his study held positions above the level of director before entering SSAO positions. As a result of this finding, Lunsford suggested that individuals seeking SSAO positions should gain experience in midlevel positions that are above the level of director.

Studies have shown that it is common for midlevel student affairs professionals who seek career advancement to gain professional experience as a dean of students or as a director of a student affairs unit (Holmes, 1982; Lunsford, 1984; Twombly, 1990). However, the positions female midlevel student affairs administrators have held immediately before entering SSAO positions have been more diverse. Women SSAOs have had titles such as assistant/associate director, counselors, and coordinators more often than their male counterparts (Rickard, 1985).

In a study of women from various administrative areas of higher education, Smith (1998) found that Black women believed there was a defined career path that would lead to career advancement. Black participants in this study also anticipated being promoted within five years. However, fewer White women (the majority population in the study) had these perceptions regarding career advancement.

**Highest Earned Degree and Related Career Advancement Factors**

Studies have shown that the doctoral degree is perceived as an important facilitator of career advancement among Black women administrators (Banner, 2003; Coleman, 2002; Scott, 2003; Smith, 1998). Previous studies showed that a terminal degree had become increasingly more common among all administrators who sought advancement to senior-level student affairs positions (Harder, 1983; Kuh, Evans, & Duke, 1983; Lunsford, 1984; Paul & Hoover, 1980). All participants in Rolle’s (1997) study of Black senior-level higher education administrators had doctoral degrees. Over 65% of participants in Bridges’ (1996) study of Black higher education administrators had earned doctoral degrees and nearly 92% earned master’s degrees.

In a study of female higher education administrators, Smith (1998) examined differences in perceptions about doctoral degrees and found that Black women were more likely than White women to perceive that a doctoral degree was important for career advancement. However, the study showed that Black women administrators earned the largest number of master’s degrees. Taylor (2000) and Coleman (2002) found that the highest degree earned by most of the Black women administrators they studied was a master’s degree. This pattern, however, is reflected among all student affairs professionals (Reason et al, 2002).
In a study of women SSAOs, lack of a graduate degree was one of the most frequently cited barriers to career advancement (Herbrand, 2001). An earlier study conducted by Rickard (1985) showed that fewer female SSAOs had earned terminal degrees than their male counterparts. A more recent study of faculty and administrators from various disciplines and administrative areas showed that over half (52%) of the male participants had earned terminal degrees. Approximately 39% of the female participants had terminal degrees (Singh et al, 1995).

**Summary**

Despite their increasing presence, Black female student affairs administrators continue to experience barriers that limit their advancement from midlevel to senior-level positions. Black women administrators perceive issues such as gender discrimination, family responsibilities, mentoring, and networking opportunities as factors that impact their career advancement. In addition to these factors, the structure of opportunity and the proportional representation of women and minorities in professional settings often contribute to cycles of disadvantage for women and minorities (Kanter, 1977; 1993). Gender, institutional characteristics, years of professional experience, and highest earned degree have been identified as characteristics that impact Black women administrators’ perceptions of career advancement factors.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Gender, institutional characteristics, years of professional experience in higher education, and highest earned degree have been identified as characteristics that impact the perceptions of career advancement factors held by Black student affairs administrators. The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of these characteristics on perceptions of career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female and male student affairs administrators.

Participants

The sample population for this study came from various locations across the United States and was drawn from the membership of College Student Educators International (ACPA), the National Association of Student Affairs Professionals (NASAP), and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). Approximately 487 people responded to this study and a 45% response rate was reached. After midlevel participants were extracted for analysis, the researcher found that 223 midlevel administrators provided useable data. Midlevel administrators comprised over half (51.9%) of the total respondents to the study. Approximately 65% of midlevel respondents were women.

Data Collection

After the research was approved by the Florida State University Human Subjects Committee (Appendix A), each member of the sample population received an electronic mail invitation to participate in the study (Appendix B). The text of the message included a link to the online survey they were asked to complete. The survey was hosted by Survey Monkey. Participants were asked to respond to an informed consent item before they completed the study (Appendix C). After the initial distribution of the survey, two follow-up electronic mail messages were sent to the sample population. The first follow-up message was sent one week after the initial survey was sent. A second follow-up electronic mail message was sent to non-respondents.

The actual response rate (45%) for this study was just below the targeted response rate of 50% to 80% recommended by Suskie (1996). However, the female representation (60%) in the present study is similar to the general representation of Black women administrators (60.7%) according to the Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac (2006). The number of women respondents to the present study is also similar to the female representation (55%) of Black student affairs administrators in the 1999-2000 NASPA Salary Survey (Reason et al, 2002).

It is difficult to identify the gender composition of midlevel Black student affairs administrators. In 2005, midlevel Black administrators comprised about 3% of total ACPA membership. Approximately 65% of the midlevel Black ACPA members were
women (ACPA, 2005). The gender composition of Black midlevel respondents to the 1999-2000 NASPA Salary Survey is unknown. However, women comprised approximately 55.5% of all Black respondents to this survey; and approximately 86% of Black respondents were midlevel administrators. Findings from the present study indicate that midlevel women administrators comprised about 65% of the respondents.

ACPA, NASPA, and NASAP approved the use of individual membership data for this study. Appendix D includes the email request to survey NASPA members. The request was sent to NASPA Executive Director, Gwendolyn Dungy. The approval email from NASPA Director of Membership Services, Evangeline Soleyjohn is also included in Appendix D. Appendix E includes the email request to survey NASAP members. The request was sent to NASAP president, Melvin Terrell. The approval email from NASAP Secretary, Minnie Austin is also included in Appendix E. Appendix F includes the email request to survey ACPA members. The letter was sent to ACPA Director of Educational Programs, Jacqueline Skinner. The approval email is also included in Appendix F.

Coleman (2002) approved the use of her instrument for this study (Appendix G). The email approval and email request to use her instrument are included in the Appendix G. ACPA provided a list of midlevel Black members. NASAP provided a membership list. NASPA provided a list of its Black members. Email addresses were not provided, so the researcher found individual, work email addresses for members of these organizations.

Instrument

The survey instrument (Appendix H) used for this study was originally developed by Coleman (2002) to examine the perceptions of factors that impact career advancement for Black women student affairs administrators at four-year institutions in Alabama. Items were developed based on the literature. The original instrument (Appendix I) contained a total of 34 items, including three demographic items and 31 Likert scale items for which respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they (1) strongly disagreed, (2) disagreed, (3) agreed, or (4) strongly agreed with each question. After calculating the instrument’s reliability, Coleman eliminated four Likert scale items. The revised instrument contained 27 Likert scale items. A detailed discussion of the statistical procedure that led to this modification is included in the reliability section of this chapter. Coleman’s final questionnaire (Appendix J) included a total of 30 items including three demographic items and 27 Likert scale items.

The instrument used for this study included the same 27 Likert scale items Coleman (2002) developed. However, the demographic section of the instrument was expanded. Coleman’s instrument contained three demographic items that addressed education level, professional experience in higher education, and institutional type. The demographic section of the current study included additional items that addressed gender, race, additional institutional characteristics such as control (public or private), student enrollment size, employee classification (entry level, midlevel, senior level,
paraprofessional, and other), and employment title based on the following ACPA (2005) categories: Advisor/Counselor, Assistant Dean/Director, Associate Dean/Director, Dean, Director, Faculty Member, Graduate Student, President, Vice President, or other. There were eight demographic items on the survey instrument used for this study.

The items about race and gender were added to ensure that the researcher accurately identified the sample population for the study. One open-ended item was added to the instrument to address factors that might not have been addressed by the questionnaire (Gay & Airasian, 2000). A final item inviting respondents to participate in a follow-up telephone interview was added to the survey. The researcher planned to conduct interviews only if the survey response rate was too low to conduct the statistical analyses planned for this study. Interviews were not conducted because an adequate response was achieved.

Because this study was a gender comparison of Black student affairs administrators, the following introductory phrase was deleted from the Likert scale items: “As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator....” The content of 26 of the Likert items was unaltered. One item was modified so that it reflected the literature reviewed for this study in a more accurate way. The literature on women and minority professionals directly addresses their perceptions of unclear professional expectations from supervisors (Hyle, 1993; Kanter, 1977; 1993; Smith, 1980). The original item stated: “As an African American female college/university student affairs administrator, I think that my supervisor’s instructions are sometimes unclear”. The item was modified to state: “I think that my supervisor’s expectations are sometimes unclear”. The modified instrument, like Coleman’s (2002) final instrument, contains 27 Likert Scale items. The instrument contained a total of 34 items including the eight demographic items.

