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Factors Affecting Minority Female Success as Professors in Higher Education

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Factors Affecting Minority Female Success as Professors in Higher Education

by
Nekita L. E. Fuller

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the Abraham S. Fischler School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University 2013
Approval Page

This applied dissertation was submitted by Nekita L. E. Fuller under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Abraham S. Fischler School of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

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Acknowledgments

“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” John 15:7. With the love of God, all things are possible. To Him, I give the glory and praise.

I want to thank my wonderful husband Andre’. From the first step onto the path of this journey to the jump across the finish line and all the stumbling blocks in between, he stood beside me steadfast and constant. When I needed reassurance, he was there. When I needed confidence, he was there. When I needed a push to stay focused and keep going, he was always there. I thank God for allowing me to be his rib.

Many thanks also go to my beautiful daughters, Britney and Kristen. They helped to keep me focused and were two of my biggest cheerleaders. They inspire me to be the best I can be. I stand taller knowing that I am a mother and a woman my daughters can be proud of. And I cannot forget my sweet grandson, my Noah. His sweet face and little voice saying “I want to help you type” was often my cue to take a break and play. His laugh gave me the smile I needed when the words were difficult to find.

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Abstract

Factors Affecting Minority Female Success as Professors in Higher Education. Nekita L. E. Fuller, 2013: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler School of Education. ERIC Descriptors: Mentoring, Self-Determination, Minority Group Teachers, Diversity (Faculty)

This applied dissertation was designed to provide university presidents with information on how to best address the shortage of minority female professors through understanding the factors that affect minority female success as professors in higher education. Essentially, this study sought to (a) identify factors that hindered or enhanced female minority success in their current career as professors and (b) identify factors that hindered or enhanced their success in preparation for their current careers as professors.

The study addressed four research questions:

1. What factors enhanced success in female minority professors’ careers?
2. What factors hindered success in female minority professors’ careers?
3. What factors enhanced the success of female minorities in preparation for their current careers as professors?
4. What factors hindered the success of female minorities in preparation for their current careers as professors?

The study employed a qualitative research methodology in supplying answers to the research questions. Phenomenology was the method used in this qualitative research study. Comprehensive face-to-face interviews were conducted with 10 minority females who worked as college professors and met the study’s criteria. With approved permission and signed consent forms, the interviews were recorded and then transcribed by the researcher. The interviews took a total of 4 months to complete and were conducted at each participant’s college location.

A review of the data revealed that self-determination, a strong mentor, and a supportive college administrate team lends to the success of minority female professors.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

An Internet search for the word *diversity* will produce thousands of hits regarding the need for diversity. The information includes the absence of diversity on college campuses. Available research contributes to gaining a better understanding of the promising educational advantages of a racially diverse campus (Denson & Chang, 2009):

Not only do students benefit from engaging with racial diversity through related knowledge acquisition or cross-racial interaction but also from being enrolled on a campus where other students are more engaged with those forms of diversity, irrespective of their own level of engagement. (p. 323)

Universities across the nation have seen an increase in student diversity on their campuses (Viernes-Turner, Gonzalez, & Wood, 2008). However, this increase has not been as prominent in attempts to diversify the staff and faculty population (Carriuolo, 2003). Colleges and universities understand the importance of having a diverse staff to ensure the success of all students (Kayes & Singley, 2005; Umbach, 2006).

A diversified faculty is an important need in higher education, and the minimal presence of minority faculty is an issue that most universities and colleges face (Brown, 2004; Festervand & Festervand, 2006; Moody, 2004). Most conversations regarding faculty diversity center around recruitment and retention aspects. The values diversity adds is often overlooked (Green, 2008). D. G. Smith and Moreno (2006) explained diversity:

The rationale for diversifying the faculty has been the growing diversity of the student body. Professors from diverse backgrounds who not only teach but also serve mentors and models can clearly play important roles for students. . . . Diversity is a matter of equity in hiring and retention, as well as a central component in higher education’s ability to develop more relevant and varied forms of knowledge. It is vital to building relationships with different communities outside the campus and essential for creating a work environment that is attractive to people from different backgrounds. Moreover, colleges and
universities need faculty members from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds in order to make fully informed decisions at all levels. Greater diversity is essential if departments and institutions are to have the expertise and perspectives that they need. Finally, and perhaps most overlooked, a relatively homogenous faculty limits the future development of diversity in leadership, as most academic administrators come from faculty ranks. (p. B22)

Others support this belief. “National studies have demonstrated that substantial educational benefits flow to students of all backgrounds when academic intuitions have a diverse student body and faculty” (Moody, 2004, p. 164). Complex and critical thinking are also aspects that are improved by a diversified campus (Antonio et al., 2004; R. L. Taylor & Holloway, 2007). Shrinking the cavity in campus diversity will help to assist with narrowing the gap in educational equity (Stuart, 2009). When the faculty does not represent a diversified campus community, students are affected, some more than others (Lee, 2010). “Students from underrepresented populations are typically drawn to academic programs where they believe the faculty can relate to their experiences and feel that the academic programs include their perspectives” (Subramaniam & Jaeger, 2010, p. 109). Further, students of an underrepresented diverse population find the university environment less agreeable than their White classmates (Worthington, Navarro, Loewy, & Hart, 2008).

**Research problem.** The problem addressed in this study was a lack of minority female representation as professors in higher education. Kayes and Singley (2005) pointed out that even with the efforts of colleges and universities, progress is slow in the diversification of faculty; colleges and universities are not having success in recruiting and retaining minority faculty. Further, women are represented less than men on college campuses, with minority females being the lowest percentile (Hamilton, 2004).

“In the United States minorities have long been underrepresented in many
different areas. The teaching field, specifically college professors, is one of those areas that have not seen much change over time” (Schwarz & Hill, 2010, p. 83). Obtaining a diversified higher education faculty realm is not just a goal of a few campuses; it is a nationwide issue:

In 2003, the U. S. Supreme Court rendered a landmark decision in Grutter v. Bollinger reaffirming the value of diversity in higher education. The Court recognized diversity as a compelling governmental interest, acknowledging that it improves cross-racial understanding; prepares students for a diverse workforce, society, and the global marketplace; cultivates leaders with legitimacy in the eyes of the citizenry. In light of the Court’s ruling . . . four-year higher education institutions have been trying to demonstrate their responsiveness and commitment to diversity by undertaking major public diversity initiatives. (Green, 2008, p. 1)

Although these actions have brought about a determination to bring diversity into the higher education arena, the progress is slow and the presence of minority faculty remains fairly minimal (Green, 2008; Stanley, 2006).

Given the fact that attempts to obtain a diverse faculty have not achieved much success as desired, perhaps obtaining a better understanding of what impacts the success of female minority professors is important. With the faculty profession projected to be one of the most in-demand occupations over the next decade, academia needs to inspire more students, especially minority students, to become college professors (Abraham, 2009). Understanding what factors affect the success of not only the careers of female minority professors but also the factors that hinder or enhance their preparations towards obtaining such career will allow universities to develop programs to recruit and retain female minority professors. The results of this study may add new information to the growing literature regarding the lack of female minority professors.

**Background and justification.** Research and studies have been conducted in relation to the lack of minority professor representation on university and college
Reports show that colleges and universities are taking extreme strides to increase the number of minority faculty at predominantly White schools (Kayes & Singley, 2005). Hochradel, Long, Johnson, and Wells (2010) stated, “Research conducted provides insight into the various measures higher education has explored in efforts to diversify” (p. 14). According to Alex-Assensoh (2003), in spite of the many efforts to diversify campuses, minority numbers are extremely low. An abundance of publications and resources have been produced regarding the lack of minority faculty on college and university campuses (Antonio et al., 2004; Berry & Mizelle, 2006; Carriuolo, 2003; Viernes-Turner et al., 2008; Kayes & Singley, 2005; Weinberg, 2008).

Although information and research are available on the lack of minority professors, little research has been done on the factors that affect female minority doctoral students in choosing careers in higher education. According to The Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac (“Number of Full-Time Faculty Members,” 2008), female faculty of color was at a bleak 2%. However, minority females earning doctoral degrees are slightly increasing: From 2003 to 2007, minority women have obtained a 3% increase in the awarding of doctoral degrees (National Science Foundation, 2008).

Women of color are minimally represented in the professoriate field. Although efforts geared towards employing women of color in academia have led to an increase in women-of-color professors, the increase is minimal (A. Davis, 2009). “Studies show that women are less likely to pursue tenure-track positions at research universities; anecdotal evidence suggests that same is true for PhDs of color” (Van Ummersen, 2005, p. 26). Women and minorities are a continued shortage in higher education (Weinberg, 2008). Minority female professors represent a smaller presence on college campuses (D. G.
Smith, Turner, Osefi-Kofi, & Richards, 2004). This number limits the encounters minority female doctoral students will have with individuals in their likeness, further contributing to the unleveled playing field that minorities often face (Antonio et al., 2004; Green, 2008; Mansfield, Welton, Pei-Ling, & Young, 2010; Moody, 2004; Torres, 2006).

Notwithstanding, the women of color who grace the halls of academia face many trials and tribulations:

The women of color, from many walks of life, have endured differing and numerous trials and tribulations, joys and celebrations in American society in relationship to the multidimensionality of being a woman of color. The academy, a microcosm of this society, bears no exception to the existence of these dilemmas and rewards. (Berry & Mizelle, 2006, p. xv)

Minority female professors are often overlooked and unrecognized (Cooper, 2006). Further, minority female professors find it hard to be accepted for their abilities and strengths, thus, leaving a feeling of the need to constantly prove their worth (Mabokela, 2007; Moody, 2004).

