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Academic Capitalism And Historically Black Colleges And Universities: Institutional Conflict

Cover Page Footnote

I would like to thank the reviewers for the insightful critiques and suggestions. While I made every attempt to meet their requests, alas, the final result is solely my responsibility.

Academic Capitalism and Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Institutional Conflict

Billy R. Brocato, *University of Maryland-Eastern Shore*

Abstract: The relevance of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the current educational climate remain a critical issue. A mixed-methods case study was used to examine the conflicting concerns among faculty at a private HBCU in northeast Texas that has in recent years faced financial distress, declining enrollment, and administrative leadership turnover. The research design incorporated a two-step, critical race process that examined 'faculty concerns' on two hypothesized dimensions: academic capitalism versus academic autonomy. Relying on the meta-theory of institutional logics, the study examined the embedded racial structure of market-based metrics associated with HBCU faculty caught in a wave of 'academic capitalism' and the consequent paradox of trying to maintain their traditional role as scholastic gatekeepers. The findings suggest two institutional logics—neoliberalism at the administrative level and faculty autonomy at the academic level—were in conflict. It is recommended that HBCU stakeholders recognize the differences in institutional logics affecting faculty perceptions to mitigate the ongoing crises associated with administrators, finances, accreditation, and academic standards. Limitations and future directions for research are discussed.

Keywords: institutional logics, HBCUs, faculty concerns, academic capitalism

Introduction

Embedded in consumerism and globalization, "academic capitalism" looms large over the country's postsecondary institutions (Slaughter and Leslie 1997:44; Park 2011:84; Giroux 2014), fostering a steady shift in state and federal funding metrics that have altered scholarly production from the early 1970s (Alon and Tienda 2007; Knoepfel and Della Sala 2015; Fourcade and Healy 2017; Hartlapp 2020). Additionally, the subsequent fallout of high tuition/increased student loans, state government budgets reduced by lower rates of revenue growth coupled with mounting public-employee pension and health-care costs have forced a restructuring of the country's private and public colleges and universities into "cost centers and revenue production units" (Slaughter and Rhoades 2004:181; Scott, Taylor, and Palmer 2013; Chen, Ingram, and Davis 2014; Eide

2018). This phenomenon has become especially troublesome for the country's four-year historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) that annually struggle to maintain relevance and sustainability in today's neoliberal economic environment (Hill 1985; Kraehe, Foster, and Blakes 2010; Brown II 2013; Andrews et al. 2016; Bracey 2017; Crawford 2017; Toldson 2022). Importantly, this has shifted faculty concerns further to the background for most colleges and universities (Freeman, Commodore, Gasman, and Carter 2016; Hicks and Watson 2018; Johnson, Smith, and Thompson 2020). Thus, the commodification of higher education has contributed to an institutional logics crisis that has become especially pernicious for HBCUs (Lewis 2011; Wilcox, Wells, Haddad, and Wilcox. 2014; Daniel 2016).

Early research has documented the dominance of a market-based institutional logics that has fostered funding redistributions at postsecondary entities and fueled biased media reports characterizing HBCUs as

less relevant today (Gasman 2010; Giroux 2014; Kissel 2019). Critics of HBCUs point to poor management initiatives, lack of faculty with terminal degrees, less rigorous admissions standards (which simply reflect the historical purposes of HBCUs), faculty turnover, and of course, differences in student success rates as rationales for reducing or in some cases, eliminating funding (Jackson 2002; Lee and Jang 2012; Morris 2016; Flores, Park, and Baker. 2017; Crawford II 2017; Blom, Rainer, and Chingos 2020). Supporters have countered that HBCUs remain relevant because of their commitment to providing Black students safe, learning spaces in contrast to principally white colleges and universities (PWIs) (McDaniel and Graham 2001; Evans, Evans, and Evans 2002; Teranishi and Briscoe 2008; Easterwood 2016; Brown et al., 2017). I submit explanatory research into the adverse effects of academic capitalism on HBCU faculty could shed light on the internal struggles threatening HBCUs in general. I believe an analysis of the conflict between academic capitalism and the traditional role of HBCUs deserves as much attention as is given the struggles of PWIs. Although previous research has detailed how HBCU administrators' hierarchical structure and president-centric campuses contributed to poor faculty morale and retention (Guy-Sheftall 2006), there is a need for an interpretive interactionist analysis that examines instructor concerns from an institutional logics perspective (Hicken, Miles, Haile, and Esposito 2021). I incorporated a simple, mixed-methods case study design that allowed for "several levels or units of analysis" as I investigated faculty concerns expressed in my survey questionnaire (Berg 2009:318; Volmar and Eisenhardt 2020).

The first step in my research was to examine HBCUs' significant role as the pathway of last resort for many disadvantaged Black students and analyze those findings from a qualitative lens that focuses on the challenges HBCU faculty face. I believe this is an important topic for several reasons. First, HBCUs remain a critical option for Black students situated in white normative education frameworks—a condition Samuels (2020:6) compared to the class-based "ancient regime" structure of Europe. Secondly, because institutional racism persists in our society, HBCUs are positioned to uniquely address the psycho-

social consequences of racism's life-long effect on marginalized groups' educational opportunities. Additionally, the actions that address racism's deleterious outcomes must be grounded in HBCU faculty's roles—a condition seldom studied, much less empirically examined (Andrews et al., 2016; Arnett, 2014; Arntson, 2020; Cantey, Bland, Mack, and Joy-Davis 2013; Feagin, 2006; LeMelle, 2002; Marks and Reid, 2013; Utsey, Chae, Brown, and Kelly 2002). Third, HBCUs have experienced significant organizational and academic trials in recent years, such as (1) declining enrollment, (2) reductions in budgets, (3) lack of funding for course materials, administrative leadership, and faculty turnover, (4) doctoral-level instructor shortages, and (5) negative stereotypes linked to regional accreditation issues (Crawford, 2017; Morris, 2016; Romero, 2020).