Likert Scales

Likert scale instruments are attitude scales that “determine what an individual believes, perceives, or feels about self, others, and a variety of activities, institutions, and situations” (Gay & Airasian, 1997, p. 156). Participants are asked to self-report their level of agreement with each item. Each potential response is assigned a point value. Some instruments include “undecided” or “neutral” as an option, increasing the number of response options to five (Suskie, 1996). However, Coleman’s (2002) instrument did not include this option.

Coleman’s (2002) instrument included a range of responses from strongly disagree (one) to strongly agree (four). However, the response range for the present study was from strongly agree (one) to strongly disagree (four). The researcher adjusted some of Coleman’s items to make them positive statements. The order of the response range was reversed because of this modification (Gay & Airasian, 1997; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; and Suske, 1996). Statistical tests of significance were conducted on the Likert scale data (Suskie, 1996).
Reliability

Coleman’s (2002) original instrument contained a total of 34 items, including three demographic items and 31 Likert scale items. The original Cronbach alpha was .92, indicating high internal consistency. In addition to calculating the Cronbach alpha, Coleman (2002) established the psychometric properties of the instrument as part of her study. Coleman calculated item-to-total correlations to measure the instrument’s reliability. This statistical procedure indicates the correlation between individual items of an instrument and the total score of that instrument. Items with scores below .3 should be removed from the instrument because they could comprise the reliability of the questionnaire (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994 cited in Coleman, 2002). Coleman found that four items on the original instrument had scores below .3. As a result of this finding, those items were removed from the survey and the final version of the questionnaire was reduced from 31 to 27 Likert scale items. The original item-to-total correlation range was .13 to .78. The final range was .317 to .808, indicating that the instrument was reliable. When the Cronbach alpha was calculated again, it had increased to .93.

The Cronbach alpha for the survey used in the present study was .844. The modification of one item could have impacted the reliability score. Despite the change, this score indicated high internal consistency for the instrument used in this study.

Coleman (2002) calculated the standard error of measurement to estimate how often test errors are expected (Gay & Airasian, 1997). This procedure is also used to determine instrument reliability. “A small standard error of measurement indicates high reliability and a large standard error of measurement indicates low reliability” (p. 177). Coleman (2002) found that the standard error of measurement was 3.85. This score is considered to be reasonable for an instrument with a small number of items (Gay & Airasian, 1997).

Validity

Content validity is an important aspect of instrument development. It involves ensuring that individual items adequately address issues covered in relevant literature and it involves making sure that instrument is clearly formatted. Coleman (2002) established the content validity of the instrument because the items were derived from relevant literature regarding career advancement for higher education administrators, student affairs administrators, women professionals, and minority professionals.

The instrument was also reviewed by four Black female student affairs administrators to ensure that the questionnaire was clearly formatted. Coleman (2002) conducted a factor analysis of the instrument, which provided further evidence of content validity. A factor analysis decreases multiple factors in an instrument to fewer, larger factor categories. Individual factors that are correlated with each other are grouped into these categories. Coleman’s instrument was reduced from 27 individual factors to 7 larger factors that reflect the literature reviewed for this study. This procedure is considered to make data analysis more manageable (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).
Data Analysis

The following research questions guided this study:

1) Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female and Black male student affairs administrators?

2) Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female and Black male student affairs administrators who are employed at different types of institutions (public/private; student enrollment size)?

3) Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female and Black male student affairs administrators based on years of professional experience in higher education?

4) Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female and Black male student affairs administrators based on highest earned degree?

The following table matches each research question to individual survey items:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions and Corresponding Survey Items</th>
<th>Demographic Item Number</th>
<th>Likert Scale Item Number</th>
<th>Open-ended Item Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Question 1</td>
<td>7,8</td>
<td>1-27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question 2</td>
<td>5,6,7,8</td>
<td>1-27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question 3</td>
<td>2,7,8</td>
<td>1-27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question 4</td>
<td>1,7,8</td>
<td>1-27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographic item eight was related to each research question because it asked participants to indicate their race. Demographic item seven was related to the first research question because it asked participants to indicate their gender. Demographic items five and six were related to the second research question because they asked participants to indicate characteristics of their employing institutions. Demographic item two was related to the third research question because it asked participants to indicate the amount of professional experience they had in higher education. Demographic item one was related to the fourth research question because it asked participants to indicate their
highest earned degree. Demographic items three and four were used to identify midlevel administrators; they were not directly related to the research questions.

The 27 Likert scale items and the one open-ended item were related to each research question because the participants’ responses to each of these questions were analyzed based on their different demographic categories.

The following hypothesis statements were developed for this study:

Hypothesis 1: There is no difference in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by Black female and Black male student affairs administrators.

Hypothesis 2: There is no difference in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by Black female and Black male student affairs administrators who are employed at different types of institutions (public/private; student enrollment size).

Hypothesis 3: There is no difference in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by Black female and Black male student affairs administrators based on years of experience in the student affairs profession.

Hypothesis 4: There is no difference in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by Black female and Black male student affairs administrators based on highest earned degree.

Several statistical procedures were used in this study. Frequency distributions were used to show the demographic profile of the respondents. Percentages were reported for demographic categories.

Cronbach alpha was calculated to determine the instrument’s reliability with the current sample population of Black female and male student affairs administrators who are employed in four-year institutions. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and univariate analysis of variance (UNIANOVA) were used to analyze individual items on the questionnaire. High mean scores (three or four) on individual items indicate disagreement with statements regarding perceptions of career advancement factors and low mean scores (one or two) indicate agreement with statements regarding career advancement factors. Tukey Highly Significant Differences (HSD) post hoc analyses were conducted on significant items with three or more groups within a demographic category.

For the first research question, ANOVA was used to determine if significant differences existed in the mean scores of each Likert scale item for Black female and male student affairs administrators. This statistical analysis was appropriate because it determined if significant differences existed between the means of two or more groups (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Gay & Airasian, 1997, p. 629).
UNIANOVA was used for the second, third, and fourth research questions to determine if significant differences in mean scores for each Likert scale item existed between the perceptions of career advancement factors held by Black female and male student affairs administrators who are employed at different types of institutions, have different amounts of professional experience in higher education, and have different education levels. This statistical procedure was appropriate because it determined if significant differences existed between the means of more than two groups and if there were significant interactions among factors (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

The Tukey post hoc analyses that were conducted were appropriate when significant differences were indicated by ANOVA and UNIANOVA in items with three or more groups within a demographic category. The .05 level of significance was used for ANOVA, UNIANOVA, Tukey post hoc analysis.

Responses to the open-ended item were categorized and analyzed to identify themes that supplemented other survey data (Suskie, 1996).
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study examined the impact of gender, institutional characteristics (public/private; student enrollment sizes), years of professional experience in higher education, and highest earned degree on perceptions of career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female and male student affairs administrators. The participants for this study were Black female and male student affairs administrators employed at four-year colleges and universities who were contacted via membership lists of the following professional organizations: the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), College Student Educators International (ACPA), and the National Association of Student Affairs Professionals (NASAP). Participants responded to an online survey which included an informed consent statement and a corresponding item asking them if they would complete the survey. The survey consisted of eight demographic items, 27 Likert scale items, one structured open-ended item, and one item inviting individuals to participate in a follow-up interview if an adequate response rate was not obtained.

Demographic Data

The questionnaire was delivered electronically to 1,082 people. After two follow-up emails requesting a reply, a total of 487 individual responses were collected and a response rate of approximately 45% was reached. Two hundred twenty-three (223) respondents who self-identified as midlevel administrators returned surveys that provided useable data for analysis. Midlevel administrators comprised over half (51.9%) of the total respondents.

Gender

About 64.6% percent (144 respondents) were female and 35.4% (79 respondents) were male.