In addition, minority female professors can be overworked, serve on a multitude of committees (because there is a shortage of minority faculty to represent), are expected to conduct research and publish (but mostly in areas that are not racially charged), and can feel disregarded and invisible all at the same time (Cooper, 2006). “Understanding the challenges faced by minority female professors is important because it points to ways in which the academy can create a more just and equitable environment for all its members” (Fries-Britt & Kelly, 2005, p. 222).

According to the National Science Foundation (2008), the number of minority women receiving doctoral degrees is slightly increasing. However, there is still speculation that lack of female minority doctoral students equals a lack of potential minority female professors:
The conventional wisdom is that African-Americans, Hispanics, and American Indians are underrepresented among faculty in postsecondary institutions because they are underrepresented among PhD recipients. Thus, the putative solution to the problem of minority faculty underrepresentation is to increase the supply of minority Ph.Ds. (Myers & Turner, 2004, para. 1)

In addition, Maton, Kohout, Wicherski, Leary, and Vinokurov (2006) pointed out, “The greater the pool of minorities who receive the doctoral degree, the larger the potential pool of qualified minority faculty applicants” (2006). Abraham (2009) acknowledged that there is ample room for more minorities in academia: If every one of the Black (1,659), Hispanic (1,370), and Native American (118) students who earned a Ph.D. in 2006 chose an academic career, there still would not have been enough candidates to ensure that every college or university in our nation (more than 3,000 total) could hire just one minority professor. (p. 25)

Although the lack of minority female doctoral students is not the central source of the minority female professor shortage, increasing the numbers of female doctoral students can help increase the numbers of minority female faculty (Myers & Turner, 2004).

Diversity is needed and wanted on college campuses, and the lack of minority female professors impacts all students, especially the minority female population (Kayes & Singley, 2005; Moody, 2004). Minority female students who have minority female faculty role models achieve higher levels of commitment and gains (Kurtz-Costes, Helmke, & Ulku-Steiner, 2006). Such a connection can play a major part in the professional decisions minority female doctoral students make (Holmes, Land, & Hinton-Hudson, 2007; D. T. Smith & Crawford, 2007).

Although the numbers of doctoral students are increasing and there is a small increase of female minorities earning doctorates, the minority female professor population is not making many strides (Berry & Mizelle, 2006; Cooper, 2006; Weinberg, 2008). This study addressed factors affecting minority female success as professors in higher education.
**Definition of Terms**

**Diversity.** This term refers to the inclusion of a variety of types of people of varied races or cultures within a group or organization.

**Mentoring.** This is a relationship in which one individual shares skills, personal and professional knowledge, support, and encouragement to another individual.

**Women of color/minority females.** These terms refer to individual women who belong within the ethnic groups in the United States. These groups of women are identified as African American, Black, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, or other ethnic groups (Carter, 2007).

**College/university.** These are accredited higher learning institutions where associate, bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees are earned.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore the personal, professional, and educational factors affecting minority female success as professors in higher education. Although the population of minority females obtaining doctoral degrees is slowly growing, that growth is not represented in the minority faculty population (Berry & Mizelle, 2006). By exploring the factors that affect the success of minority female professors in higher education, knowledge may be gained in regard to the shortage of minority female professors. This information should serve to help address the problem of a lack of minority female representation as professors in higher education.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the factors that affect minority female success as professors in higher education. Essentially, this study sought to (a) identify factors that hindered or enhanced minority females’ success in their current career as professors and (b) identify factors that hindered or enhanced their success in preparation for their current careers as professors. The first section of this chapter presents an overview of theoretical studies that apply to the factors that affect women of color in higher education. Subsequent to constructing a theoretical framework for the study, literature relating to campus diversity, women’s experiences in higher education, and the relevance of mentoring are reviewed.

Theoretical Framework

Several authors utilized Collins’s (2000) Black feminist viewpoint as a framework for understanding the experiences of women of color in academia (Burke, Cropper, & Harrison, 2000; Harris, 2007; D. Hinton, 2010; Johnson-Bailey, 2004; Patton, 2009; Wane, 2009; Williams, Brewley, Reed, White, & Davis-Haley, 2005). Intersectionality, a prominent theme in Collins’s work, is especially relevant. Collins defined intersectionality as a type of “analysis claiming that systems of race, social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation and age from mutually constructing features of social organization, which shape Black women’s experiences and, in turn, are shaped by Black women” (p. 299).

Patitu and Hinton (2003) noted that the intersection of race and gender heighten the complexity of the situation of Black women in the academy because that can make it difficult to target the precise source of perceived discrimination. Women may blame
racism for a negative encounter, for example, when it is really sexism to blame, or vice versa. Collins’s (2000) model illustrated that the characteristics that form an individual’s identity cannot be separated. Harris (2007) declared that Black female academics are engaged in a constant process of balancing dual identities, which is stressful and challenging. According to Harris, understanding the “identity negotiation process” entails recognition and acknowledgment of racial and gendered perspectives (p. 60). A prominent theme in the literature is the importance of self-definition in the identity development of Black women in the academy (Alfred, 2001; Burke et al., 2000; D. Hinton, 2010). Rheineck and Roland (2008) advocated developmental mentoring as a strategy for helping all academic women cultivate a strong sense of self-identity.

Bradley (2005) recognized that African American professional women are often perceived through the stereotypical lens of the Mammy and Sapphire. The Mammy is the nurturing caregiver who sacrifices her own interests to look after others, and the responsibilities often expected of African American female professors reflect the Mammy stereotype (Harley, 2008).

Sapphire is a disparaging term applied to African American women who are intelligent, confident, outspoken, and ambitious, qualities that describe many Black female college faculty and administrators (Bradley, 2005). In fact, Bradley (2005) presented the narrative of a law professor, who described herself as a Sapphire in the eyes of others, which in turn worked to diminish “my status and effectiveness as a law professor and my potential career opportunities” (Smith, as cited in Bradley, 2005, p. 519). According to Bradley, these stereotypes are too pervasive and too destructive to the career development of African American women, and especially African American female faculty, for colleges and universities to ignore.
Critical race theory was also used as a theoretical framework (Diggs, Garrison-Wade, Estrada, & Galindo, 2009; Grant & Simmons, 2008). Central to critical race theory is the exploration of how inequities are created and sustained. This framework not only proclaims the importance of the voices of faculty of color, but it also sheds light on the importance of addressing issues of racism and sexism in all professions (Grant & Simmons, 2008).

Together, Black feminist thought and critical race theory furnish an underpinning foundation giving way to an understanding of the social administrative settings of higher education and the position of women and minorities working within academia (Grant & Simmons, 2008). Specifically, using the frameworks provided, this study was intended to assist in understanding and representing the experiences of minority female professors and gain a better understanding of what factors enhanced or hindered their success in higher education.

**Campus Diversity**

Brown (2004) observed that perceptions of campus climate can be highly subjective and individual. Group membership and the experiences that arise from that experience play a powerful role in perceptions of campus climate. A result of this phenomenon is that there are divergent perspectives on the institution’s diversity climate and the goals of diversity.

**Perceptions of faculty diversity.** Lee (2010) investigated perceptions of faculty diversity in university students drawn from an academic department that was in the process of self-assessing its diversity climate. The department was chosen because it had received a grant for the purpose of conducting a needs analysis. Lee emphasized that it was not the only department on campus involved in efforts to improve faculty diversity.
The site of the study was a predominantly White research university located in the Southeast. At the time of the study, the department had 28 White and 3 minority faculty members—18 men and 13 women. The participant sample of 109 students, all majors in the department, was primarily female (81%) and 65% White, 16% African American, 4% Asian, 2% Latino, 2% Native American, 6% multiethnic, and 5% other. Lee noted that the gender and ethnic composition of the participants was largely representative of the department.

Lee (2010) created the survey instrument for the study, which consisted of 20 items designed to capture the students’ perceptions of and satisfaction with the diversity climate of the department. As anticipated, the minority students were less satisfied with the extent of diversity in the department than their Caucasian peers and expressed a need for a greater degree of diversity. Furthermore, the minority students were less inclined to agree strongly with the idea that the faculty respected the diversity of the students. Irrespective of their own ethnicity, those students who felt that exposure to diversity faculty enhanced their educational experience expressed less satisfaction with the diversity climate. Gender did not influence the students’ responses. Although this finding contrasted with Park and Denson’s (2009) finding for faculty members, Lee noted that there was no lack of female role models in the department and on the university campus in general, whereas the minority students had few available role models. Lee gave precedence to the importance of students having an influential role model on campus as a key reason for expanding faculty diversity beyond the broader goal of creating a welcoming and supportive environment for all students.

An interesting and unanticipated finding was that the older students were less satisfied with the diversity climate and agreed less strongly that the faculty respected
student diversity. Lee (2010) emphasized that this finding was not associated with either ethnicity or gender. Greater maturity and experience might have played a role in the perceptions. It is possible that the older students had more experience interacting with people of different ethnic backgrounds or might have been more aware of diversity issues and of the prospective advantages to students being taught by a diverse group of professors.