The research analysis consisted of examining the following conditions: 1) summary of the current historical, social, economic, and political conditions affecting HBCU faculty; 2) accreditation decisions as linked to neoliberal economic forces; 3) the unmasking of the institutional logics governing stakeholder interactions; and finally, 4) using a self-reported survey to locate faculty *in situ*—that is, within their situated organizational structure to gauge their concerns as student mentors and scholarly gatekeepers. Because the sample has similar problems observed at other minority-serving institutions in the country, I asked faculty questions specific to the administrative and academic challenges they faced (Baylor 2010; Lewis 2011; Vineburgh 2010). The following hypotheses guided my research:

H₁: If there exists two opposing institutional logics, a majority of faculty will demonstrate a high level of concern with organizational policies that place more emphasis on the strategic revenue generation of the college instead of the college's traditional academic mission.

H₂: If market-based institutional logics appear in opposition to the scholarly needs of students, faculty will demonstrate high levels of concern with students' potential for academic progress.

H₃: If market-based institutional logics appear in opposition to student performance, faculty will

demonstrate high levels of concern with student academic performance and after-graduation goals.

The remainder of the paper is presented as follows: (1) research purpose, (2) theoretical framework, including the meta-theory of institutional logics and a description of the historical significance of neoliberalism as an economic and social force, (3) a review of the relevant literature regarding HBCUs as organizations and social institutions, (4) a description of the research methodology, sample, and statistical techniques used, (5) findings/results/discussion, (6) conclusion, and finally (7) the limitations and proposed direction for future research on the topic.

Metatheory

Because postindustrial organizations rely on rules that guide intra- and interdepartmental roles and employee relations, I rely on neo-institutional theory and specifically the metatheory of institutional logics, to examine the outcome of educators' goals in conflict with neoliberal market forces (Eapen and Krishnan 2009). Neo-institutional theory is a dominant organizational studies tradition from the late 1970s that as a framework explained how "organizations adopted new structures and practices"—not because these practices were "particularly effective or efficient, but because they gave the organization a sheen of legitimacy" (Alvesson and Spicer 2019:200). This framework captures how a shift in the "dominant institutional logic" of late American capitalism has undermined the academy (Thornton and Ocasio 1999:802; Habarth and Coquia 2017). This case study illuminates those vague spaces where structure and agency intersect, contributing to "situated practices" that culminate as institutional behaviors (Giddens 1979:56).

Neoliberal logic represents the socio-cognitive-emotional (sensemaking) components that value *laissez-faire* economic policies over government social redistribution of resources, such as state-funded subsidies for housing, food, medical care, childcare, unemployment, and financial allotments to support post-secondary institutions (Fernandez 2019). Consequently, institutional logics can be viewed as a mechanism by which formal actors are able to put into

practice goal-oriented behaviors that support the functioning and sustainability of neoliberal policies. The growth of neoliberalism's economic policies—a radical view of free market interventions—emerged from the University of Chicago's Nobel laureate Milton Friedman. Friedman's liberal economic agenda garnered the political and economic imagination of the post-industrial public haunted by Marx's specter in the second half of the 20th century (Ashford 2010). In his book, *Capitalism and Freedom*, Friedman (1962/2020) made an unabashed claim that a competitive, free market, private enterprise, capitalist system was necessary for individual freedom. In the United States and Britain, Friedman's view of free markets and individualism gained policy backing by the administrations of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, both recognized for their efforts to dismantle government social programs and marginalize worker unions (Slaughter and Rhoades 2004). Neoliberalism as a logic began its growth through the coercive tendency for organizations within a given field such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (Ocampo 2004) to accept globalized market-based metrics—such as cost-benefit analyses—that removed social considerations by replacing them with an institutional logic grounded in rational, individualized transactional schema (DiMaggio and Powell 1983).

I portend that the competing institutional logics—scholarly versus neoliberal—in U.S. post-secondary education is playing out in a discursive space between the financialization and cultural autonomy generally of HBCUs, and more specifically, HBCU faculty. For example, Giroux (2014:17-18) has criticized neoliberal logic because it placed emphasis on profitability whereby "university presidents are now viewed as CEOs, faculty as entrepreneurs, and students as consumers." Bisaso (2013:47) has termed current conditions as "academic capitalism". Lee and Jang (2012) predicted that when two oppositional institutional logics—neoliberal and academic—were in conflict, the outcome may point to a demoralization of faculty and other stakeholders. Further, research has shown that market-driven college and universities negatively affected faculty lecture preparation, their

advising duties, fostered weak curriculum designs, and contributed to lower faculty recruitment and retention (Park 2011). Combined with a lack of shared governance, faculty input, job insecurity, and noncompetitive salary packages found at HBCUs, discordant roles have threatened organizational trust. Recently, Kim, Cahill, and Jacquart (2020:4) described instructors' oppositional concerns as a crisis of, "ontological labor"; that very beingness that defines scholars as gatekeepers of knowledge and diffusers of their knowledge for the public good.

Literature Review

Although federal aid for HBCUs was nearly nonexistent until the 1960s, a growth in Black students attending post-secondary schools did not occur until expansion of federal student aid programs in the 1970s. Thus, the legacy of racial inequity by state legislative funding relative to PWIs has continued to foster significant barriers to the financial and academic success of HBCUs (Baker, Di Carlo, Reist, and Weber 2021). Not until a federal district court ruled 27 years ago in the *Ayers v. Fordice*, 879 F. Supp. 1419 (N.D. Miss. 1995) that there was formal recognition that HBCUs were subjected to a history of financial underfunding (Palmer and Griffin 2009; Kraehe, Foster, and Blakes 2010). However, the resolution of those lawsuits in the guise of monies, did not occur for some time after. For example, the State of Mississippi appealed the district court ruling to the United States Supreme Court and stalled payments until 2002, when an agreement was finally reached that awarded three public HBCUs \$503 million over the next 17 years (Sanders 2017). Similar lawsuits in Alabama and Tennessee—also required 26 years of legal negotiations to finally reach fruition (Stuart 2006).