Institutional Characteristics

Two hundred fourteen respondents (96%) were employed at PWIs. Nine respondents (4%) were employed at HBCUs. One hundred forty respondents (62.8%) were employed at public institutions, while eighty-three respondents (37.2%) were employed at private institutions. Slightly more than 99% (221 respondents) were employed at four-year institutions. Two respondents (.9%) were employed at two-year institutions. The two-year administrators were not excluded from the study because their impact on the findings was negligible. Sixty-seven respondents (30%) were employed at institutions with student enrollments of fewer than 5,000. Eighty respondents (35.9%) were employed at institutions with student enrollments of 5,000 to 19,999; and 76 respondents (34.1%) were employed at institutions with student enrollments of 20,000 or more.
Years of Professional Experience and Degrees Earned

Twenty-two respondents (9.9%) had fewer than five years of professional experience in higher education. Approximately 29.1% (65 respondents) had five to ten years of professional experience, 35.4% (79 respondents) had ten to fifteen years of professional experience; and 25.6% (57 respondents) had more than 15 years of professional experience in higher education.

Approximately 5.8% (13 respondents) had earned Bachelor’s degrees. One hundred sixty-three respondents (73.1%) had earned master’s degrees and six respondents (2.7%) had earned education specialist degrees. Approximately 18.4% (41 respondents) earned doctoral degrees.

Demographic Summary

The majority of the respondents were women. Most respondents were employed in public, predominantly White institutions of medium or large size. Most respondents had a master’s degree as their highest earned degree and had 10 to 15 years or 5 to 10 years (respectively) of professional experience in higher education. (See Table 4.)

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>64.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Characteristics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PWI</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>96.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HBCU</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>37.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-year</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>99.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-year</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fewer than 5,000 students</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000 – 19,999 students</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000+ students</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 years</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-15 years</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 15 years</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Earned Degree</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>73.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Specialist</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This study examined the impact of gender, institutional characteristics (public/private; student enrollment sizes), years of professional experience in higher education, and highest earned degree on perceptions of career advancement factors held by Black female and Black male student affairs administrators at four-year institutions. The following research questions guided this study:
1) Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female and Black male student affairs administrators?

2) Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female and Black male student affairs administrators who are employed at different types of institutions (public/private; student enrollment sizes)?

3) Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female and Black male student affairs administrators based on years of professional experience in higher education?

4) Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by Black female and Black male student affairs administrators based on highest earned degree?

The instrument used for this study included 27 Likert scale items representing 27 individual career advancement factors. The individual survey items represented issues related to opportunities for career growth; competence; attitudes held by and about respondents; organizational and employment concerns; employment position responsibilities; and position requirements (Coleman, 2002). Data for the first research question was analyzed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to determine if significant differences existed between mean scores for both gender groups.

The following variables were examined in the second research question: gender, public/private institutions, and student enrollment. An analysis of institutional type (HBCU/PWI) had been anticipated but was not conducted because the small number of midlevel respondents who were employed at HBCUs made such analysis impossible. Data was analyzed using Univariate Analysis of Variance (UNIANOVA). UNIANOVA is appropriate when two or more independent variables are analyzed. Data from the third and fourth research questions was also analyzed using UNIANOVA. Tukey HSD post hoc tests were conducted on significant items with three or more groups within a demographic category.

The final questionnaire item asked participants to answer an open-ended question regarding factors that impact career advancement for Black student affairs administrators. Data from this item was coded, categorized, and analyzed. The results of this item are presented after the results of the statistical analyses are presented.

Findings

Research Question 1: Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by Black female and Black male student affairs administrators?
**Gender**

One significant difference was found in the analysis of gender. In item 17, women were significantly less likely than men to perceive that they are not held to a higher performance standard than White male administrators. (See Table 5.)

**Table 5**

Response for Gender

**ANOVA Response for Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.514</td>
<td>.035*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* < .05

**Research Question 2: Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by Black female and Black male student affairs administrators who are employed at different types of institutions?**

**Gender and Institutional Type**

Two significant differences were found in the analysis of gender and institutional control. In item 15, women (in general) were significantly less likely than men (in general) to perceive that they have not been victims of gender discrimination. In item 17, women were significantly less likely than men to perceive that they are not held to a higher performance standard than White male administrators. (See Table 6.)

**Table 6**

Responses for Gender and Institutional Control

**UNIANOVA Responses for Item 15**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.118</td>
<td>.044*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional control</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.244</td>
<td>.136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender x institutional control</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.317</td>
<td>.252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>(.683)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The value in parenthesis represents the mean square error.

* < .05
Table 6 continued

UNIANOVA Responses for Item 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.460</td>
<td>.036*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional control</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.739</td>
<td>.391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender x institutional control</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.299</td>
<td>.585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>(.675)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The value in parenthesis represents the mean square error.
* < .05

Gender and Student Enrollment Size

Four significant items were found in the analysis of gender and student enrollment size. In item 11, all administrators at medium institutions were significantly more likely than all administrators at large institutions to perceive that experience and a master’s degree are necessary for career advancement. In item 17, women administrators were significantly less likely than men to perceive that they are not held to higher performance standards than White male administrators.

In item 22, all female and male administrators at medium institutions were significantly more likely than administrators at small institutions to perceive that they are often included in decision-making processes. In item 27, women at small institutions were significantly less likely than men at small institutions to perceive that they are not subjected to negative societal attitudes about Black people of their gender group. (See Table 7.)

Post Hoc Analysis

Tukey HSD analysis was conducted on items 11 and 22. A significant difference was found in item 11 between all administrators at medium and large institutions. A significant difference was also found in item 22 between all administrators at small and medium institutions. All administrators at medium institutions were significantly more likely to perceive that experience and a master’s degree are necessary for career advancement and that they are included in decision-making processes.
Table 7

Responses for Gender and Student Enrollment Size

UNIANOVA Responses for Item 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>.791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student enrollment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.563</td>
<td>.012*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender x student enrollment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.176</td>
<td>.838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>(.290)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The value in parenthesis represents the mean square error.
* < .05

UNIANOVA Responses for Item 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.346</td>
<td>.038*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student enrollment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.357</td>
<td>.700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender x student enrollment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.816</td>
<td>.444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>(.678)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The value in parenthesis represents the mean square error.
* < .05

UNIANOVA Responses for Item 22

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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<th>f</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.614</td>
<td>.434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student enrollment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.970</td>
<td>.020*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender x student enrollment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>.951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>(.582)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The value in parenthesis represents the mean square error.
* < .05
Research Question 3: Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by Black female and Black male student affairs administrators based on years of professional experience in higher education?

Gender and Years of Professional Experience

Three significant items were found in the analysis of gender and years of professional experience in higher education. In item 2, all administrators with more than 15 years of professional experience in higher education were significantly more likely than all administrators with 10 to 15 years to perceive that they rarely feel isolated.

In item 13, all administrators with fewer than five years of experience were significantly more likely than all administrators with 5 to 10 years and 10 to 15 years to perceive that Black student affairs administrators of their gender are often placed in positions of power. In item 13, all female and male administrators with more than 15 years were significantly more likely than all administrators with 5 to 10 years and 10 to 15 years to perceive that Black student affairs administrators are often placed in positions of power.

In item 17, women were significantly less likely than men perceive that they are not held to higher performance standards than White male administrators. (See Table 8.)

Post Hoc Analysis

In item 2, a significant difference was found between administrators with 10 to 15 years and more than 15 years of experience. All administrators with more than 15 years of experience were more likely to indicate that they rarely feel isolated.

In item 13, a significant difference was found between all administrators with fewer than 5 years and those with 5 to 10 years of experience. A significant difference

---

Table 7 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.479</td>
<td>.490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student enrollment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.640</td>
<td>.074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender x student enrollment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.275</td>
<td>.015*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>(.623)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The value in parenthesis represents the mean square error.
* < .05
was also found between administrators with fewer than five years and 10 to 15 years of experience. In both analyses, administrators with less than 5 years of experience were more likely to perceive that Black student affairs administrators of their gender were often placed in positions of power.

In item 13, a significant difference was also found between all administrators with more than 15 years and 5 to 10 years. A significant difference was found between all administrators with more than 15 years and those with 10 to 15 years. In both analyses, all female and male administrators with more than 15 years in both analyses were more likely to perceive that Black student affairs administrators of their gender were often placed in positions of power.