**Faculty attitudes.** Park and Denson (2009) presented findings from a national study of college and university faculty conducted in 2004-2005 by the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles. The responses came from 38,580 faculty members from 414 two-year and 4-year institutions. The study was driven by the assumption that the campus racial climate is influenced by organizational and structural features of the institution such as tenure policies and decision-making protocols. In addition, four interrelated features are thought to contribute to the development of a positive campus racial climate: demographic diversity, historical legacy, behavioral interactions, and psychological dimensions. According to Park and Denson, although faculty members may be directly involved with all four facets of diversity, the organizational and structural aspects of the institutional climate come into play, bringing “the faculty role in fostering diversity to the forefront” (p. 419). Therefore, although there is a complex interaction of factors that contribute to the campus diversity climate, faculty members can play a pivotal role in either facilitating or impeding the development of a healthy campus racial climate.

The focal point of the study was to determine the characteristics of faculty members classified as having a diversity advocacy identity (Park & Denson, 2009). Certain groups of faculty, notably, members of racial and ethnic minorities, women, and
those from the English, Social Science, and Humanities departments, were the most inclined to endorse items associated with diversity advocacy. Women scored significantly higher on diversity advocacy than did their male colleagues in the same department, suggesting that women may be in the vanguard of efforts to develop a more positive diversity climate. Not unexpectedly, minority faculty also scored high on diversity advocacy compared to White faculty members. Also predictably, faculty members with a liberal political orientation were more amenable to policies promoting campus diversity.

One somewhat unexpected finding was that older professors were more likely to be diversity advocates. Park and Denson (2009) surmised that some of the older faculty members might have been graduate students or embarked on their academic careers in the midst of activism related to the Vietnam war, the Civil Rights movement, and other social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Academic rank, on the other hand, had no significant association with diversity advocacy. In the final regression analysis, only two institutional factors retained significance. Faculty members at 4-year public institutions were most likely to endorse diversity advocacy, and somewhat paradoxically, faculty members at institutions with higher proportions of minority students scored higher on diversity advocacy. Regarding the second, counter-intuitive finding, Park and Denson suggested that being part of a campus with limited diversity might inspire efforts to make the environment more diverse or give higher priority to diversity issues. Being a faculty member at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) lost its significance in the final analysis, although it was still linked with commitment to diversity.

In terms of academic disciplines, faculty from science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields and business fields were less likely to be diversity advocates, although the significance of academic field was weakened when other factors
were accounted for (Park & Denson, 2009). This finding is not surprising given that with the exception of Asians in STEM fields, minorities and women are underrepresented in both fields (“Diversity in Academe,” 2011). In describing diversity issues undertaken by four university graduate programs, Siegel (2006) found a decisive gap in the efforts of the business school and engineering school compared to the schools of social work and public health. Ironically, the business school had a former dean who was a staunch champion of diversity and implemented policies to promote diversity, yet the school still had few minority faculty members. Their small numbers impeded them from acting as a collective force for change.

Certain teaching activities were related to diversity advocacy, specifically, infusing the curriculum with readings on issues related to race, ethnicity, and gender (Park & Denson, 2009). Park and Denson (2009) noted that a previous study found that faculty members who attended diversity workshops were more predisposed to incorporate these issues into their curriculum, suggesting a strategy for promoting campus diversity. The same study also disclosed that faculty members who perceived that their department was committed to diversity were also more likely to integrate diversity issues into their teaching. In the dataset used by Park and Denson, expressing positive perceptions of the institutional climate for diversity was linked with diversity advocacy, implying that the creation of a positive diversity climate can influence the attitudes of individual faculty members.

In terms of individual characteristics, faculty members who described themselves as spiritual were significantly more inclined to embrace diversity advocacy. However, the most powerful predictor of diversity advocacy, according to Park and Denson (2009), was the faculty member’s civic values, which encompassed personal objectives (to
influence the social values or the political structure of the institution), opinions regarding student and institutional involvement with the community, and attitudes toward the goals of undergraduate education (to foster commitment to community service and prepare the students for responsible citizenship). Based on this last finding, Park and Denson suggested that colleges and universities striving to create a healthy diversity climate could begin by creating an environment that encourages and rewards faculty members for promoting civic values and involvement with the community in their students.

The results of the study showed that a complex interaction of factors contributes to the endorsement of diversity advocacy by higher education faculty. Park and Denson (2009) proposed three recommendations for promoting faculty diversity. First, they deemed it essential for colleges and universities to engage in efforts to recruit and retain a diverse faculty. Although acknowledging that this seems like an obvious statement, they emphasized that faculty diversity has not kept pace with the increasing numbers of minority students in higher education and minority faculty are still confronted with numerous obstacles to tenure and promotions. The researchers explicitly state, “While the responsibility of diversity advocacy does not and cannot lie on the shoulders of faculty of color alone, institutional transformational in the area of diversity will not happen without faculty of color who compose the pool of potential future provosts, deans, and college presidents” (p. 432).

Second, Park and Denson (2009) proposed that universities should devise innovative initiatives to encourage more active involvement in campus diversity efforts by STEM faculty. One possible reason is that students of color are also underrepresented in STEM fields, which has clear implications for intensifying efforts to increase the presence of students of color as well as faculty of color in STEM disciplines. The
researchers also pointed out that the STEM fields are not related to diversity issues in the same manner as disciplines in the Humanities, Fine Arts, and Social Sciences. Indeed, in the diversity initiative detailed by Siegel (2006), the schools of social work and public health had both ethical and practical commitments to diversity that the engineering department did not.

Perna et al. (2009) and Perna, Gasman, Gary, Lundy-Wagner, and Drezner (2010) recommended using the efforts of HBCUs, specifically Spelman College, as a model for expanding the representation of African American women in the STEM professions. Their case-study research disclosed several features of the institution that promoted the degree attainment of African American women in STEM majors. Other institutions can adapt these features to create a favorable climate for women in the STEM fields.

The final recommendation of Park and Denson (2009) was that institutions of higher learning should support and promote civic values among their faculty members, given that this was most strongly linked with diversity advocacy in the final analysis. In addition to faculty members with strong civic values, those who held the belief that undergraduate education should promote student development were also more inclined to be diversity advocates. Park and Denson proposed that a greater degree of collaboration among academic departments and student affairs might work to create a more diverse campus climate.

Retention and satisfaction. Jayakumar, Howard, Allen, and Han (2009) used data from the 2001 Higher Education Research Institute survey to examine perceptions of campus climate, retention, and satisfaction among minority member. The dataset was composed of responses from 942 Black, 1,630 Asian, and 1,097 Latino faculty members, with the responses of 33,451 White faculty members used for comparison. The
researchers noted that although minority faculty accounted for only 11% of the total family, the number was not far off from their actual representation of 16%. Two key questions guiding the study were whether the faculty members had contemplated leaving the academy for another job within the last 2 years and, if they had the opportunity to begin their career again, whether they would desire to become a college professor.

The findings disclosed that a high proportion of minority faculty who felt there was a hostile racial climate (44%) had considered leaving compared to those who perceived the climate as moderate or mild (30%) or benign (27%). Jayakumar et al. (2009) considered this finding troubling given that close to three quarters of the respondents felt the climate at their institution was moderately to very negative. At the same time, a comparable proportion (70%) who expressed high satisfaction had not considered leaving. Native Americans (who were not included in the final analysis because of small sample size) most often considered leaving (44%), followed by African American (39%), Latino (36%), and Asian (27%) faculty.

The quality of the professors’ experiences at the institution overrode background characteristics in predicting the factors associated with retention (Jayakumar et al., 2009). Minority faculty members who were married, earned higher base salaries, and had higher academic status were more likely to stay. Marital status and rank were both associated with higher salaries (Aud et al., 2011; Toutkoushian, Bellas, & Moore, 2007). Private institutions proved more successful in retaining minority faculty but, interestingly, the campus racial climate did not exert a significant influence on retention when other factors were included in the analysis (Jayakumar et al., 2009). Even tenure did not completely neutralize the negative impact of a hostile racial climate. Predictably, though, tenure decreased stress and anxiety resulting from the review and promotion process at research
universities.

For minority faculty, it was not only extrinsic rewards such as status and tenure that promoted their retention in the academy, but tenured faculty of color seemed to have developed coping mechanisms that enabled them to transcend a hostile racial climate and were therefore more likely to stay (Jayakumar et al., 2009). Many academic women of color developed survival skills that allowed them to stay focused on their careers and persist in the face of obstacles (Alfred, 2001; Bradley, 2005; Holmes, 2008; Wane, 2009). In particular, African American women generally had a repertoire of coping strategies for dealing with the dual challenges of sexism and racism (Patitu & Hinton, 2003). Self-care is an often overlooked coping strategy that is especially vital for African American female faculty who are frequently striving to balance their commitments to their careers, families, and community (Daniel, 2009; Harley, 2008).

One key factor that was strongly linked with retention and job satisfaction among the minority faculty was feeling that their work was valued (Jayakumar et al., 2009). This theme arose repeatedly in the literature on women of color in the academy. A common experience was that minority female professors found that students questioned their intellect and their legitimacy in the classroom (Anyaso, 2008; Harris, 2007; Mahtani, 2004). Self-valuation and self-respect can be pivotal to survival (Holmes, 2008). Conveying an aura of confidence as a serious scholar can influence how women of color are treated by others.