Given the financial struggles of HBCUs and citing federal enforcement of affirmative action programs as a national success, some mainstream educators and conservative policymakers have described HBCUs as unneeded (Riley 2010). Other critics have recommended state and federal resources would be better spent elsewhere—again pointing to higher student attrition rates at HBCUs compared to their PWI counterparts (McDaniel & Graham, 2001).

For example, the declining significance of HBCUs was described by the *Wall Street Journal* editorial writer Jason Riley. In his article, he wrote, "There's no shortage of traditional colleges willing to give Black students a chance...Today, nearly 90% of Black students spurn such schools [HBCUs], and the available evidence shows that, in the main, these students are better off exercising their non-HBCU options" (Riley 2010). However, Bracey (2017) has pointed out that save for HBCUs, the fight for educational equality and an end to "racial discrimination in higher education" would not likely occur. For example, general media accounts have incorporated negative discourses that widely generalize "the culture of HBCUs as struggling, angry, incompetent, and witless" (Exkano 2013:64). This is especially relevant today because interpersonal racism has become opaque or "color-blind" (Bonilla-Silva 2018:9-10). Secondly, HBCU disparagers have ignored the resource-poor circumstances that have played a role in the destabilization of Black colleges and universities and the benefits to their students (DeSousa and Kuh 1996; Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso 2000; Chen et al., 2014; Ford and Reeves 2020; Griffith et al., 2019). Moreover, critics have disregarded that HBCUs represent only three percent of the colleges and universities in the United States, and yet, have produced "more than 20 percent" of Black graduates over time (Andrews et al. 2016:151).

The Accreditation Dilemma

The determined outcome of accreditation is to ensure that the post-secondary education meets acceptable levels of quality. However, there is scant empirical research examining why HBCUs were disproportionately penalized by post-secondary regional accreditation agencies. The literature is also silent as to conceptualization of Black student success in relation to a public school system that has historically undermined Blacks' access to higher education. Comparing HBCUs to PWIs on a performance-based formula omits the fact PWIs do not share the same financial and faculty challenges of HBCUs (Blom, Rainer, and Chingos 2020). Consider: regional accreditation organizations such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) “circa 1895” were originally established to be the postsecondary accreditor for public and private PWI’s in the southern region. Nearly 61 years later, SACSCOC admitted an HBCU in 1956 (Donahoo and Lee 2008) although the first HBCU in the southern region, Shaw University, was established in 1865 (Evans et al. 2002). Burnett (2020) also pointed out that “as gatekeepers to federal financial aid, these accreditation standards exert strong coercive isomorphic pressure” on colleges and universities that fall within their regional purview.

Reviewing SACSCOC’s accreditation findings for the 2018-2019 year for HBCUs that included this case study, 13 percent or 11 out of approximately 84 HBCUs were on probation under SACSCOC as shown in Table 1. Additionally, Burnett examined accreditation agencies across the country and found “the odds of an HBCU being placed on probation” were about six times higher than a non-HBCU, and that the schools received probationary status nearly 31percent of the time compared to PWIs at seven percent.

Table 1. Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges Accreditation of Historically Black Colleges and Universities: 2019 Actions out of a Total of 84 HBCUs.

Institution: 2-year & 4-year	State	Accreditation Status
Bethune-Cookman University	Florida	Probation
Fisk University	Tennessee	continued Probation
Southern University at New Orleans	Louisiana	Probation
Southwestern Christian College	Texas	Warning*
Tennessee State University	Tennessee	Probation
Wiley College	Texas	Warning*
Benedict College	South Carolina	Probation
Bennett College	North Carolina	Probation
Bethune-Cookman University	Florida	Probation
Denmark Technical College	South Carolina	Warning*
Paine College	Georgia	Probation

Source: Report generated from Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) website at: <http://sacscoc.org/institutions/accreditation-actions-and-disclosures/june-2019-accreditation-actions-and-public-disclosure-statements/>

Note* = A Warning imposed by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees at the time of an institution’s comprehensive decennial review follows a determination of significant noncompliance with the Core Requirements or Standards of the Principles of Accreditation. Failure to adequately address SACSCOC concerns would lead to probation status.

HBCUs: Unequal Resources

Another structural factor that has weakened enrollment and tuition revenues at HBCUs were cuts to Direct PLUS Loan programs and overall federal funding. Toldson (2022:97) reported that in 2014, “Four traditionally White institutions received more revenue from grants and contracts than all four-year historically Black colleges and universities combined. In total, 89 four-year HBCUs collectively received \$1.2 billion for grants and contracts from the federal, state, and local

governments, as well as private foundations” compared to the \$1.6 billion received by John Hopkins University. Additionally, the National Endowment for the Arts awarded 2,200 grants and cooperative agreements in the 50 states and six U.S. jurisdictions in 2013 at about \$130 million; of that total, HBCUs received about \$35,000, or about 0.003 percent of the total funds (U.S. Department of Education 2015). As Hirschman’s (2016) analysis of the high school to college pipeline revealed, irrespective of the gains made by minorities in the United States since the

1970s, Blacks remained significantly behind their white counterparts. Mettler's research (2014:24) also found that students who fall in the bottom income quartile in the country showed little advancement, posting only a two percent increase from six percent in 1970 to eight percent in 2011. Equally, Garcia (2020) found that of poor students attending public schools, 81 percent in the high-level poverty category were Blacks.