Table 8

Responses for Gender and Years of Professional Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.526</td>
<td>.469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.009</td>
<td>.031*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender x years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.931</td>
<td>.427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>(.595)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The value in parenthesis represents the mean squares error. * < .05

UNIANOVA Responses for Item 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.178</td>
<td>.674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.177</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender x years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.895</td>
<td>.445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>(.460)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The value in parenthesis represents the mean square error. * < .05
Table 8 continued

UNIANOVA Responses for Item 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.123</td>
<td>.044*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.916</td>
<td>.434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender x Years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.511</td>
<td>.675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>(.680)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The value in parenthesis represents the mean square error.
* < .05

**Research Question 4: Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by Black female and Black male student affairs administrators based on highest earned degree?**

**Gender and Highest Earned Degree**

Because of the small number of respondents who indicated that a bachelor’s degree was their highest earned degree, administrators in the bachelor’s degree category were omitted from the analysis of administrators by gender and education level. Five significant items were found in the analysis of gender and highest earned degree.

In item 1, all administrators with doctoral degrees were significantly more likely than all administrators with master’s degrees to perceive that a doctoral degree is necessary for career advancement. In item 3, women with doctoral degrees were significantly less likely than men with doctoral degrees to perceive that their skills are often utilized. In item 5, all administrators whose highest degree is a master’s degree were significantly more likely than all administrators with doctoral degrees to perceive that there is a lack of opportunities for Black student affairs administrators of their gender to network with one another. In item 17, women (in general) were significantly less likely than men (in general) to perceive that they are not held to a higher performance standard than White male administrators.

In item 19, women were significantly less likely than men to perceive that they are not held to higher performance standards than Black student affairs administrators of the opposite gender. In item 19, women with doctoral degrees were also significantly less likely than men with doctoral degrees to perceive that they were not held to higher performance standards than Black student affairs administrators of the opposite gender. (See Table 9.)
Table 9
Responses for Gender and Highest Earned Degree

UNIANOVA Responses for Item 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>.890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.089</td>
<td>.025*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender x degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.395</td>
<td>.530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>(.539)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The value in parenthesis represents the mean square error.  
* < .05

UNIANOVA Responses for Item 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.171</td>
<td>.142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>.830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender x degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.044</td>
<td>.046*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>(.486)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The value in parenthesis represents the mean square error.  
* < .05

UNIANOVA Responses for Item 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.061</td>
<td>.153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.875</td>
<td>.050*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender x degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.860</td>
<td>.355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>(.584)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The value in parenthesis represents the mean square error.  
* < .05
### Table 9 continued

#### UNIANOVA Responses for Item 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.396</td>
<td>.037*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.351</td>
<td>.554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender x degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.865</td>
<td>.353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>(.675)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The value in parenthesis represents the mean square error.
* < .05

#### UNIANOVA Responses for Item 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.940</td>
<td>.009*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.907</td>
<td>.169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender x degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.575</td>
<td>.034*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>(.545)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The value in parenthesis represents the mean square error.
* < .05

### Open-Ended Responses

Participants were asked to identify (in no particular order) up to three factors that have the most impact on career advancement for Black student affairs administrators. The 620 responses were coded and placed into eleven categories. (See Table 10.) The first column of the table below lists the names of each category. The frequencies of responses for each category are listed in the second column. The percentages of responses for each category are listed in the final column. A discussion of the responses follows the table.
Table 10

Open-Ended Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTOR CATEGORY</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic credentials</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional experience</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal characteristics</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial issues</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career mobility</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence, skills, and abilities</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational culture; political factors</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical characteristics and age</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over half (56.6%) of the participants cited academic credentials, professional experience, and networking as responses to the open-ended item. Many respondents emphasized the importance of earning terminal degrees. Respondents also emphasized that it is important to have different types of professional experience (different functional areas; budget administration) and several years of professional experience.

However, responses did not indicate a recommended amount of professional experience. Specific responses included “fundraising experience”, “supervisory experience”, “multiple areas of experience”, and “willingness to put in time in a particular system or institution”. Responses in the networking category addressed the importance of establishing connections with other professionals that can lead to career advancement opportunities. Specific responses included “relationship building”, having “connections”, and having “favor with senior administration”.

The personal characteristics category included responses that were related to individual characteristics such as effective communication and persistence. Specific responses included “excellent interpersonal skills”, “being flexible”, “individual drive and commitment”, and having “good character”.

The racial issues category included responses that were related to assimilation, bias, and perceptions about Black administrators. Specific responses included “the ability to assimilate without losing one’s identity”, “being seen as non-aggressive”, and the “perception of potential difficulty working with a Black administrator”.

Responses in the mentoring category were related to the ways in which being mentored impacts career advancement. Specific responses included the importance of being mentored “by experienced colleagues”, having “competent and effective mentors”, and the need for “Black mentors and advocates”.

48
In the career mobility category, responses were related to the limited advancement opportunities that exist at many institutions. Specific responses included the perception that Black administrators are limited to working at institutions located “in big cities or liberal states”. Other responses indicated that student affairs administrators who seek career advancement must be willing to relocate frequently and that “there is no incentive to stay in the field long enough to advance”.

Responses in the competence, skills, and ability category emphasized extensive knowledge of functional areas and exemplary job performance. Specific responses included having “job knowledge” and being able to articulate that knowledge. A respondent also indicated that the “lack of perceived competence” could impact career advancement.

Responses in the organizational culture/political factors category emphasized the importance of understanding institutional culture and governance. Specific responses included “being involved in campus governance” and “involvement in university committees”. Other responses included “institutional commitment” to hiring diverse individuals; administrators’ “ability to navigate the political landscape”; and administrators’ “ability to negotiate in predominantly White institutions.

Responses in the physical characteristics and age category indicated that “conventionality” in appearance, “age”, and “weight” impact career advancement. Responses in the gender category indicated that “sexism” and “gender stereotypes” impact career advancement.

**Summary**

This study sought to determine if there were significant differences in career advancement perceptions held by midlevel Black female and male student affairs administrators based on gender, institutional characteristics, years of professional experience in higher education, and highest earned degree. Significant differences were found among gender groups. Significant differences were also found in the analysis of gender and institutional characteristics; gender and years of professional experience in higher education; and gender and highest earned degree.

This study also yielded significant findings beyond the research questions for this study. Differences were found among administrators who were employed at different types of institutions, had different amounts of professional experience, and had different levels of education.

Responses to the open-ended questionnaire item also provided findings beyond the research questions. Although significant differences between women and men were found in the Likert scale items, gender was the least frequently cited career advancement factor in the open-ended item. The most frequently cited career advancement factors in this item, however, academic credentials, professional experience, and networking.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This study examined the impact of gender, institutional characteristics, years of professional experience in higher education, and highest earned degree on perceptions of career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female and male student affairs administrators. Midlevel Black female student affairs administrators were the primary focus of this study because they are more likely to perceive factors that could serve as barriers to their career advancement. Black women are also more likely to be employed in midlevel and lower-level student affairs positions at public institutions; and they are under-represented as senior student affairs officers (SSAOs) in most higher education institutions. (Banner, 2003; Evans, 1988; Hamrick & Carlisle, 1990; Jones & Komives, 2001; Konrad & Pfeffer, 1991; McEwen, Engstrom, & Williams, 1990; Moses, 1997; Reason, Walker, & Robinson, 2002; Reason, 2003; Scott, 2003; Taylor, 2000; Twale, 1995). Higher education literature also suggests that years of professional experience in higher education and education level are associated with career advancement perceptions held by Black female and male student affairs administrators and student affairs administrators, in general (Banner, 2003; Coleman, 2002; Harder, 1983; Herbrand, 2001; Kuh, Evans, & Duke, 1983; Lunsford, 1984; Paul & Hoover, 1980; Rickard, 1985; Scott, 2003; Smith, 1998).

This chapter begins with a summary of the findings from this study followed by a discussion of the results. Findings that expand the scope of existing literature are also presented and discussed. Recommendations for additional research are discussed in the final section of this chapter.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to determine if significant differences exist in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female and male student affairs administrators. Specifically, the study examined differences in perceptions based on gender, institutional characteristics (institutional control and student enrollment size), years of professional experience in higher education, and highest earned degree. The researcher initially intended to analyze administrators by gender and type of institution (HBCU or PWI) as part of the analysis of institutional characteristics. However, the comparisons between HBCUs and PWIs were not conducted because the small number of respondents employed at HBCUs made such analysis impossible.