The three factors most strongly associated with job satisfaction among the minority faculty members were independence, autonomy, and the sense that their work was valued by others in the department (Jayakumar et al., 2009). Autonomy and independence were especially important for African American faculty members.
Interestingly, although the higher ranking minority professors expressed fewer intentions to leave the academy, they also seemed to have the lowest job satisfaction. Regardless of academic rank, those with higher salaries were more satisfied with their jobs. Institutional features accounted for 4% of the variation in job satisfaction. Not surprisingly, a more amenable racial climate translated into higher job satisfaction. Teaching at a more selective or prestigious institution was also related to higher job satisfaction, although minority faculty at research universities tended to express less satisfaction. Jayakumar et al. (2009) attributed this finding to intensive pressure created by a culture driven by the “publish or perish” concept. The reward structure at research universities does not recognize contributions other than research, which is a liability for women of color who are typically expected to serve on committees and engage in other service activities (Harley, 2008).

Although there were some differences in the perceptions of African American, Latino, Asian, and White faculty members, there were also certain commonalities. The deeply entrenched promotion and tenure process adversely impacted job satisfaction and retention across ethnic and racial groups (Jayakumar et al., 2009). According to Jayakumar et al., reassessment of the value given to publication in mainstream journals and the traditional research process is warranted. In view of the powerful role of autonomy and the sense that an individual’s work is valued on retention, they also proposed a reappraisal of the nature of “valuable research” (p. 557).

In some cases, women were denied access to research resources that were available to their male colleagues (Evans & Cokley, 2008; Moody, 2004). Women documented discriminatory treatment in the allocation of start-up funds, laboratory space, and funding for research assistants. African American women may find their research
further impeded by the combined effects of racial and gender discrimination. African American women in psychology have created elaborate mentoring networks to promote research productivity (Daniel, 2009; Evans & Cokley, 2008). However, the networks do not resolve the larger issues of the institution’s conception of valuable research and the role of activities other than research in the tenure and promotion process.

**Diversity initiatives.** Piercy et al. (2005) described a series of pilot programs created to promote the satisfaction and retention of new faculty, especially minority faculty, at Virginia Tech. The initiative was built on recognition that hiring faculty from underrepresented groups represents only the first step in cultivating a diverse campus climate. Turning to the existing literature, the project developers identified several elements of an effective retention program: (a) dedicated and sustained mentorship; (b) cultivating a supportive, collegial community; (c) providing new minority faculty with leadership opportunities while being careful not to burden them with activities that will go unrecognized and are not valued in tenure and promotion decisions; (d) involving new minority faculty in program planning; (e) providing a system for presenting complaints to senior faculty, department chairs, deans, and other senior administrators; and (f) avoiding any appearance of preferential treatment by creating a climate that supports all faculty members.

Focus groups were conducted to elicit input from new, untenured, and underrepresented faculty members regarding their perceptions of support (or lack of support) from the university and their ideas for improving support for their success and retention (Piercy et al., 2005). The suggestions of the focus group participants were consistent with the recommendations drawn from the literature with concerns unique to the Virginia Tech campus. Several of the proposals related to mentoring. In the ideal
mentoring relationship, according to the faculty members, the mentor should have a good cultural understanding of the protégé although not necessarily be of the same cultural heritage. They felt that mentors should be both formally assigned and freely selected by the protégés and that the mentoring program should be conducted at both the department and college levels. Another recommendation was that an ideal mentoring program should include opportunities for faculty to network with administrators as well as with faculty colleagues.

The focus group participants felt that faculty from underrepresented groups warranted more rewards and recognition than they currently received (Piercy et al., 2005). They also called on administrators and faculty to demonstrate ongoing support for faculty work by getting to know their work and ensuring that they had adequate funding to carry it out. A more innovative proposal was that the university should support the careers of faculty members’ partners or spouses. There were also recommendations for fair salary increases. With regard to tenure and promotion, the focus group participants advocated (a) the formulation of clear, consistent policies, expectations, and protocols within departments, across departments, and across colleges; (b) respect for teaching, service, and a broad range of scholarly endeavors; (c) release of untenured faculty from teaching loads to provide them with time to develop research early on in the tenure process; and (d) encouragement of active and committed mentors.

Interestingly, the pilot programs were conducted during a challenging period at Virginia Tech amidst budget cuts, a freeze on salary raises, restructuring efforts, and a call for greater research productivity, which was not looked upon favorably by some liberal arts and humanities faculty (Piercy et al., 2005). The suggestions for improving the diversity climate indicated that these departments were less valued by the university
than the STEM fields. In terms of demographic composition, the departments fighting for more recognition were those that had more minority and female faculty (“Diversity in Academe,” 2011). The numerous upheavals, which disrupted the diversity initiative, caused some faculty members to question whether they wanted to stay (Piercy et al., 2005). A major upheaval was the abolishment of the university’s affirmative action plan by the Board of Visitors. The action plan was reinstated several weeks later after a massive backlash by students and faculty. A common perception was that the decision conveyed the message that “we don’t support or appreciate diversity at Virginia Tech” (p. 63).

Despite the obstacles and setbacks to the project’s “ultimate goal of creating and nurturing a campus climate that supports colleagueship and inclusion,” according to Piercy et al. (2005), the problems “brought out the best in the faculty” by inspiring a strong sense of camaraderie, bolstering motivation and commitment to change, and providing concrete evidence of the need for the programs (p. 64). Paradoxically, the challenges appeared to fuel overwhelming support for the programs. Not incidentally, the programs were also helped by solid support from central university administration. A critical factor, however, was the active involvement of new and minority faculty, some of whom might have left the institution without the diversity initiative.

Siegel (2006) utilized a multiple case-study approach to elaborate the various ways four very different professional schools responded to the dynamics of market forces and a campus mandate to increase diversity. The four schools were Public Health, Social Work, Business, and Engineering, and all were part of the same research university. The study was conducted from an open-systems perspective that stressed the role of multiple “layers of systems” in driving demands for organizational change (p. 467). The three key
dimensions of the model are the institutional environment, the organizational context, and the organizational response.

For all four professional schools, the overarching theme was that sensitivity to diversity enhanced their credibility with external stakeholders (Siegel, 2006). To the schools of public health and social work, commitment to diversity was perceived as an ethical and professional imperative. Both schools worked extensively with minority populations, and representatives from the school of social work noted that issues of diversity and multiculturalism were intrinsic to social work ethics. Indeed, satisfactory compliance with the diversity mandate was requisite for the accreditation of the school of social work. None of the other schools was under such formal pressure. The schools of engineering and business looked at diversity pragmatically as business and industry operate in a global marketplace. Awareness of the limited female and minority representation in STEM fields triggered outreach initiatives by universities that predated efforts to diversify university faculty and administration (Fields, 1998; Siegel, 2006).

For all four schools, the diversity efforts focused primarily on (a) recruiting and retaining minority students; (b) recruiting, retaining, and promoting minority faculty; (c) developing innovative multicultural curricula and conducting research on underrepresented groups; and (d) improving the overall diversity climate (Siegel, 2006). In each school, the dean played a unique role. An interesting irony was that the predecessor of the current business dean was a powerful advocate of diversity, resulting in an unstated policy that every search committee had to have at least one viable minority candidate. Yet the business school stood out among the four schools for the limited number of minority faculty. Because of their limited representation, the minority business faculty were largely isolated and had minimal political clout. According to Siegel, had
there been more faculty of color, there would probably have been a much stronger collective effort on the part of the business school. Also largely devoid of minority faculty, the diversity initiative of the engineering school was a top-down effort directed by the dean. The presence of women as viewed by the engineering school was evidence that the school had a hospitable climate.

In contrast, the social work school engaged in a collaborative effort to promote greater diversity, with leadership distributed among faculty, staff, and students (Siegel, 2006). The administrative team at the school of social work was ethnically diverse, and the school had several African American professors and a diverse student body. The social work informants often used the term *critical mass*. Most departments within the school of public health also had a critical mass of faculty of color, which allowed the dean to remain in the background and support the diversity efforts of the faculty.

**STEM programs.** Women are severely underrepresented in STEM majors at the undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral level (Aud et al., 2011). With the exception of Asians, minorities are poorly represented in STEM doctoral degree programs (“Diversity in Academe,” 2011). Despite this, some institutions stand out for producing a sizable number of minority and female graduates and doctoral degree holders. As early as 1973, Stanford University was known for producing a fairly large number of African American doctoral engineers (Fields, 1998). In some institutions, dedicated Black professors commit themselves to supporting the Black students in their programs. Accounts of their experiences by students and faculty indicate that as the presence of students and faculty of color reach critical mass, race becomes less of an issue in terms of the campus intellectual and social environment. This phenomenon supports Park and Denson’s (2009) observation that faculty from colleges and universities that are more diverse score
lower on diversity advocacy.

Perna et al. (2009) and Perna et al. (2010) conducted case study research to investigate the features of HBCUs that successfully promote the degree attainment of Black women in STEM fields. The main focus was Spelman College, which is renowned in this endeavor. Four themes emerged from the case analysis (Perna et al., 2009). First, the institution’s reputation for fostering the success in STEM fields was a key reason for the selection of Spelman College by Black women interested in STEM careers. Second, the students began their college careers with high educational and professional aspirations and maintained these aspirations through their graduation. Third, both students and faculty recognized the academic, psychological, and financial barriers that undermined the persistence of Black women in STEM fields. Fourth, and most important to the researchers, Spelman has a number of institutional features that help mitigate the potentially adverse impact of those barriers on the women pursuing STEM careers. These include structural features, a peer culture that is collaborative as opposed to competitive, efforts by faculty to actively encourage and promote students’ success, the availability and use of academic supports, and the availability of opportunities for undergraduate research.