This underscores a Pew Research Center (2016) report that showed 23 percent of all undergraduate degrees in the United States awarded went to Blacks, compared to 53 percent for Asians and 36 percent for whites. Of the total number of whites earning a terminal degree (46,857), about 27 percent of their parents had received a bachelor's degree. This contrasts with the substantially fewer number of Blacks earning a doctoral degree (4,184), with only 18 percent of their parents having achieved a baccalaureate degree (National Science Foundation 2017). Jackson (2002) reported that in 2000, Blacks accounted for only six percent of the doctoral degrees awarded. A comparison of the latest NSF (2017) data indicated that Blacks earned only nine percent of the total doctorates awarded—a scant three-percentage point gain in 17 years.

Why have the numbers of degrees awarded to Blacks remained so stable? Scholars have pointed to an income-based system of educational attainment (Bailey and Dynarski 2011). For example, state legislatures have adopted performance-based funding (PBF) programs that provided financial incentives to community colleges and four-year secondary institutions that increased graduation rates. According to McKinney and Hagedorn (2017:160), "One way for a college to increase our allocations is to enroll more of the students who achieve the metrics built into the funding formula while curtailing enrollment among students who achieve few, if any, of these funding points". Additionally, Kalogrides and Loeb (2013:304) reported, large urban school systems have relied on student sorting, disproportionately affecting less-prepared minority students. This suggests school systems are ignoring 'the unintended consequence' of a PBF structure (Brown et al. 2017). Another unintended consequence was Black high school graduates migrating in mass (more than 50 percent) to

community colleges or choosing for-profit institutions in the country, "where students pay higher tuition, more frequently default on student loans, and graduate less often" (Allen et al. 2018:44).

Methodology

In this study, I used a mixed-method case study design to investigate organizational and scholarly conflicts at a small HBCU in northeast Texas (Volmar and Eisenhardt 2020) that included: 1) examining the current historical, social, economic, and political conditions of small HBCUs; 2) accreditation agencies as a neoliberal force; 3) embedded institutional forces through an examination of institutional logics; and finally, 4) locating HBCU faculty within their situational framework. A sample was drawn from faculty at a small, private HBCU in northeast Texas with open enrollment and facing substantive financial distress, declining enrollment, and administrative leadership turnover, pre-COVID 19 pandemic. Because the literature indicated that a significant number of small HBCU colleges faced the same challenges mentioned above, I relied on a convenience sample (due to geographic proximity and minimal study costs) to survey the faculty' administrative and academic challenges (Lewis 2011). I noted that the college has demonstrated a five percent average graduation rate for the 2007-2011 period and posted a student population average G.P.A. of 2.42. In 2018, 274 freshman and sophomore students were on academic suspension, probation, or warning status according to SACSCOC's (2020) website.

The total sample consisted of approximately 75 percent of the faculty—33 participants (17 males, 16 females). The racial/ethnic breakdown was 80 percent Black, 15 percent White and Hispanic, and five percent of another national origin. Faculty were approached at the end of a mandatory orientation meeting at the beginning of the spring 2020 semester and informed of the survey's purpose and their right to opt out. Participants provided written consent by completing the survey. Participants self-identified gender, but no other identifying information was solicited to ensure anonymity. After the meeting, surveys were left on desks and collected without the presence of faculty

participants. Approximately 45 faculty members were present with 34 completing the survey. However, one survey was incomplete and dropped from the analysis, leaving 33 instruments.

I developed a 14-item questionnaire that examined faculty concerns ever mindful of the “cultural and contextual differences between” HBCU and PWI institutions (Minor 2005:35). Faculty were asked to rank each survey question in relation to their daily interactions with students and administrators. I hypothesized that an inverse relationship would result: a low score would demonstrate high confidence, say for academic autonomy, while a high score would reflect more uncertainty with their roles as scholarly gatekeepers. A closed ended, semantic differential scale measured faculty concerns regarding student academics, job security, administrative leadership, technology in the classrooms, and competitiveness with PWIs. Scores were ranked from 1 (not concerned) to 4 (very concerned) that allowed participants to assess their degree of support or uncertainty for each item.

Analysis

The first stage examined faculty responses by gender. To test for significance, I used Fisher’s Exact instead of a χ^2 test given the small sample size (N=33) (Kim 2017). A confirmatory factor analysis followed that provided distinct associations between indicators, e.g., survey items, and latent constructs that accounted for

variation and covariation among the observed survey items (Kline 2011). Because faculty concerns were ranked along a continuum, I used a two latent factor model. “Concern” as a concept was difficult to operationalize; so, I elected to use the latent factors framework to identify respondents’ meaning in a way that reduced the number of structural parameters estimated (Kaplan 2009:13). The results indicated that two latent factors comprehensively described the operationalized variable—concern—as a dual construct (DeVellis 1991).

Results/Discussion

Sample respondents were very concerned about students’ academics and administrators’ guidance. Only two survey items provoked significant differences by faculty gender: student use of plagiarism (female = 69 percent vs male = 59 percent) and faculty salaries (male 81 percent vs female = 53 percent). Although gender differences were statistically significant, the results demonstrated validation of past research that described a longtime concern with plagiarism by faculty at PWIs and HBCUs (Nielsen 2009; Singh and Bennington 2012; Heckler and Forde 2015; Bruton Childers 2016; Stowe 2017). Table 2 provides summary statistics for each survey item. I suggest that the nearly unanimous concerns documented across survey items validated the two latent factors and provided a rationale for considering an institutional logics model.