The findings from this study indicate that there are significant differences in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by Black female and male student affairs administrators based on gender, institutional characteristics, years of professional experience in higher education, and highest earned degree.

The following research questions guided this study:
(1) Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female and Black male student affairs administrators?

Findings from the analysis of gender perceptions indicate that women were more likely than men to perceive they are held to a higher performance standard than White male administrators.

(2) Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female and Black male student affairs administrators who are employed at different types of institutions?

Findings from the analysis of gender perceptions and institutional control indicate significant findings for gender only. There were no significant findings regarding gender and institutional control. Women (in general) were more likely than men (in general) to perceive they had been victims of gender discrimination and that they are held to a higher performance standard than White male administrators.

Findings from the analysis of gender perceptions and student enrollment size indicate that women (in general) were more likely than men (in general) to perceive they are held to a higher performance standard than White male administrators.

Women at small institutions were more likely than men at small institutions to perceive they are subjected to negative societal attitudes about Black people of their gender group. However, women at medium institutions were less likely than men at medium institutions to perceive that they are subjected to negative societal attitudes about Black people of their gender group.

The following findings were beyond the scope of the second research question. All administrators at medium institutions were more likely than all administrators at large institutions to perceive that experience and a master’s degree were necessary for career advancement. All administrators at medium institutions were also more likely than all administrators at small institutions to perceive that they are included in decision-making processes.

3) Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female and Black male student affairs administrators based on years of professional experience in higher education?

Findings from the analyses of gender and years of professional experience in higher education indicate that women (in general) were more likely to perceive they are held to a higher performance standard than White male administrators.

The following findings were beyond the scope of the third research question. All administrators with more than 15 years of professional experience were more likely than all administrators with 10 to 15 years to perceive that they rarely feel isolated.
All administrators with more than 15 years of professional experience were more likely than administrators with 5 to 10 years and 10 to 15 years to perceive that Black administrators of their gender are placed in power. All administrators with fewer than 5 years of experience were more likely than all administrators with 5 to 10 years and 10 to 15 years to perceive that Black administrators of their gender are placed in power.

4) Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female and Black male student affairs administrators based on highest earned degree?

Findings from the analysis of gender and highest earned degree indicate that women (in general) were more likely than men (in general) to perceive they are held to higher performance standards than White male administrators and Black male student affairs administrators. Women with doctoral degrees were less likely than men with doctoral degrees to perceive that their skills are often utilized and that they are held to higher performance standards than Black male student affairs administrators.

One additional finding was beyond the scope of the fourth research. All administrators with doctoral degrees were more likely than all administrators with master’s degrees to perceive that a doctoral degree is necessary for career advancement.

Discussion of Results

Findings from the present study reflect the literature reviewed in preparation for this study. The findings are largely consistent with previous studies that examined Black women administrators and gender issues. However, the findings from this study also suggest that institutional characteristics, years of experience, and highest earned degree impact perceptions of career advancement factors held by midlevel Black female and male student affairs administrators. Few studies examine the career advancement perceptions of midlevel Black female and male student affairs administrators with an emphasis on gender, institutional characteristics, years of experience, and highest earned degree. Because current research is limited in this area, findings from this study could expand existing literature.

Emerging Themes

Findings from the present study indicate that Black women student affairs administrators were more likely than their Black male counterparts to perceive disparities related to career advancement factors. In addition to perceiving gender discrimination and elevated professional requirements, Black women perceived that their skills were underutilized.

Black women, in general, were more likely than men to perceive that they were held to higher professional performance standards than White male administrators and that they had experienced gender discrimination. Women at small institutions were more likely than men at small institutions to perceive that they were subjected to negative
societal attitudes about Black women. However, women at medium institutions were less likely than men at medium institutions to perceive that they were subjected to negative societal attitudes about Black women. Women with doctoral degrees were less likely than men with doctoral degrees to perceive that their skills were often utilized and that they were held to higher professional performance standards than Black male student affairs administrators. In the following paragraphs, the findings from this study are discussed in relation to existing literature.

The present study found that women perceived they were held to higher professional performance standards than men. Previous studies have shown that women and minority educators in higher education perceive the added responsibility of working on projects that were specifically related to their gender or racial classification (Howard-Hamilton & Williams, 1996; Hyle, 1993; Smith, 1980). Black women administrators perceived that they were expected to be advocates for Black students (Howard-Hamilton & Williams, 1996). Hyle (1993) found that Black and White women faculty perceived that they were expected to serve as liaisons for Black students and female students, respectively. In other studies, women have perceived that they must work harder than others to prove their professional competence (Kanter, 1977; 1993; Miller & Vaughn, 1997).

The present study found that women were more likely than men to perceive gender discrimination and the underutilization of their skills. Previous studies on Black women administrators yielded similar findings (Coleman, 2002; Coleman, 1998; Holmes, 2003; Miller & Vaughn, 1997; Singh, Robinson, Williams-Green, 1995). Researchers have found that Black women who were employed in various professions perceived that their colleagues underestimated their abilities and questioned their competence (Kanter, 1977; 1993; Holmes, 2003; Miller & Vaughn, 1997). Coleman (1998) found that Black and White women professionals cited negative perceptions about women and exclusion from male-dominated networks as barriers to career advancement.

The literature on higher education administrators indicates that female student affairs administrators are often employed at smaller, private institutions and that they often experience advancement to senior-level positions at such institutions (Evans & Kuh, 1983; Herbrand, 2001; Randall et al, 1995; Rickard, 1985). Although there were no significant findings regarding institutional control in the present study, the study did show that women at medium institutions were less likely than men at medium institutions to perceive that they are subjected to negative societal perceptions about Black women. Yet, women at small institutions were more likely than men at small institutions to perceive that they are subjected to negative societal perceptions about Black women. This finding suggests that institutional size could impact midlevel Black women in different ways than it impacts their White female and Black male counterparts. However, the finding is consistent with literature regarding the persistence of negative stereotypes characterizing Black women as aggressive individuals (Holmes, 2003; Ihle, 1985; Nelson, 1995; Vaz, 1995).
Although studies have shown that women are less likely to earn terminal degrees, the literature indicates that doctoral degrees are perceived to facilitate career advancement among female and male college administrators (Banner, 2003; Coleman, 2002; Rickard, 1985; Scott, 2003; Sing et al, 1995; Smith, 1998). However, this study shows that midlevel Black female student affairs administrators who earn doctoral degrees perceive that they are held to higher professional standards than their Black male counterparts; and they also perceive that their skills are not often utilized. These findings indicate that, despite achieving terminal degrees, midlevel Black female student affairs administrators perceive factors that could impede their career advancement.

Summary

The findings from this study suggest that midlevel Black female student affairs administrators are more likely than their male counterparts to perceive disparities related to career advancement factors. Specifically, women perceived elevated professional performance standards, gender discrimination, underutilization of their skills, and negative societal attitudes regarding Black women. Previous studies have yielded similar results, but few studies have examined these issues within an emphasis on gender, institutional characteristics, years of professional experience, and highest earned degree.

Findings from this study are consistent with literature on Black women administrators and gender. However, these findings suggest that institutional characteristics, years of experience, and highest earned degree also impact the perceptions of Black female and Black male administrators in ways that have not been examined extensively in the existing literature. This study begins to expand the literature in this area by identifying additional characteristics that could impact career advancement perceptions held by midlevel Black student affairs administrators.

The present study yielded findings that were beyond the scope of the research questions (see Appendix K). These findings indicate that all midlevel Black student affairs administrators at medium institutions were more likely to perceive that experience and a master’s degree were necessary for career advancement. All administrators at medium institutions were also more likely to perceive that they are included in decision-making processes.

It was also determined that, all administrators with more than 15 years of experience and fewer than 5 years of experience were more likely to perceive that administrators of their gender were placed in positions of power. All administrators with more than 15 years of experience were also more likely to perceive that they rarely feel isolated. In the analysis of highest earned degree, administrators with doctoral degrees perceived that a doctoral degree is necessary for career advancement.