The students were unanimous in stating that Spelman faculty “do everything they can” to promote the achievement of African American women in STEM fields (Perna et al., 2009, p. 13). According to Perna et al. (2009), the institution’s success in this endeavor is due to the adoption of a multifaceted approach designed to prepare the students, academically and psychologically, for the pursuit of advanced degrees and careers in STEM fields. The structures, policies, and practices are all built on the assumption that “all African American women at this institution can succeed in STEM
fields” (p. 16). They also recognize that belief in the students’ capabilities of being successful does not negate the need for support systems, which are built into the program. In an atmosphere committed to intellectual and career success, Perna et al. (2010) noted that there remained one impediment to the success of many students. Specifically, the financial cost of the degree program is one barrier that many students were struggling to overcome.

Perna et al. (2010) recommended applying the findings from their case study to additional research into how universities can increase the ethnic and gender diversity of their STEM programs. They suggested that the features that promote the success of students in HBCUs and other institutions with high minority enrollments can be applied to other institutions with the goal of increasing the number of minority students with undergraduate and advanced degrees in STEM fields. The Spelman College case study offered excellent insight into increasing the representation of Black women in STEM fields. Although the research did not address the aspirations of the women beyond earning their degree, it was probable that some of the women would choose to return to the institution as academics after attaining a doctoral degree.

**Strategies to promote faculty diversity.** O. Taylor, Apprey, Hill, McGrann, & Wang (2010) compiled a list of recommendations for improving the diversity climate in higher education. They regarded acquiring a critical mass of individuals from diverse groups as a first essential step in attaining faculty diversity. The recommendations outlined by O. Taylor et al. are that (a) the strategy must be tailored to the institution; (b) institutions must match rhetoric on faculty diversity with action; (c) faculty diversity is enhanced by student diversity; (d) faculty diversity is enhanced by the formulation of explicit policies, infrastructures, an reward systems that support it; (e) faculty diversity is
enhanced by a diverse curriculum and support for research on issues and topics related to diversity; (f) faculty and staff diversity training and preparation of the campus community for diversity are important for promoting faculty diversity; (g) recruitment of diverse faculty is important, but mentoring and support leading to the promotion and tenure of diverse faculty members may be even more important; and (h) establishing a campus, departmental, and community climate to support faculty diversity is essential to program success.

**Women’s Experiences**

Boyd, Cintron, and Alexander-Snow (2010) used narrative analysis to examine the experiences of three junior minority female tenure-track faculty members (a Native American, an African American, and a Latina) within a college of education. Both women and minorities earned the greatest number of doctoral degrees in education (“Diversity in Academe,” 2011). Nonetheless, minority women may still be the only persons of color in their department and, hence, feel isolated (Johnson-Bailey, 2004). Indeed, isolation was a common theme, resulting from differences between the women’s cultural background and the culture of the education department (Boyd et al., 2010). To some extent, the women described their isolation as self-imposed, but there was still some incongruity between their individual needs and the institutional culture.

Because of the differences in their cultural heritage, as well as differences in individual perspectives, the three women did not agree on whether being a minority was a liability or not. However, there was more agreement that the academy did not support women who were balancing work and family responsibilities (Boyd et al., 2010). There was a glaring lack of institutional and departmental support for their professional development. The women described a hostile or chaotic departmental climate, and none
had access to formal mentoring or professional development and socialization experiences. Two of the women had mentors at the university and one had a mentor outside the university, but these relationships appeared to develop independently and informally. The women also concurred that any networking and opportunities for collaboration they had grew out of their own initiative.

The women also concurred that they had excessive teaching and advising workloads and questioned the criteria used to award tenure and promotions (Boyd et al., 2010). Their comments supported the assertion of Jayakumar et al. (2006) that policies and protocols related to tenure should be reevaluated to foster the retention and satisfaction of minority faculty. Boyd et al. (2010) noted that despite the negative experiences they encountered, two of the three women said they would choose to be an academic if they could make the decision again. Although the women’s narratives revealed a number of problems, the most important implication was that there was an urgent need for opportunities for mentoring, socialization, and collaboration with senior faculty for junior minority female faculty at the institution.

Holmes (2008) presented the experiences of 10 African American women from six academic disciplines in two predominantly White research universities. The group consisted of eight tenure-track assistant professors, one associate professor, and one full professor. A somewhat startling finding was that some of the women had originally been hired to fill minority quotas but had been unaware of it. Being hired for the purpose of diversity was not necessarily viewed as negative as the women had confidence in their talents and qualifications. Nonetheless, it was stressful to be acutely aware that others who doubted their qualifications surrounded them.

The women were further stressed by being expected to serve the minority students
on campus (Holmes, 2008). This experience arises frequently in the narrative accounts of African American female faculty. Some are presumed to be experts on diversity (Stanley & Lincoln, 2005). Often, African American women are tapped for any activity related to diversity (Harley, 2008). African American women are often expected to perform service activities not expected of their White colleagues, and this was the case with the faculty members at the research universities (Holmes, 2008). Consistent with Collins’s (2000) theory, race intersected with gender, and gender also affected the women’s relationships with their male colleagues (Holmes, 2008). One woman emphasized that she would not betray herself by playing the demure female just to get along with the men in her department. She stated explicitly, “I will not play the Mammy role, or I will not play the Jezebel role to get ahead. . . . I will not allow myself to feed into their stereotypical images” (pp. 114-115).

The detrimental impact of being called upon for service was evident in the narrative of one woman who found that her focus on service undermined her prospect for promotion because she did not produce the requisite research (Holmes, 2008). Some of the women were reluctant to turn down service activities because of their interest in helping African American students. However, Harley (2008) strongly cautioned against this, stating that African American women must be assertive in drawing the line. African American graduate students seeking mentors often observe that the White female faculty members have more time of their own, whereas the African American women seem continually under pressure (Patton, 2009). K. L. Walker, Wright, & Hanley (2001) described a psychology department in which three African American faculty members were overloaded with mentoring the department’s African American students as well as carrying out their research and teaching obligations. Perhaps not surprisingly in view of
the very common phenomenon, a mentoring program for African American women in psychology included a self-care component (Daniel, 2009).

Holmes (2008) noted that women in general and African American women in particular may be reluctant to tout their accomplishments, which is ultimately counterproductive to their career advancement. Holmes believed that there should be a mechanism in place that allows African American women to share their achievements and publications with the academic community to dispel the negative stereotype that they are not capable of producing praiseworthy scholarly work.

**Mentoring**

The literature related to the experience of women of color in academia, as professors or doctoral students, routinely turns up references to mentoring. Indeed, mentoring is deemed critical to the success of minority women pursuing advanced degrees and academic careers (Anyaso, 2008; Daniel, 2009; D. J. Davis, 2007, 2010; Dolan, 2009; Felder, 2010; Grant & Simmons, 2008; K. G. Hinton, 2006; Johnson-Bailey, 2004; Moody, 2004; Patitu & Hinton, 2003; Patton, 2009; Patton & Harper, 2003; Thomas, Willis, & Davis, 2007; K. L. Walker et al., 2001). Beyond academia, there is evidence that mentoring is even more beneficial to the careers of women than of men (Tharenou, 2005).

Mentoring has two basic dimensions: career (or instrumental) support and psychosocial support (Tharenou, 2005). By providing career support, mentors facilitate their protégés’ advancement via coaching, providing challenging assignments and opportunities that allow the protégés to refine and display their talents and competencies, protecting the protégés, and enhancing their visibility and credibility within the organization. Mentors provide psychosocial support by befriending their protégés,
counseling them, and acting as role models. The psychosocial dimension is intended to enhance the protégés’ self-concepts and personal growth, which is thought to indirectly affect career advancement.

According to Tharenou (2005), career support is especially vital for helping women “negotiate the minefield of promotion” (p. 79). Add the word tenure, and her assertion perfectly fits the situation of female faculty, especially female faculty of color. Tharenou recognized that psychosocial support could be personally therapeutic; however, she contended that it could actually divert the focus from actions that directly advance the protégé’s career. Tharenou explored the respective effects of career and psychosocial supports in a large sample of Australian women and men from a broad variety of private and public sector organizations. The findings confirmed that career support mentoring was especially advantageous for women. A mentor’s career support had a more powerful impact on the careers of women than of men.

Two findings were particularly striking. First, psychosocial support actually lowered the women’s prospects for advancement (Tharenou, 2005). Second, both the positive and negative effects were magnified when the mentor was female. Tharenou (2005) proposed that women who seek out or elicit more psychosocial support might be less independent or else might rely more heavily on psychosocial support to the detriment of their career support.

Grant and Simmons (2008) raised the question of whether the traditional model of mentoring as described by Tharenou (2005) was really the most effective for helping African American female academics. The professional and social isolation that many experience is a driving force for many women in building support networks. Role modeling is regarded as very important for African American women. The portrayals of
mentoring relationships among African American women in the academy show that both career and psychosocial mentoring are important, although there is invariably a clear focus on intellectual and career development.

**Mentoring in academia.** Professional development mentoring can be an excellent tool for graduate and doctoral degree students (Joseph & Green-Powell, 2009; Rheineck & Roland, 2008). Joseph and Green-Powell (2009) implicated inadequate or absent mentoring as a reason for the limited presence of African American faculty in colleges and universities. They defined professional development mentoring as a developmental relationship built on knowledge acquisition, application, and analytical reflection. Joseph and Green-Powell asserted that professional development mentoring should be integral to all graduate degree programs; and degree candidates aspiring to the professoriate should have the opportunity to serve as a teaching assistant; develop a course with syllabi and exams; learn academic governance systems; interview faculty and administrators; mentor undergraduate students; represent the department on a campus committee; and conduct, present, and publish research.