Table 2. HBCU Faculty Concerns: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std.Dev.	Min	Max
ID	33	17	9.67	1	33
Sex	33	.52	.508	0	1
Male	17	.51	na	1	1
Female	16	.49	na	0	0
Attendance	33	3.7	.692	2	4
Retention	33	3.7	.54	2	4
Readiness	33	3.7	.529	2	4
Morality	33	3.0	.893	1	4
Salaries	33	3.6	.663	2	4
Compete	33	3.5	.87	1	4

Table 2. HBCU Faculty Concerns: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std.Dev.	Min	Max
Enrollment	33	3.6	.699	2	4
Standards	33	3.5	.87	1	4
Leadership	33	3.1	.834	1	4
Technology	33	3.0	.899	1	4
Commitment	33	3.3	.595	2	4
Plagiarism	33	3.3	.77	2	4
Compete_HBCU	33	3.2	.801	1	4
Compete_PWUs	33	3.1	.95	1	4

Upon examination of the neoliberal factor, faculty ranked the college's ability to retain students ($\bar{x} = 3.7$); declining recruitment/enrollment ($\bar{x} = 3.6$); faculty salaries ($\bar{x} = 3.6$); and the school's ability to 'maintain academic standards' ($\bar{x} = 3.5$) as most concerning. In terms of gender differences, male and female faculty significantly differed over their concern about their current salaries ($p < 0.05$), with 81.25 percent males responding very concerned compared to 53 percent of female instructors. This finding is consistent with past research that has documented a consistent wage differential between male and female faculty at HBCUs (Jackson 2002). In fact, "HBCUs can sometimes be hostile environments for women faculty...[and] have actually lagged behind most in addressing issues of gender discrimination" (Renzulli, Grant, and 2006:495). Other research has pointed out that Black faculty at PWIs face challenges, but some researchers reported that "one of the most poignant displays of oppression of Black women in education is at HBCUs" (Blackshear and Hollis 2021). The fact that male instructors surveyed were more concerned with salaries could indicate a reticence on the part of HBCU female faculty to concern themselves in a setting where their faculty representation has little legitimacy.

This finding supports H_1 : *If there exists two opposing institutional logics, a majority of faculty will demonstrate a high level of concern with organizational policies that place more emphasis on the strategic*

revenue generation of the college instead of the college's traditional academic mission.

Faculty participants reported that declining enrollment was very concerning (male = 77 and female = 75 percent, respectively). This finding mirrors similar long-time concerns with declining enrollments at both PWIs and HBCUs entities (Eide 2018). Some research has suggested that this trend is more reflective of the market-based approach that has established consumer risk preferences regarding college commitment (Heckman and Montalto 2018). Interestingly, the findings indicate a qualitative shift in risk preferences based on gender, with females more likely to positively evaluate a commitment to postsecondary education. Comparatively, faculty were least concerned with the college's administrative leadership ($\bar{x} = 3.1$) although a significant gap existed, with 50 percent of male respondents very concerned compared to about 30 percent of female faculty.

Prior studies have demonstrated HBCU faculty reported less trust of administrative leadership; in some case because they perceive their input as seldom acted on (Minor 2005; Guy-Sheftall 2006; Vineburgh 2010; Freeman et al. 2016). The gender differences that women instructors did not report as high a concern for administrative leadership can be ascribed to the considered top-down hierarchical structure at HBCUs (Blackshear and Hollis 2021).

Although the availability of classroom technology ($\bar{x} = 3.0$) was of least concern, female faculty were 77 percent more likely to be more concerned over this compared to 50 percent of their male counterparts ($p < 0.10$). This finding does reflect an overall recognition that a digital divide exists that favors PWIs over HBCUs (Snipes, Ellis, and Thomas 2006). In follow up interviews with some faculty, there was agreement that technology concerns were continually voiced to administration, but budgetary constraints were the most often cited reason for inaction on this infrastructure need. Personal discussions with HBCU administrators at the survey site also mentioned that the costs associated with campus-wide technology upgrades were often dependent on federal grants or private donors.

Surprisingly, 81 percent of females surveyed versus 59 percent of males reported they were very concerned about academic standards at the college. Overall, PWIs and HBCUs generally rated concerns with academic standards as most instructors recognize the structural factors affecting students' achievement (Alhadabi and Karpinski 2020). Prior research indicates that gender differences here may be linked to the HBCU mission of care. Historically, that emphasis has often been labeled as "othermothering" by Black female faculty (Mawhinney 2011:217). Anecdotally, male instructors may place more emphasis on a student's demonstration of self-efficacy during mentoring, which appears to place more emphasis on student engagement than one-on-one relationships (DeFreitas and Bravo Jr. 2012). However, the literature is quiet on HBCU student evaluations of male instructors.

It appeared faculty concerns about retaining students, declining recruitment/enrollment, faculty salaries, and maintaining academic standards spoke directly to the funding of specific departments. I should note however, that faculty were least concerned about the 'administration's leadership and support of faculty', a perplexing finding. I suspect this indicated instructors' reticence to criticize given the college's precarious financial status which placed

faculty at the mercy of market forces. Regarding declining enrollment—referred to as a "demographic storm"—PWIs were just as affected as HBCUs (Pavlov and Katsamakos 2020:1). However, given the majority of small (private and public) HBCUs do not offer instructors tenure, I suspect the degree of concern is qualitatively higher.

The above findings supported H_2 : *If market-based institutional logics appear in opposition to the scholarly needs of students, faculty will demonstrate concern with students' potential for academic progress.*

Scholarly Gatekeepers

Faculty were very concerned with student attendance ($\bar{x} = 3.7$) readiness for the job market ($\bar{x} = 3.5$), and ability to compete in graduate school ($\bar{x} = 3.5$). Faculty were least concerned about student use of plagiarism to complete basic assignments ($\bar{x} = 3.3$), students' commitment to their education ($\bar{x} = 3.3$), competitiveness with other HBCUs ($\bar{x} = 3.2$), and students' overall academic competitiveness with PWIs ($\bar{x} = 3.1$). Of all student-related survey items, instructors were not as concerned with student morality ($\bar{x} = 3.0$). The concept of student morality was operationally defined as students ability to demonstrate agreement with school rules and norms as well as demonstrating professional respect for faculty members. Teaching moral and ethical values at the college-level continues to be an important component of faculty nationwide (Reetz and Jacobs 1999; Richardson and Healy 2019). I suggest that this finding that the faculty participants were not as concerned with morality was not an inconsistent finding because the sampled HBCU faculty were part of a campus-wide commitment to weekly religious services that occurred each semester. Additionally, it was not unusual for visitors and others to the campus to hear students and faculty saying "God bless you" at the end of a one-on-one meeting or class lecture.