Responses to the open-ended questionnaire item also provided findings beyond the research questions. Although significant differences in perceptions were found between women and men in the Likert scale items, gender was the least frequently cited factor in the open-ended item--in which respondents were asked to indicate factors that
impact career advancement for Black student affairs administrators. Academic credentials, professional experience, and networking were the most frequently cited career advancement factors in the open-ended item.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Findings from this study have several implications for midlevel Black student affairs administrators. Overall, Black women administrators continue to perceive disparities including gender discrimination, elevated professional performance standards, underutilization of professional skills, and negative perceptions of Black women. Despite governmental and corporate efforts to increase gender equity in work environments, Black women and men, in general, continue to perceive workplace disparities and barriers to career advancement (Dingell & Maloney, 2002; U.S. Department of Labor, 1991).

Individual administrators and institutions share the responsibility for enhancing career advancement opportunities for Black women. Black women administrators should continue to earn terminal degrees and seek opportunities for advancement. Institutions should use findings from this study and similar studies to further examine and minimize factors that contribute to Black women administrators’ perceptions of disparities. Institutional leaders and researchers should investigate administrative practices at medium institutions and examine the experiences of Black women administrators at medium institutions. Findings from this study indicate that Black women at medium institutions were less likely than men to perceive they are subjected to negative societal attitudes about Black people of their gender group. This result was the only significant finding that did not indicate a perceived disparity by women. Successful behaviors and practices from medium institutions could be modified and implemented at different types of institutions.

The findings from this study have implications for midlevel Black student affairs administrators in general. Researchers should further examine the impact of institutional size on perceptions of career advancement factors. In this study, all midlevel Black administrators at medium institutions were more likely than their counterparts at small institutions to perceive that they are often included in decision-making processes. This finding is inconsistent with a finding from a previous study which indicated that midlevel administrators perceived they had limited decision-making authority (Henkin & Persson, 1992 cited in Johnsrud, Heck, & Rosser, 2000). Researchers and institutional administrators should attempt to identify successful practices at medium institutions and modify them for implementation at small and large institutions, where many of the respondents of this study are employed. Specifically, about 30% of respondents to this study indicated they were employed at small institutions and about 34.1% indicated they were employed at large institutions.

The findings from this study can be expanded to examine Black student affairs administrators at two-year colleges and by conducting gender comparisons of Black and non-Black student affairs administrators. Future researchers could also compare the
career advancement perceptions of Black student affairs administrators in different employment categories (senior-level, midlevel, and entry-level). Findings from an unpublished study conducted by Belk (2006) suggest that career advancement perceptions differ among Black student affairs administrators in different employment and gender categories.

Finally, the open-ended item yielded important findings. Significant differences in perceptions based on gender were found in the quantitative analysis of Likert scale items. In the qualitative item, however, gender was the least frequently cited factor reported when respondents were asked to indicate factors they perceived to impact career advancement for Black student affairs administrators. These differences suggest that more extensive qualitative studies should be conducted to investigate the perceived impact of gender on career advancement for midlevel Black student affairs administrators.
REAPPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 11/3/2005

To:
Adria Belk
1900 Centre Pointe Blvd #103
Tallahassee, FL 32308

Dept.: EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS AND POLICY STUDIES

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Reapproval of Use of Human subjects in Research:
Career Advancement among Black Student Affairs administrators: A gender comparison

Your request to continue the research project listed above involving human subjects has been approved by the Human Subjects Committee. If your project has not been completed by 11/1/2006 please request renewed approval.

You are reminded that a change in protocol in this project must be approved by resubmission of the project to the Committee for approval. Also, the principal investigator must report to the Chair promptly, and in writing, any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the Chairman of your department and/or your major professor are reminded of their responsibility for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in their department. They are advised to review the protocols of such investigations as often as necessary to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

Cc: Robert Schwartz
HSC No. 2005.832-R
Dear Educator:

My name is Adria Belk and I am a doctoral student at Florida State University. I seek your participation in the following research project: "Career Advancement among Black Student Affairs Administrators: A Gender Comparison". This project examines the impact of gender, institutional type, years of professional experience in higher education, and highest earned degree on perceptions of career advancement factors.

I have developed an electronic survey that you can access at [http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?A=103606561E25155](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?A=103606561E25155). If you decide to take the survey, please complete it by December 7, 2005. Your responses will remain confidential and anonymous.

I obtained only your name and institution from Collegiate Educators International (ACPA), the National Association of Student Affairs Professionals (NASAP), and/or the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). ACPA, NASAP, and NASPA do not endorse this study in any way.

Sincerely,

Adria L. Belk  
Doctoral Candidate  
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies  
Florida State University  
adriabelk@yahoo.com

Please click the following link if you wish to be removed from this list: [http://www.surveymonkey.com/r.asp?A=103606561E25155](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r.asp?A=103606561E25155)
APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

By responding to this survey, I give my consent to participate in the following research project: “Perceptions of Career Advancement Factors Held by Black Student Affairs Administrators: A Gender Comparison”. Adria Belk, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Florida State University, is conducting the research.

This study is considered to pose minimal risk to me as a participant because I am able to complete the online survey in the setting of my choice and at my convenience. My responses will remain anonymous. I understand that I may choose to discontinue my participation in the study at any time. If I have concerns about the study, I am encouraged to contact the researcher at adriabelk@yahoo.com or I can contact the Florida State University Institutional Review Board at 850-644-9694. I am free, at any time, to request to have my responses withdrawn from the study and excluded from the analysis. I can request and receive the results of this study from the researcher for a period of up to five years after my participation in the study.

Sincerely,

Adria L. Belk
Doctoral Candidate
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
Florida State University
APPENDIX D

REQUEST AND APPROVAL TO SURVEY NASPA MEMBERS

From: Adria Belk [mailto:belk@eng.fsu.edu]
Sent: Thursday, September 15, 2005 12:08 PM
To: Gwen Dungy
Subject: Research information

Hello Dr. Dungy,

My name is Adria Belk and I am a doctoral student in the Higher Education program at Florida State University. My major professor, Robert Schwartz, suggested that I contact you.

I am writing my dissertation and the title is "Perceptions of Career Advancement Factors held by Black Student Affairs Administrators: A Gender Comparison". Currently, my sample population is comprised of midlevel, Black administrators who are members of ACPA and NASAP. I would also like to include NASPA members in my study. Would you please tell me which steps I should take to request access to your membership data?

Thank you,

Adria Belk

From: Evangeline SoleynJohn [mailto:esoleynjohn@naspa.org]
Sent: Wednesday, September 21, 2005 9:36 AM
To: Adria Belk
Subject: RE: Research information

Adria-

here is the mailing list of all current African American NASPA members. The statistics breakdown report for the entire membership is not yet available due to the database conversion. I can tell you that 1387/ 9221 out of all members identify as African American which equals about 15%.

Evangeline
Hello Dr. Terrell.

My name is Adria Belk. I am a doctoral student at Florida State University and I am currently writing my dissertation. My working title is "Characteristics Impacting the Perception of Career Advancement Factors among Black Student Affairs Administrators: A Gender Comparison".

I would like the participants in my study to be midlevel Black student affairs administrators who are members of NASAP (and ACPA). I am requesting permission to access NASAP membership data so I can contact NASAP members by email and ask them to complete an electronic survey. It would be extremely helpful if you can provide the names, institutional mailing addresses, and email addresses of the NASAP members.

Please let me know if you need additional information regarding my request such as a copy of my approval letter from the Institutional Review Board. I appreciate your willingness to help me.

Sincerely,
Adria Belk

Ms. Belk,

There are eight people that are members of NASAP at this institution. Five of them are students from the Leadership Institute.

If you want a listing of the membership, I will be glad to send that to you. I will need your fax #.

Thanks

Minnie Austin
APPENDIX F

REQUEST AND APPROVAL TO SURVEY ACPA MEMBERS
December 6, 2004

Core Council for the Generation and Dissemination of Knowledge
c/o Jacqueline D. Skinner, Ph.D.
One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036-1188.

Dear Dr. Skinner:

Please accept this letter as confirmation and support for the doctoral research of Adria Belk at Florida State University. Adria is a current doctoral student in the Higher Education Administration program who is working under my direction as her major professor. Adria is conducting research for her dissertation which depends on access to the membership records of ACPA for distribution of a survey.