Joseph and Green-Powell (2009) envisioned professional development mentoring as a strategy for increasing faculty diversity. They also asserted that irrespective of ethnicity, doctoral degree candidates are rarely trained to be effective college professors. College and university administrators have the power to address both issues, that is, expand faculty diversity and prepare doctoral candidates for the professoriate. Although they emphasized the importance of race and gender in the mentoring relationship, the authors’ central concern was that all doctoral students who aspire to be professors should have opportunities directed toward the attainment of that goal.

Felder (2010) used socialization theory as a framework for exploring the
influence of faculty mentoring on the success of African American doctoral students. Socialization has been defined as the process whereby newcomers learn the implicit behavioral rules unique to their field of expertise and the systems of values and meanings associated with those behaviors. They attempt to align their own behavior with those systems in order to negotiate the challenges confronting them as they strive toward the doctoral degree. Felder concurred with the often-cited assertion that faculty mentoring plays a pivotal role in the successful degree completion of African American doctoral students.

Tinto’s (1993) model of the doctoral degree process also served as inspiration for Felder’s (2010) study. Tinto’s (1993) interactionalist model is arguably the most popular framework for examining undergraduate student retention. Tinto’s model of doctoral degree candidacy is also based on the dual facets of academic integration and social integration in a student’s experience and commitment to advancing toward the degree. Tinto’s doctoral degree model consists of three stages of progress: transition and adjustment, attainment of candidacy, and completion of the dissertation. The stage of transition and adjustment reflects the student’s first year of postgraduate education. During this stage, students weigh the investment of becoming part of an academic community, become members of the academic and social community at their institution, and starting to forge relationships with the faculty.

The second stage, attainment of candidacy, begins after the first year and extends until the student passes the certification examinations and formally becomes a doctoral candidate (Tinto, 1993). During this stage, the importance of community membership declines and the task of acquiring the knowledge needed for conducting doctoral research gains precedence. The final stage, completion of the dissertation, marks the culmination
of the student’s relationships with faculty, advisors, and mentors. Felder (2010) emphasized that at this stage, the mentor becomes especially influential in the students’ successful completion of the doctoral process. Her primary goal is understanding how the mentor-protégé relationship shapes the probability that African American students will successfully overcome obstacles in their path to the doctorate. It is clear that most minority doctoral candidates do not have access to mentors of their own ethnic heritage. Felder’s premise, drawn from the existing literature, is that regardless of race or ethnicity, a faculty member who conveys genuine interest in the doctoral candidate’s research, professional development, and degree completion can play an important role in African American students’ doctoral degree completion.

Case analysis was selected as the mode of research for Felder’s (2010) in-depth study. The site was an elite graduate school of education at an urban Ivy league university located in the Northeast. All the participants interviewed for the study were African American graduates who received their doctoral degrees between 1994 and 2005. All of the interviewees concurred with the idea that faculty mentorship and support were essential to facilitating their socialization, scholarship and research, and career development. Six participants explicitly stated that faculty support and advising were critical to their perseverance in achieving their academic goals. Three participants reported that how they perceived the behavior of faculty members exerted a significant influence on their development, and five elaborated on how their interactions with faculty directly affected their academic advancement.

Faculty advising and support were especially important during the first stage of doctoral student development, transition and adjustment (Felder, 2010). The experiences varied considerably; for example, one graduate described universal supportive
experiences, even with faculty who had limited available time, and another likened the experience to “being in a swamp . . . trying to find the dry spots; the dry spots being the supportive faculty” (p. 464). This participant described the faculty as relatively unsupportive except for one or two professors. Still another participant described politically charged dynamics related to the choice of a Ph.D. versus an Ed.D. that made it challenging for African American students to choose one or the other. Some faculty members appeared to put their own agenda above the students’ best interests in guiding the students towards a degree path.

During the second and third stages of the doctoral process, the doctoral candidates focused their energy on activities promoting their academic and career advancement, immersing themselves in the research process and seeking relationship beyond the academic community (Felder, 2010). Seeking out information beyond the institution was especially important in the final stage, completing the dissertation. During these last two stages, the participants realized they had to act independently and autonomously to engage in successful scholarship and embark on an academic career. One participant elaborated on the importance of networking with people outside of the university: “The networks are very tight across the country for Black scholars in the field of education in particular. It is so important to find them as early as possible and to let them nurture you. And, to let them help shape your work” (p. 466). Education is the most popular field of doctoral study for women and for African Americans (“Diversity in Academe,” 2011).

The participants who elaborated on their perceptions of faculty described a wide range of behaviors, in some cases from the same faculty member. For example, using the term schizophrenic, one participant related, “I have had interactions with . . . the same faculty that have ranged from wildly supportive to just completely disrespectful, and I
think those relationships speak to the state of mind and state of being of the faculty” (Felder, 2010, p. 467). This participant described perceptions of faculty members that could influence the choice of a doctoral candidate to pursue a scholarly career apart from whether it affected persistence toward the doctoral degree. To this graduate, some of the education professors seemed to have “assumed a sort of split personality” to help them in “climbing up the social ladder” or “gaining tenure” or “gaining respect” (p. 467). A doctoral candidate might decide against a career in academia if this was the behavior she or he had to adopt.

There was general consensus of the need for greater faculty diversity (Felder, 2010). The participants were sensitive to the burden carried by faculty of color, who are under more scrutiny and are frequently “just stretched too thin” (p. 467). Several felt that the lack of diversity among education faculty limited the potential for exploring relevant issues such as inequities in education. Indeed, such topics were often raised in the classroom by the students rather than the professors. Felder suggested that the stereotype threat might be a factor in the decision of a student or a professor to approach issues of race and diversity in class.

For all the participants, faculty mentoring played an important role in shaping the course of their doctoral degree completion (Felder, 2010). That does not imply that the mentorships were uniformly constructive. In some cases, the mentoring experiences were negative but the candidates were strongly committed to their academic field and their scholarly goals and had confidence in their own abilities. Indeed, the experiences of some participants suggested that they reassessed their belief systems in the wake of negative experiences and became even more determined. The fact that all the participants successfully completed their doctoral degree programs demonstrated that they were able
to find supportive faculty members with whom they engaged in discussion and developed collaborative research partnerships. To Felder, collaboration is the key element in the doctoral student’s development of a scholarly network and a successful transition from doctoral candidate to doctoral degree holder.

Using critical race theory as a framework, Grant and Simmons (2008) presented an in-depth narrative analysis of their relationship as mentor and protégé as well as their experiences with other mentors. Both women were encouraged to pursue professional careers by parents with graduate degrees, and both spent at least some portion of their undergraduate education at a HBCU. Through face-to-face meetings at conferences and ongoing phone and email communications, the two authors identified common themes in their personal experiences of mentoring that they related to traditional concepts of mentoring. At the time of the study, the two women were pursuing a doctoral degree and teaching, respectively, at separate predominantly White research universities. In an interesting research technique, the research project unfolded as the two authors submitted questions to one another and subsequently analyzed the responses in terms of common themes. Five key themes arose from the narratives: (a) similarities of family, influence, class and background; (b) prior experiences and influences with HBCUs; (c) prior experiences and influences with predominantly White institutions; (d) current mentoring experiences; and (e) perceptions of ideal mentoring activities.

The similarities in background and education helped draw the two scholarly women together and fostered the development of a bond (Grant & Simmons, 2008). Both researchers saw their own backgrounds as an advantage, but the fact that they encountered obstacles in academia made them especially sensitive to the challenges faced by women of color who are first-generation students at predominantly White institutions.
As a current protégé, Grant, the graduate student, articulated her experiences with formal and informal mentoring. She clearly extolled the advantages of having African American female mentors who were important sources of “emotional intelligence, spiritual support, role-modeling, academic, advisement” and “networking opportunities” (Grant & Simmons, 2008, p. 507). At the time of the study, she was mentored by a highly respected African American professor and administrator whom she personally sought as a mentor. She also had a second mentor, an African American woman who held a leadership position in her department and with whom the formal mentorship arose from informal interactions. In the experience of the doctoral candidate researcher, “African American female mentors have been vital to my academic success” (p. 507). Invoking Tinto’s (1993) model of the doctoral degree process, Grant stated that African American mentors played an important role in helping her cultivate socialization skills that facilitated her entry into academic cultures and departments that were sometimes “unwelcoming” (Grant & Simmons, 2008, p. 507).

A particularly noteworthy finding regarding minority women’s choice of the professoriate as a career, Grant felt that mentoring by two African American women “opened up new possibilities of the reality of professional advancement in my eyes” (Grant & Simmons, 2008, p. 507). Based on their own experiences, the two mentors were able to articulate the challenges of pursuing an academic career from the perspective of an academic who had successfully secured tenure. Grant also cited academic development as an essential element in her academic success. Felder (2010) stressed the importance of going beyond the institution in the second and third stage of doctoral student development. Two excellent sources of academic development were the Jackson Scholars network and Sisters of the Academy, which also enhanced her credentials and,
consequently, her prospects for obtaining a tenure track position upon earning the doctorate (Grant & Simmons, 2008). The two mentors also offered practical support in areas such as time management, which Felder (2010) mentioned in the context of support for the doctoral candidate’s research agenda.