As instructor-mentors, 81 percent of males and 77 percent of females were very concerned with student absenteeism. Eighty-one percent of female respondents and 64 percent of male faculty were very concerned with students' job readiness. When asked

about students' ability to effectively compete in a graduate school setting, 81 percent of females were very concerned compared to 59 percent of the male faculty. Female and male faculty significantly diverged on their concerns with student plagiarism—69 percent of male instructors were more likely to report being very concerned compared to 29 percent of female participants ($p < 0.005$). Overall, more than 50 percent of the faculty reported concern with students' demonstrated commitment to their learning—56 percent of females were very concerned with student morality compared to only 35 percent of males. The concerns reported by faculty signaled their 'perceived responses' to institutional rules and practices were at

odds with their roles as scholarly gatekeepers. Additionally, faculty concerns reflected similar concerns at PWIs where a misalignment between students and faculty over the college's academic culture, i.e., how can instructors balance course rigor with student satisfaction (Chen, Ingram, and Davis 2014). The findings demonstrated support for H_3 : *If market-based institutional logics appear in opposition to student performance, faculty will demonstrate high levels of concern with student academic performance and after-graduation goals.*

Table 3. Fisher's Exact Test by Gender: Faculty Concerns

Faculty Concerns	Male (cell %)	Female (cell %)	Fisher's exact test (p-value)
Student Attendance			
Concerned	5.88	12.50	0.70
Very Concerned	81.25	76.47	
Readiness for Job Market			
Concerned	29.41	18.75	0.56
Very Concerned	81.25	64.71	
Student Morality			
Concerned	41.18	31.25	0.67
Very Concerned	35.29	56.25	
Compete in Graduate School			
Concerned	23.53	12.50	0.50
Very Concerned	58.82	81.25	
Committed to Academics			
Concerned	58.82	50.00	0.31
Very Concerned	29.41	50.00	
Student Plagiarism**			
Concerned	58.82	6.25	0.005
Very Concerned	29.41	68.75	
Student Retention			
Concerned	35.29	18.75	0.34
Very Concerned	58.82	81.25	
Faculty Salaries**			
Concerned	47.06	18.75	0.05
Very Concerned	52.94	81.25	
Declining Enrollment			
Concerned	23.53	25.00	

Table 3. Fisher's Exact Test by Gender: Faculty Concerns

Very Concerned	76.47	75.00	0.44
Academic Standards			
Not Concerned	11.76	0.00	0.50
Somewhat Concerned	5.88	6.25	
Concerned	23.53	12.50	
Very Concerned	58.82	81.25	
Compete w/HBCUs			
Not Concerned	0.00	6.25	0.35
Somewhat Concerned	17.65	6.25	
Concerned	47.06	31.25	
Very Concerned	35.29	56.25	
Compete w/PWIs*			
Not Concerned	0.00	12.50	0.17
Somewhat Concerned	17.65	18.75	
Concerned	41.18	12.50	
Very Concerned	41.18	56.25	
Administrative Leadership			
Concerned	70.59	50.00	0.62
Very Concerned	29.41	50.00	
Classroom Technology*			
Concerned	76.46	50.00	0.10
Very Concerned	23.53	50.00	
Note: * $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$ *** $p < 0.01$			

Two-Factor Latent Model: Leadership And Academic Roles

Given the initial hypotheses proved a reasonable fit to my theoretical model, I further tested the operationalized factors or two measurement dimensions of concerns: academic capitalism and faculty-as-gatekeepers as a two-factor latent model. The standardized loadings measured faculty concern for student academics (0.29 to 0.88) and were significant ($p < 0.01$ or better) except for plagiarism ($p < 0.08$). The standardized loadings measured administrative leadership (0.92 to 0.32). All loadings were significant ($p < 0.01$ or better). Because the solution was standardized, all the variables—latent

variables as well—were rescaled to a variance of 1. Thus, the covariance and correlation between any two variables would have the same value. The results show that the correlation between the latent factors “faculty concern with student academics” and “administrative leadership” was very strong: 0.98, $Z_{(score)} = 17.69$, $p < 0.001$.

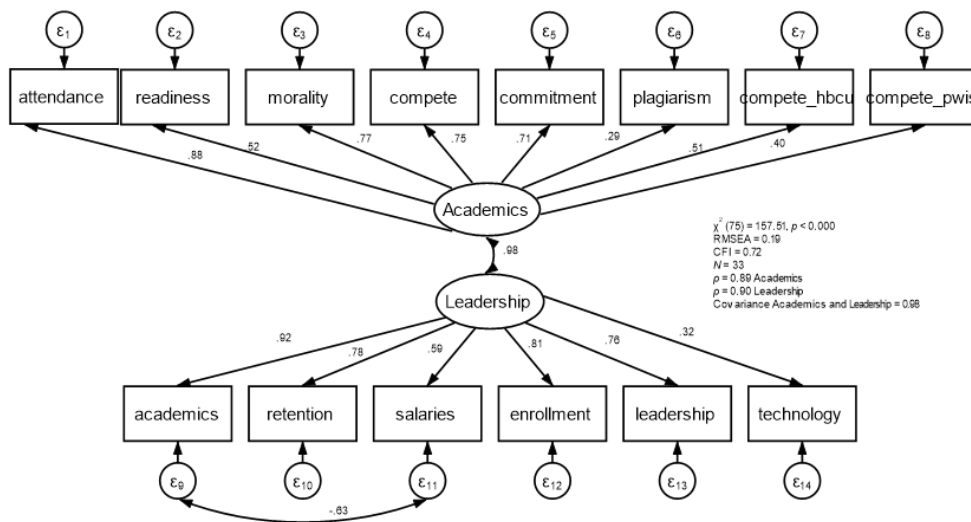
The correlations demonstrated the direction of influence between two latent constructs; however, whether faculty concern with students’ academics was influencing their concern with administrative leadership or vice versa, was less transparent. The relationship could be entirely spurious if there were other variables influencing faculty on both dimensions. However, it is reasonable that the two-construct model was identified. While a two-factor model failed to account for ‘all’ the information in the observed

covariance matrix ($\chi^2(75) = 157.51, p < 0.000$), I believe the small sample size marginalized the goodness-of-fit results. Interestingly, the loadings of indicators for both latent variables were strong and significant—0.40 or above—except for the variable plagiarism. I further investigated this outlier and found that the mean ranking of plagiarism was significant between male and female faculty (Fisher’s exact $P < 0.005$) as mentioned previously.