Adria will ensure the confidentiality of the list and of any respondents to the survey. She is very cognizant of the requirements of confidentiality for her research as well as the ethics of survey research in general. I can also assure you and the members of ACPA that we will not violate their right to privacy in conducting the research Adria has proposed to you.

I am happy to discuss the matter with you further in person by phone or e-mail if needed. I thank you in advance for your cooperation and consideration. I can be reached at the address listed under my signature as necessary.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Robert A. Schwartz
Associate Professor and
Program Coordinator
rschwartz@coe.fsu.edu
(850) 644-8169
Adria Belk
Coordinator, Academic Support Services
FAMU-FSU College of Engineering, B111
Tallahassee, FL 32310-2870
Phone: (850) 410-6543
Fax: (850) 410-6344
belk@eng.fsu.edu

-----Original Message-----
From: Jacquie D. Skinner [mailto:js@acpa.nche.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, January 18, 2005 6:18 PM
To: Adria Belk
Subject: Text file for mid-level African American ACPA members

Adria:

We have approved your research request and are only able to provide you a text listing of those noted in the subject line. Regarding SSAOs, this list will have to wait upon my return to the office after Jan. 27.

Thanks for your patience,

Jacquie Skinner

Jacqueline D. Skinner, Ph.D.
Director of Educational Programs

ACPA
tel: 202.835.2272
fax: 202.296.3286
js@acpa.nche.edu
www.myacpa.org
Ms. Belk:

First of all, Congratulations on getting this far in working on your doctorate degree. I am honored that you would like to use my instrument. You have my permission to do so. The only thing that I ask is that you send me your results/findings of your research. I am very interested in your topic.

Good Luck. If there is anything else that I can do to help you, please let me know.

Sincerely,
Jane Coleman-Owens, Ed.D.

---

From: Adria Belk [mailto:belk@eng.fsu.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, May 17, 2005 9:13 AM
To: coleman-owens@msn.com
Subject: Dissertation survey instrument

Hello Dr. Coleman-Owens.

My name is Adria Belk. I am a doctoral student at Florida State University and I am currently writing my dissertation. My topic is "Factors Impacting the Career Advancement of Black Student Affairs Administrators: A Gender Comparison". The population for my study will be midlevel Black female and male administrators who are members of ACPA (College Student Educators International, formerly the American College Personnel Association).

I obtained a copy of your dissertation from Digital Dissertations (http://www.lib.umi.com/dissertations/gateway) and I would like to use your instrument to collect data during the summer and/or fall semesters of 2005 if you will allow me to do so. Please let me know if you will give me permission to use your survey instrument. Also, please let me know if I can provide additional information for you.

Sincerely,
Adria Belk
APPENDIX H

PERCEPTIONS OF CAREER ADVANCEMENT SURVEY

Please read the following informed consent statement:

By responding to this survey, I give my consent to participate in the following research project: “Perceptions of Career Advancement Factors Held by Black Student Affairs Administrators: A Gender Comparison”. Adria Belk, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Florida State University, is conducting the research.

This study is considered to pose minimal risk to me as a participant because I am able to complete the online survey in the setting of my choice and at my convenience. My responses will remain anonymous. I understand that I may choose to discontinue my participation in the study at any time. If I have concerns about the study, I am encouraged to contact the researcher at adriabelk@yahoo.com or I can contact the Florida State University Institutional Review Board at 850-644-9694. I am free, at any time, to request to have my responses withdrawn from the study and excluded from the analysis. I can request and receive the results of this study from the researcher for a period of up to five years after my participation in the study.

Will you participate in this survey?

__Yes, I will participate in this survey.
__No, I will not participate in this survey.

This survey measures the perceptions of career advancement factors held by Black female and male student affairs administrators at four-year institutions in the United States. For each item, you will be asked to provide information regarding your professional experiences and background. Please select responses that accurately describe you and your experiences as a Black female or male student affairs administrator. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete this survey. Your responses will be confidential and will be used only in aggregate analysis.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Please select the appropriate response to each item below. Please select all that apply.

1. The highest degree that I hold is:

__ Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science (B.A./B.S.)
__ Master of Arts/Master of Science (M.A./M.S.)
__ Education Specialist (Ed.S.)
__ Doctor of Philosophy/Doctor of Education (Ph.D./Ed.D.)
__ Other; please indicate ____________________________

2. Indicate how many years of professional experience you have in higher
3. Indicate the employment position title(s) you currently hold. Please check all that apply:

- Advisor/Counselor
- Assistant Dean/Director
- Associate Dean/Director
- Dean
- Director
- Faculty Member
- Graduate Student
- President
- Vice President
- Other; please indicate your position title

4. Indicate the one classification of student affairs professionals that best describes you:

- **Senior level**: full time employee; one of the highest ranking student affairs administrators at an institution with supervisory responsibility for a student affairs division.

- **Midlevel**: full-time employee with supervisory responsibility for full-time professional and/or support staff; supervisory responsibility within one or more departments.

- **Entry-level**: full-time employee with frequent, direct student contact; responsible for student programming; no supervisory responsibility for full-time professional and/or support staff.

- **Paraprofessional**: graduate student who is employed part-time in a student affairs unit.

Other; please describe.

5. Indicate the type of institution in which you work. Please check all that apply:

- Predominantly White Institution (PWI)
- Historically Black College or University (HBCU)
- Public institution
- Private institution
- Four-year institution
- Two-year institution

6. The student enrollment at my institution is:

- Fewer than 5,000
7. Which race/ethnic group best describes you:

__African American/Black (Non-Hispanic)
__Asian American/Asian
__Caucasian/White
__Latino/Hispanic
__Native American

8. To which gender group do you belong:

__Female
__Male

PERCEPTIONS OF CAREER ADVANCEMENT FACTORS

For items 1-27, please indicate the extent to which you: 1 (Strongly Agree), 2 (Agree), 3 (Disagree), 4 (Strongly disagree) with the following statements:

1 = Strongly Agree    2 = Agree    3 = Disagree    4 = Strongly Disagree

1. A doctoral degree is necessary for career advancement.

2. I rarely feel isolated.

3. My skills are often utilized.

4. I feel appreciated.

5. Overall, there is a lack of opportunities for Black student affairs administrators of my gender to network with one another.

6. There is a lack of mentoring for Black student affairs administrators of my gender.

7. My supervisor’s expectations are usually clear.

8. I am subjected to unfair criticisms by co-workers and other administrators.

9. I am often expected to serve as a liaison between Black students and the
administration at my institution.

10. I have a clear understanding of the organizational culture in which I work.

11. Experience, in addition to a master’s degree is necessary for career advancement.

12. Experience, in addition to a doctoral degree is necessary for career advancement.

13. Black student affairs administrators of my gender are often placed in positions of power.

14. I am forced to choose between my job and my family responsibilities in order to advance in my career.

15. I have not been the victim of gender discrimination.

16. Often, Black student affairs administrators of my gender are given the title of assistant, associate, or acting instead of the top administrative title.

17. I am not held to a higher performance standard than White male administrators.

18. I am not held to a higher performance standard than White female administrators.

19. I am not held to a higher performance standard than Black student affairs administrators of the opposite gender.

20. Wearing Afro-centric attire/hairstyles at work would be a barrier to my career advancement.

21. I am taken seriously by colleagues and supervisors.
22. I am often included in decision-making processes.

23. I have to work twice as hard as others to be seen as competent.

24. Black student affairs administrators are often hired because of their race to satisfy quotas.

25. I am often seen by others as being aggressive.

26. My accomplishments are often acknowledged at my institution.

27. I am not subjected to negative societal attitudes about Black people of my gender group.

Please provide a response for item 28.

28. Please identify up to three factors that you believe have the most significant impact on career advancement for Black student affairs administrators.

(1)____________________________________________

(2)____________________________________________

(3)____________________________________________

29. If follow-up interviews are needed, please provide your email address if you are willing to participate in a brief (10 minute) telephone interview.

Email address: _________________________________
APPENDIX I

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENT AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATORS SURVEY
by Jane L. Coleman

This questionnaire measures the perceptions of African American female student affairs administrators in college/university Student Affairs in four-year Alabaman institutions of higher education regarding barriers to career advancement. Your responses should be indicative of your experience in institutions of higher education in Alabama. This is not a test. There are no right or wrong answers. Please express your opinion in response to each item. This questionnaire is anonymous, so do not sign your name.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Please check the appropriate response to each item below.