Simmons received most of her mentoring from a White professor with a strong international reputation in her research area that was sensitive to issues of race and gender (Grant & Simmons, 2008). She received less support from a young male colleague who was initially assigned as her mentor, although the main barrier appeared to be limited time and his preoccupation with his own research. Indeed, according to Simmons, time constraints and involvement in one’s own research were ubiquitous as barriers to mentoring within the department. However, the university did provide formal mentoring opportunities for new faculty via yearlong professional development seminars conducted by instructors who were White but diverse in age and gender. Due to a lack of critical mass, Simmons had no experience with African American female mentors and, despite good relationships with her mentors, was reticent about bringing up issues related to race.

Grant described effective mentoring as uniquely conceived by each individual according to the protégé’s unique interests and needs (Grant & Simmons, 2008). Her conception of the ideal mentoring relationship for women of color pursuing a doctoral degree included being matched in race and gender to promote the development of scholarly identity and secure support in overcoming obstacles confronting African American women in a White male-dominated field or institution. Simmons’s conception of the ideal mentorship for women of color challenged the perspective expressed by Tharenou (2005) that career support is more helpful for women than psychosocial
support. She did not dispute the vital importance of career support, but rather, her own lack of psychosocial support from African American women resulted in a need for emotional support and understanding, or sistering, defined as “relationships with other caring and nurturing women of color for social, professional, and spiritual support with networking opportunities” (Grant & Simmons, 2008, p. 509). Grant, in contrast, had the experience of such relationships and networking opportunities.

Grant and Simmons (2008) stated categorically that administrators of predominantly White universities need to take aggressive action to provide formal mentoring opportunities that pair experienced African American female professionals with junior academics to help them navigate the cultural differences they are likely to encounter. The researchers outlined a model for promoting the career development of African American female academics beginning with their entry into the doctoral program and progressing through the degree process to acquiring a tenure-track faculty position and securing tenure within the department. The model consists of 8 steps:

1. Ensure that each department has a mentoring program for doctoral students that includes race- and gender-sensitive activities and provides opportunities for African American women to serve as graduate research assistants as part of the mentoring.

2. Provide graduate students with opportunities to attend conferences and with research incentive grants.

3. Prepare doctoral students to act as mentors for African American undergraduate women.

4. Provide doctoral candidates with internships and teaching assistant positions as they advance, assuring that their assignments are aligned with their field of study and assisted by professors.
5. Socialize the doctoral students into the academy by involving them in college committees, teaching assistantships, and other endeavors while continuing the mentorship.

6. Target the candidates’ socialization through award and incentives programs, with recognition for their mentors.

7. Establish collaborative partnerships with other universities to provide the women with postdoctoral experiences with an intent to rehire them if possible.

8. Support the women in junior faculty positions.

Grant and Simmons (2008) emphasized that the process of cultivating African American female academics should begin with the master’s degree program and progress into the doctoral degree program. Some programs begin at the undergraduate level and extend through graduate and postgraduate work (Dodson, Montgomery, & Brown, 2009). Mentoring has been found to have a significant positive impact on the satisfaction of African American undergraduate women and men with their college experience (Strayhorn & Saddler, 2009). Although women and men were equally satisfied with their mentoring relationships, it is important to note that the women had fewer opportunities for formal and informal mentoring than their male peers. Mentoring that involved collaborative research seemed to be especially beneficial. Strayhorn and Saddler (2009) advocated establishing undergraduate research mentorships to engage African American students, especially women, and ideally encourage them to pursue graduate degrees. African Atlantic Research Team was created precisely for that purpose (Dodson et al., 2009).

Patton (2009) utilized Collins’s (2000) Black feminist viewpoint as a framework for exploring the mentoring experiences of eight African American women in graduate
and professional schools (Law, Business, Humanities, Education, and Science). Four of the women were mentored by African Americans. Four key themes arose from the interviews. The first theme related to expectations and perspectives of mentoring (Patton, 2009). There seemed to be an emphasis on psychosocial support, which distinguished mentors from advisors. Trust was a critical element in the mentoring relationship.

The second theme was perspectives of African American women as mentors. The women all felt it was preferable to be with someone who “looked like” them (Patton, 2009, p. 523). The similarity fostered open and honest dialogue, but beyond the ease of communication, the women viewed African American female mentors as sources of guidance and information on issues of mutual understanding that others might not be attuned to. A common theme was that the African American mentors “kept it real” by being authentic and never avoiding sensitive topics. Especially positive for the protégés was that the mentors served as powerful role models of successful African American women who dispelled negative cultural stereotypes.

None of the women were mentored by the few African American women in their departments, who were generally regarded as either apathetic or under pressure to earn tenure, which entailed adapting the culture of the department (Patton, 2009). The women felt that their second choice for a mentor was an African American man, but they were also aware that issues related to gender would probably surface in the relationship. All the women had experiences with White mentors, which led to the third theme, perspectives on White mentors. The participants described both positive and negative relationships with White mentors. Establishing trust was a challenge in these relationships; however, the women recognized that given the small number of minority faculty, most relationships would be with White mentors. For the most part, the White
mentors fulfilled the career support function of mentoring.

Cross-race mentoring has advantages and disadvantages (Dolan, 2007; Stanley & Lincoln, 2005). A key advantage is that a White mentor may have connections to important professional networks. Interestingly, one participant felt that having a White mentor was less of a threat because they had different research interests and, thus, there was no concern that the mentor might breach her line of research (Patton, 2009). To Patton (2009), this perception highlighted the competition and territoriality in the academy. With a White mentor, issues related to race receded into the background and the professional element came to the fore. One woman pursuing a business degree aptly captured the situation:

One of the key lessons I learned from her is that you can go into an environment and it doesn’t matter what your color is or what your gender is. At the end of the day people want to know, “Did you do a good job?” So if you view yourself every time you go into a situation as “the new Black woman” then you won’t learn. So what they have been able to offer me is just a look from their perspective to see that their having some of the same problems that I’m having and it’s not a Black issue. (p. 528)

The final theme related to the women’s perspectives on other mentoring relationships (Patton, 2009). Mothers were mentioned more than any other person in the women’s lives. There were accounts of numerous people who all had a positive influence including immediate and extended family members, friends, and sorority sisters. As a group, the women felt compelled to mentor others. The foremost reason cited was to extend a legacy of support to other African American doctoral and graduate students, female and male. In addition, the participants’ own experiences with mentoring inspired them to mentor others. Mentoring was also described as a way of not losing sight of the support received from others.

The experiences and perspectives of the African American graduate students
made a compelling argument for promoting faculty diversity to achieve critical mass. Although issues of race and gender were not necessarily in the forefront, the women clearly felt more at ease with other African American women. Ideally, African American women would have access to several mentors from whom they gain different perspectives and types of support.

Fries-Britt and Kelly (2005) described an informal mentoring relationship that extended over 10 years. Kelly was encouraged to pursue an advanced degree by her highly educated parents, but it was not until she met her first African American teacher in graduate school, Fries-Britt, that she envisioned herself in the role of a professor. In contrast to Kelly’s family background, Fries-Britt was a first-generation college student. Over the course of her academic life, she had a variety of African American mentors, although the most influence was her doctoral degree advisor, a White male professor with a graduate degree in African American studies. Fries-Britt became Kelly’s advisor after she had a bad experience with an unsupportive and extremely critical and insensitive advisor. Kelly was clearly inspired by Fries-Britt and credited her with the decision to become a college professor. Over time, the relationship evolved into one of mutual support.

Two key themes in the relationship between Fries-Britt and Kelly (2005) were vulnerability and trust, which are issues in any mentoring relationship and perhaps especially relevant to the experiences of African American women. Their informal relationship exemplified the best of the career support and psychosocial dimensions of mentoring, described by the authors as a “very productive professional relationship and an invaluable personal friendship” (p. 239). Fries-Britt and Kelly advised universities to support opportunities for networking and mentoring among African American faculty,
who can benefit from the type of strong connections they established and sustained.

**Cross-race mentoring.** Stanley and Lincoln (2005) described their experiences as protégé and mentor from the time Stanley was a junior faculty member—and the only Black faculty member—and Lincoln was known by her colleagues as the “queen of qualitative research” (p. 46). Although the two women acknowledged that there are advantages to same-race or same-gender mentorships, they emphasized that the quality of the relationship and the purpose it serves are what differentiate successful from mediocre relationships. As a seasoned faculty member with more than 30 years of experience, Lincoln had numerous encounters with sexism. At her first department, she was bluntly told she was hired only because of affirmative action, similar to some of the African American women interviewed by Holmes (2008). Furthermore, the department had vowed that Lincoln would not last beyond a year (Stanley & Lincoln, 2005). At her second appointment, she had to fight for a computer that all the male professors had whether or not they actually used them. Thus, Lincoln was quite aware of inequities based on gender, and her experiences sensitized her to the barriers faced by a Black woman.

Stanley and Lincoln (2005) defined a successful mentorship as one “characterized by trust, honesty, a willingness to learn about self and others, and the ability to share power and privilege” (p. 46). Additionally, “mentors must learn how to recognize their protégés’ strengths and weaknesses, nurture their autonomy, treat them as individuals, capitalize on their skills, and create opportunities for challenge and growth” (p. 46). The relationship between the two women exemplified the qualities of an excellent mentoring relationship. Lincoln consistently supported Stanley in discussions of diversity and acted as her advocate, helping her gain recognition and respect at the university. She continued
her unwavering advocacy and support as Stanley was promoted and tenured to associate professor and then to assistant dean of faculties. Stanley credited Lincoln with detailing her skills and accomplishments to the dean of faculties and associate provost with her attainment to the assistant deanship. She also stressed that a successful mentorship is reciprocal and bidirectional.