Figure 1 illustrates a structural equation model (SEM) for two latent factors and coefficients [Separate SEM models are available on request. However, loadings for each latent factor are presented in separate summary tables]. It is important to note that all the statistical tests performed for this study used the STATA/IC 16.1 software package. One last word of caution: according to Schreiber et al. (2006:326)

sample sizes are important to the “stability of the parameter estimates” although there is not a rule *per se* for the number of participants needed in a study, the generally acceptable sample size is computed at 10 individuals per estimated parameter. The latent factor that would indicate misalignment between faculty and leadership had six regressions, six error terms, and one covariance that would have required 130 participants while the latent factor measuring faculty institutional logic had eight regressions, eight error terms, and one covariance totaling 17 parameters needing approximately 170 participants. Additionally, as the structural equation model has unidentified parameters, the model required constraining selected variables.

Figure 1. Structural Equation Two-Factor Model Simulation. Academics and Administrative Leadership Latent Factor Model 1: Administrative Leadership.



My first CFA model examined the latent variable—Administrative Leadership Concerns—which included response items: student retention, faculty salaries student enrollment, academic standards, administrative leadership, and technology in the classroom. The coefficients indicated that academic

standards had the strongest factor loading = 2.17 and was selected as the reference variable (Acocck 2013:17). I ran postestimation statistics for possible correlations among the error terms; the result pointed to possible changes that would reduce the significance of the chi-square by adding an additional parameter. The CFA showed that all variables loaded significantly, but the

initial model fit was less than satisfactory: $\chi^2(9) = 27.08$, $p < 0.001$, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.25, and comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.81. The RMSEA is much higher than an acceptable level of 0.05, but the CFI indicated the hypothesized model does about 81 percent better than a null model—which is hopeful—assuming the responses are all unrelated to each other (Acock 2013).

Examining for covariances among the items indicated the error terms faculty salaries and academic standards were significantly large: Modification Indices (MI = 10.83). I set the two error terms to covary. I portend this is a reasonable adjustment given that faculty salary concerns could be associated with a ‘buy in’ from faculty over ‘maintenance’ of academic standards. I suggest that if faculty struggled to meet the challenges associated with maintaining academic

rigor in a less-than-advantageous setting and perceived their work as going unrewarded, ‘trust’ issues would emerge. Based on this reasoning, I correlated the two error terms and refit the model. The results closely mirrored the hypothesized covariance matrix: $\chi^2(8) = 9.18$, $p < 0.33$, RMSEA = 0.07, and CFI = 0.99. Of the faculty responses linked to the latent factor, all six items were significant at the $p < 0.05$ level or better. The standardized loadings ranged from 0.29 to 0.98. I used the formula for scale reliability (ρ) that included the covariance of the two error terms in the denominator and the unstandardized coefficients with the latent variable coded Leadership fixed to 1.0. The alpha reliability ($\rho = 0.90$) metric was significant. The unstandardized and standardized results for the survey items and probabilities are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Results for CFA Latent Model: Leadership Concerns

	Unstandardized value	Standardized value
Coefficient Loadings		
Student Retention	0.46***	0.70***
Faculty Salaries	0.42**	0.70***
Student Enrollment	0.69***	0.74***
College’s Academic Standards Maintained	1.00 (fixed)***	0.98***
Administrators’ Leadership	0.82***	0.74***
Technology Available in the Classrooms	0.39*	0.29*
Variances		
error Student Retention	0.15	0.51
error Faculty Salaries	0.32	0.50
error Student Enrollment	0.18	0.46
College’s Academic Standards Maintained	0.12	0.04
error Administrators’ Leadership	0.26	0.45
error Technology Available in the Classrooms	0.69	0.91
Leadership Concerns	0.62	1.00 (fixed)
Covariance		
Error term “faculty salaries” with error term “academic standards”	-0.19***	0.13

Latent Factor 2: Student Academic Ability

The second latent factor comprised eight survey items: 1) student attendance, 2) readiness for job market, 3) morality, 4) ability to compete in graduate school, 5) commitment to academics, 6)

plagiarism, 7) compete with other HBCU undergraduates, and 8) compete with undergraduates from principally white institutions.

The latent factor measured faculty concerns about 1) student retention, 2) faculty salaries, 3)

student enrollment, 4) academic standards, 5) administrative leadership, and 6) technology in the classroom. The latent factor model and variables are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Results for CFA Latent Model 1: Academic Concerns

	Unstandardized value	Standardized value
Coefficient Loadings		
Student Attendance	1.00 (fixed)	0.87***
Student Readiness for Job Market	0.47***	0.54***
Student Morality	1.07***	0.72***
Student Compete in Graduate School	1.13***	0.78***
Student Commitment to Academic Progress	0.66***	0.67***
Student Plagiarism	0.41	0.32
Student compete with other HBCU graduates	0.83***	0.62***
Student compete with PWI students	0.72**	0.42**
Variiances		
error Student Attendance	0.11	0.25
error Student Readiness for Job Market	0.19	0.71
error Student Morality	0.37	0.48
error Student Compete in Graduate School	0.28	0.39
error Student Commitment to Academic Progress	0.19	0.55
error Plagiarism	0.52	0.90
error Student compete with other HBCU graduates	0.38	0.62
error Student compete with PWI students	0.70	0.80
Academic Concerns	0.35	1.00 (fixed)
Covariance		
Error term "compete" with error term "plagiarism"	-0.20*	- 0.52**