1. The highest degree that I hold is:
   _____BA/BS   _____MA/MS   _____Ed.S.   _____Ph.D./Ed.D.   _____Other

2. The number of years of experience that I have in college/university Student Affairs is: _____0-9 years   _____10+ years

3. The type of institution in which I work is:
   _____Predominantly White   _____Historically Black College or University

Each of the following questions is followed by four responses. The responses are as follows: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, and 4=Strongly Agree. Please circle the one number which best reflects your opinion.

1. A doctoral degree is necessary for career advancement in college/university Student Affairs for African American female administrators.

2. As an African American female administrator in college/university Student Affairs, I often feel isolated.

3. As an African American female administrator in college/university Student Affairs, I often feel underutilized.

4. As an African American female administrator in college/university Student Affairs, I often feel unappreciated.

5. Overall, there is a lack of opportunities for African American female Student Affairs administrators to network with one another.

6. There is a lack of mentoring for African American female college/university
Student Affairs administrators.

7. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that my supervisor’s instructions are sometimes unclear.

8. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that I am often subjected to unfair criticisms by co-workers and other administrators.

9. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think I am often used as a buffer between African American students and the administration of my institution.

10. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that on the whole, I have an unclear understanding of the organizational culture in which I work.

11. Experience, in addition to a Master’s degree, is necessary for career advancement for African American female college/university Student Affairs administrators.

12. Experience, in addition to a Doctoral degree, is necessary for career advancement for African American female college/university Student Affairs administrators.

13. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that often, African American female administrators are placed in positions which hold no real power.

14. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that I am often forced to choose between my job and my family responsibility in order to advance in my career.

15. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think I have been the victim of gender discrimination.

16. Often, African American female college/university Student Affairs administrators are given the title of assistant, associate, or acting instead of the top administrative title.

17. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that I am often held to a higher performance standard than the White male administrator.

18. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that I am often held to a higher performance standard than the White female administrator.
19. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that I am often held to a higher performance standard than the African American male administrator.

20. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that Afro-centric dress/hairstyle in the workplace would be a barrier to my career advancement.

21. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that I am often not taken seriously by my co-workers and the administration.

22. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think I am often shut out of the decision-making process.

23. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that I have to work twice as hard as others to be seen as competent.

24. African American female college/university Student Affairs administrators are often hired because of their race to satisfy a quota.

25. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that I am often seen by others as being aggressive.

26. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think my accomplishments are often ignored at my institution.

27. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that I am often subjected to the same negative attitudes that exist in the larger society regarding African American women.

28. A master’s degree is necessary for career advancement for African American female student affairs administrators.

29. Experience in higher education is the key for career advancement for African American female college/university student affairs administrators.

30. Experience, in addition to a Bachelor’s degree, is necessary for career advancement for African American female college/university student affairs administrators.

31. As an African American female college/university student affairs administrator, I think that the use of standard English is necessary for my career advancement.
APPENDIX J

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENT AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATORS SURVEY
(REVISED)
by Jane L. Coleman

This questionnaire measures the perceptions of African American female student affairs administrators in college/university Student Affairs in four-year Alabama institutions of higher education regarding barriers to career advancement. Your responses should be indicative of your experience in institutions of higher education in Alabama. This is not a test. There are no right or wrong answers. Please express your opinion in response to each item. This questionnaire is anonymous, so do not sign your name.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Please check the appropriate response to each item below.

1. The highest degree that I hold is:
   _____BA/BS  _____MA/MS  _____Ed.S.  _____Ph.D./Ed.D.  _____Other

2. The number of years of experience that I have in college/university Student Affairs is:  _____0-9 years  _____10+ years

3. The type of institution in which I work is:
   _____Predominantly White  _____Historically Black College or University

Each of the following questions is followed by four responses. The responses are as follows: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, and 4=Strongly Agree. Please circle the one number which best reflects your opinion.

1. A doctoral degree is necessary for career advancement in college/university Student Affairs for African American female administrators.

2. As an African American female administrator in college/university Student Affairs, I often feel isolated.

3. As an African American female administrator in college/university Student Affairs, I often feel underutilized.

4. As an African American female administrator in college/university Student Affairs, I often feel unappreciated.

5. Overall, there is a lack of opportunities for African American female Student Affairs administrators to network with one another.

6. There is a lack of mentoring for African American female college/university
Student Affairs administrators.

7. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that my supervisor’s instructions are sometimes unclear.

8. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that I am often subjected to unfair criticisms by co-workers and other administrators.

9. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think I am often used as a buffer between African American students and the administration of my institution.

10. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that on the whole, I have an unclear understanding of the organizational culture in which I work.

11. Experience, in addition to a Master’s degree, is necessary for career advancement for African American female college/university Student Affairs administrators.

12. Experience, in addition to a Doctoral degree, is necessary for career advancement for African American female college/university Student Affairs administrators.

13. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that often, African American female administrators are placed in positions which hold no real power.

14. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that I am often forced to choose between my job and my family responsibility in order to advance in my career.

15. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think I have been the victim of gender discrimination.

16. Often, African American female college/university Student Affairs administrators are given the title of assistant, associate, or acting instead of the top administrative title.

17. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that I am often held to a higher performance standard than the White male administrator.

18. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that I am often held to a higher performance standard than the White female administrator.
19. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that I am often held to a higher performance standard than the African American male administrator.

20. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that Afro-centric dress/hairstyle in the workplace would be a barrier to my career advancement.

21. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that I am often not taken seriously by my co-workers and the administration.

22. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think I am often shut out of the decision-making process.

23. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that I have to work twice as hard as others to be seen as competent.

24. African American female college/university Student Affairs administrators are often hired because of their race to satisfy a quota.

25. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that I am often seen by others as being aggressive.

26. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think my accomplishments are often ignored at my institution.

27. As an African American female college/university Student Affairs administrator, I think that I am often subjected to the same negative attitudes that exist in the larger society regarding African American women.
APPENDIX K

STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS BEYOND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

ANOVA Significant Responses for Student Enrollment Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.989</td>
<td>.008*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.357</td>
<td>.014*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: An asterisk indicates findings were significant in ANOVA and Tukey post hoc test.

The Tukey HSD post hoc test found a significant difference in item 11 between administrators at medium and large institutions. Administrators at medium institutions were more likely to perceive that experience and a master’s degree are necessary for career advancement. In item 22, the post hoc test found a significant difference between administrators at small and medium institutions. Administrators at medium institutions were more likely to perceive that they are often included in decision-making processes.

ANOVA Significant Responses for Years of Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.800</td>
<td>.041*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.723</td>
<td>.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.014</td>
<td>.001*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: An asterisk indicates findings were significant in ANOVA and Tukey post hoc test.

In item 2, the Tukey post hoc test found a significant difference between administrators with 10 to 15 years and administrators with more than 15 years of experience. Administrators with more than 15 years of experience were more likely to perceive that they rarely feel isolated.

In item 13, the Tukey post hoc test found significant differences between administrators with fewer than 5 years and administrators with 5 to 10 years and between administrators with fewer than 5 years and 10 to 15 years of experience. In both tests, administrators with fewer than 5 years were more likely to perceive that Black student affairs administrators of their gender were often placed in positions of power. In this same item, significant differences were found between administrators with 5 to 10 years and administrators with more than 15 years and between administrators with 10 to 15 years and administrators with more than 15 years of experience. In both tests, administrators with more than 15 years were more also likely to perceive that Black student affairs administrators of their gender were often placed in positions of power.
### ANOVA Significant Responses for Highest Earned Degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
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<th>f</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.117</td>
<td>.027*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.153</td>
<td>.026</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: An asterisk indicates findings were significant in ANOVA and Tukey post hoc test.

In item 1, the Tukey post hoc test found a significant difference between administrators with bachelor’s and doctoral degrees. Administrators with doctoral degrees were more likely to perceive that a doctoral degree is necessary for career advancement.
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Adria Belk is a native of Columbia, South Carolina. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from the University of South Carolina. She received Master of Science and Doctor of Education degrees in Higher Education from Florida State University. She began her professional career as a Coordinator of Academic Support Services in the Division of Undergraduate Studies at Florida State University. She is currently employed as the Director of Instruction in the Division of Technical Studies at Bainbridge College.