The SEM analysis was conducted using maximum likelihood (ML) estimation for both models. The ML method is a robust analytic if three conditions are generally met: 1) the data comes from a large enough sample size, 2) the scales can approximate an interval-level measurement, and 3) the data are normally distributed (Brown 2006). The initial eight items all loaded significantly, strongly, and were of the correct sign on the single faculty concern dimension. Because the chi-squared value was significant, the proposed model is too different from the estimated model, indicating poor fit: $\chi^2(20) = 34.06, p < 0.03$, root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.15, and cumulative fit index (CFI) = 0.90 (Schreiber et al. 2006). However, the chi-square test is used "to help us understand the relation between variables and does

a 'reasonable' job of matching the data, which partially validated" my estimated latent factor (Bollen 1989:268).

Another analytic tool to judge the "fit" of the structural model was the RMSEA and CFI. The RMSEA is much higher than an acceptable level of 0.05, and the CFI indicated my model does 90 percent better than a null model that assumes the responses are all unrelated to each other. Although currently statisticians recommend a RMSEA at 0.95, 0.90 was acceptable in the past (Acock 2013). Thus, I could estimate how much chi-square would be reduced.

Having conducted a postestimation test with modification indices (MI) that basically seeks a less rigorous estimation "by freeing parameters that were fixed" in the initial model (Kaplan 2009:122), I selected the responses "students' ability to compete in

graduate school" and "students use of plagiarism" ($MI = 5.532$) to covary. This seemed reasonable because as gatekeepers, faculty would be concerned with a student's ability to compete at the graduate level and their use of plagiarism could reduce their ability to succeed in a graduate program given the severity of penalties for plagiarism. Correlating the two error terms improved the fit; correlation between the two terms was also significant ($p < 0.02$) but did not replicate my hypothesized model exactly. Of the faculty responses linked to the latent factor of academic concern, six of seven were significant at the $p < 0.05$ or better level. The standardized loadings ranged from 0.32 to 0.87, with a significant scale reliability of ($\rho = 0.89$). The results for the 'best fitted model' (after examining modification indices) for non-standardized and standardized coefficients and covariances is presented in Table 5.

Conclusion

The challenges of HBCUs revealed demonstrated a long-term trend of underfunding, biased accreditation standards, state-level discriminatory policies, and an institutional logics conflict between administrators and faculty. Faculty participants' responses to survey items helped to unmask the determinate structure of neoliberal economics in postsecondary schools has had on faculty perceptions. This finding also validates concerns across the academy that the progression of neoliberalism has negatively affected scholars' autonomy (Nielsen 2009; Mintz 2021). The SEM findings presented indicated that HBCU faculty experienced anxiety over their dual-embedded roles as organizational functionaries and scholarly-gatekeepers. However, whether faculty concern with students' academics was influencing their concern with administrative leadership or vice versa, was less transparent. The results of the survey analysis demonstrated the daily anxiety faculty experienced over the institutional viability of their college. Instructor perceptions of administrative instability across academic affairs departments appeared linked to a lack of faculty trust with academic policies. Declining enrollment further increased faculty job insecurity that appeared to support a professional disconnect as they

worked to accept administrative policies and provide a quality instruction.

Although the bureaucratic regime dominating academia has developed over a slow historical progression (see Nielson 2009), faculty study participants found the constant pressure associated with rationalized resources, leadership disconnect, employee turnover, and a lack of tenure, pay, and benefits especially challenging. Second, instructor perceptions of administrative leadership instability correlated with a lack of faculty trust. Considering the high levels of concern recorded, faculty appeared to experience diminishing levels of trust. On a positive note, faculty demonstrated clear concerns with students' readiness and competitive skills. The survey results indicated that faculty were mostly concerned with outcomes such as student engagement, student course satisfaction, plagiarism, and administrative priorities that mirror similar findings at PWIs (Kesar 2013). Like PWIs, HBCU faculty participants were most concerned with a lack of tenure or suitable salaries in today's economy. I suggest that given the dire financial conditions of HBCUs, this study contributed to a paucity of research into HBCU faculty institutional conflict.

Going forward, I welcome debate over the incomparableness of HBCUs and PWIs accreditation standards, funding requirements, academic capitalism, and the mission of HBCU scholars. I close with this observation: the challenges facing HBCUs are complex, especially to recruit students in a market-based environment with limited resources. This has placed faculty and administrators at odds over how to improve infrastructure, non-academic leisure venues, and recruit quality faculty amid reduced salaries and benefits.

Limitations and Suggestions

It is important to note that HBCUs "do not reflect some monolithic institution, but instead vary in size, curriculum specializations, and other characteristics" (Brown, 2013:5). The questionnaire and sample size for this study offers some insights into a small, private HBCU faculty regarding their dual institutional roles.

However, the sample size was not large enough to generalize to other HBCUs. Future research should offer a broader suite of variables that could provide more granular answers as to how HBCU faculty concerns translate into instructor effectiveness and students' academic commitment. The SEM model used would require a sample size of at least 300 participants. Future work could provide more detailed college-specific analyses by incorporating HBCU faculties concerns considering the paucity of literature on the subject. A comparison with PWIs would seem rewarding as there do not appear to be recent studies

on this dual topic: institutional logics and faculty concerns. As mentioned, the important role accreditation agencies play was one of mutual support to a system that I previously demonstrated as structurally biased and emerged from during Jim Crow. I suggest critical race theorists may want to examine accreditation standards considering the colonizing influence of isomorphic structures on the mission of HBCUs as well going forward.

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