The mentoring relationship between Stanley and Lincoln (2005) highlights the fact that the mentor and protégé need not be match on race for the relationship to be successful. The authors provided a detailed account of the actions Lincoln engaged in as she diligently fulfilled the career support-mentoring role.

**Undergraduate students.** D. J. Davis (2007, 2010) detailed the experience of African American undergraduate students with aspirations to become university professors. The Summer Research Opportunity Program (SROP) was created to cultivate a diverse faculty. The program provided socialization experiences to prepare underrepresented minority students for graduate education and a career in the academy. Interviews were conducted with Black female and male students who elaborated on their experiences. Mentoring played a prominent role in the SROP. Some students credited their mentors with encouraging them to apply to the program. Many students described extremely positive and supportive experiences. A notable finding was that constructive criticism from a mentor, even delivered bluntly, was construed positively because it conveyed the belief that the student was capable of doing better and reinforced motivation to succeed. In addition to faculty mentors, the students had graduate students as mentors. For some SROP participants, the knowledge that the graduate student mentor had successfully navigated a program similar to SROP enhanced their status as a role model for academic scholarship.
Over the course of the program, the students had access to mentorship by Black faculty members, often working with two or more professors (D. J. Davis, 2007, 2010). Some students took the initiative in seeking mentors from professors they admired. These professors served as a powerful influence on the students’ career aspirations. Peer mentors as well as graduate student mentors inspired the undergraduate students to persist in their desire to be professors. Being surrounded by young mentors with whom they could identify was inspirational and reinforcing and had the practical advantage of furthering the students’ academic socialization.

D. J. Davis (2010) emphasized that graduate schools play a central role in preparing students for the culture of academic professionals. Two key ingredients in the process are self-efficacy and increased student engagement. D. J. Davis advocated that universities provide underrepresented students with opportunities for mentoring similar to those enjoyed by the SROP participants as part of their effort to create a diverse faculty. Encouraging undergraduate students interested in academic careers to pursue their scholarly aspirations reflects the grow-your-own approach to faculty diversity adopted by some institutions.

**Mentoring to support research.** Daniel (2009) described the program Next Generation, created for mentoring Black women in the early stages of careers as psychologists and who were interested in pursuing research careers in their field. The overarching aim of the Next Generation program is to increase the number of Black female faculty in graduate psychology departments. The program has five specific objectives: (a) decreasing the sense of isolation experienced by Black female psychology professors in graduate departments, (b) deconstructing the research subculture in graduate psychology departments, (c) detailing the mentoring process, (d) preparing the protégés
for bicultural lives as Black professional women, and (e) highlighting the importance of strategic self-care to promote healthy personal lives.

Daniel (2009) noted that the content of the Next Generation program evolved from the founder’s observations and experiences after 30 years in academia. The participants were recruited through a Leadership Education in Adolescent Health training program and through meetings of the Society of Adolescent Medicine attended by the training program’s postdoctoral fellows in psychology. All nine women had earned doctoral degrees in either counseling or clinical psychology and had been postdoctoral fellows. The nine protégés were actually a rather diverse group. One of the women was Caribbean and two were bilingual, one in Haitian Creole and one in Spanish. The mentors were three Black female psychologists, each of whom mentored three women. The program started with a weekend retreat meeting and a brief orientation. Following the retreat, the participants met at two conferences and a convention over the next 14 months. The bulk of communication was conducted via email. Through a quarterly report, the participants were kept updated on the areas of publications, proposals for funding, and presentations. According to Daniel, the report helped to keep the participants focused on the goals of the mentoring program.

The issue of isolation arose from the Next Generation founder’s experience at the 1994 Black Women in the Academy Conference held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Daniel, 2009). At the time, the number of Black academics was very small and isolation was a prominent theme at the conference. The Next Generation participants adopted three key strategies to combat isolation in academia: forming a peer group, cultivating the mentoring relationships, and creating opportunities to discuss plans for research with other senior Black female researchers who might be prospective mentors.
The group directly addressed issues that might impede the formation of bonds among them and came to think of themselves as “sister scientists” (p. 301). A notable feature of the program was that the women worked together as a large group as well as in groups of three protégés and their mentor. As the bonds among them developed, they began sharing their broader professional networks of research psychologists, which were diverse in ethnicity and gender.

The goal of deconstructing the research subculture included strategies for securing research grants and getting research published in accordance with the publish-or-perish philosophy that continues to have a strong hold in academia (Daniel, 2009). Detailing the mentoring process began with each participant composing a mission statement outlining her professional goal to symbolize commitment to those goals and to the mentoring process. As part of the process, the participants discussed the attributes of healthy versus unhealthy mentoring relationships. The role of race and gender was an explicit theme. The Next Generation program recognized the advantages of having multiple mentors, either simultaneously or serial mentors. The participants envisioned having relationships with mentors who varied on numerous dimensions, demographic, personal, and professional. Although it was not a requisite of the program, an underlying belief was that during the course of their personal and career development, the Next Generation participants would choose to be mentors to others.

The objective of being prepared to live bicultural lives was formulated with recognition that Black professional women often inhabit two worlds, a reality that is not part of the lives of their White female colleagues (Daniel, 2009). The final objective, highlighting the need for self-care, grew out of the “iconic image” of Black women “being the caregiver of everyone except herself” (p. 303). Needless to say, such self-
sacrifice can take a physical and psychological toll on the well-being of the individual. The mentors encouraged their protégés to establish limits on expectations from others, personally and professionally, and become part of community networks they could turn to for support. They also discussed how they balanced their own professional, family, and community responsibilities.

Expecting Black women to be responsible for others to their own disadvantage reflects the Mammy stereotype (Bradley, 2005; Collins, 2000). The need for self-care by Black female academics was highlighted by Harley’s (2008) portrayal of Black female faculty at predominantly White institutions as “maids of academe” (p. 20). A common theme in the mentoring experiences of minority graduate students was that not only were there few minority faculty members but also that they were overextended. According to Harley, minority faculty members are often burdened with a workload that impedes their advancement in their own careers. As Mammies, African American women are expected to nurture their students and may be expected to mentor students who are part of any underrepresented group, which reinforces their status as other in the academy. Stanley described how, as the only Black faculty member at Texas A&M University, she was expected to be the expert on diversity (Stanley & Lincoln, 2005). African American women also tend to engage in a disproportionate amount of service work, which is advantageous to the institution but may be counterproductive to their careers (Harley, 2008). Notably, the strategies for retaining minority faculty at Virginia Tech included freeing new faculty members from an excessive workload and taking care not to burden minority faculty with activities that do not contribute to tenure and promotion decisions (Piercy et al., 2005).

According to Harley (2008), retaining faculty of color, specifically African
American women, at research universities begins with three basic questions. The first question is determining which professional responsibilities the African American women deem most important. The second question is exploring the features of life at the academy the women find most rewarding. The third question is addressed by soliciting recommendations from African American female faculty about what measures the institution can take to enhance their job satisfaction. The Virginia Tech diversity projects addressed all three issues (Piercy et al., 2005). These concerns are intrinsic to the design of the Next Generation program (Daniel, 2009).

There was no formal evaluation of the Next Generation program, which was a pilot program. However, Daniel (2009) noted that the participants kept in touch with one another after the 14-month program ended. One woman decided against pursuing a research career and consequently left the program. However, the eight remaining women have enjoyed considerable success in their fields. At their fifth-year reunion, the women articulated ways in which the program had helped them professionally; several credited the program with their ability to successfully engage in grant-funded research. The supportive mentoring and relationships with other Black women were perceived as important sources of professional support. It is interesting that the comments of the participants, now tenured professors and award recipients, focused entirely on the career support aspects of mentoring. Although Daniel presented only a small sample of the comments expressed by the Next Generation participants, this emphasis would seem to support Tharenou’s (2005) conclusions that career support is the most effective aspect of mentoring for women and that the positive benefits are magnified when the mentor is a woman.

Evans and Cokley (2008) also advocated career mentoring for promoting the
research productivity of Black women in university psychology departments. They declared that it was impossible for one mentor to meet the needs of Black women, especially since it was most likely that a faculty mentor would not be matched by race and gender. While recognizing that a White or male mentor can successfully act as a research mentor, they also believed that an African American woman would be more sensitive to the specific research interests of an African American female protégé. Of course, the graduate student in Patton’s (2009) study expressed the opposite perspective. In fact, the predominance of qualitative research in studies of mentoring and career development among African American female academics offers a plethora of different perspectives and insights into the nature of mentoring experiences.

According to Evans and Cokley (2008), psychology students should join and build relationships with individuals who are members of diverse professional organizations. One advantage of organizational membership is that provides exposure to prospective mentors with different research interests. Organizations can also serve as a forum for presenting work. Although Evans and Cokley focused on psychology, their recommendations are applicable to other fields as well. Professional organizations are certainly not unique to any one discipline.

Evans and Cokley (2008) emphasized the importance of research mentoring in graduate education, which encourages research productivity and which the authors deemed essential for preparing students to become successful academics. The SROP was created on the principle that socializing students for academic careers begins even earlier, in undergraduate education (D. J. Davis, 2007, 2010). Mentoring continues through the postdoctoral period when the new doctorate begins a career as a junior faculty member (Evans & Cokley, 2008).
Evans and Cokley (2008) stated that for African American female students and academics, one of the most daunting barriers they face is the perception of a racist and gender-biased environment in their academic department. In many cases, this arises from seeing White male students and junior faculty given valuable opportunities to engage in collaborative research and publication with senior faculty members. They often feel excluded but are unsure whether the cause is discriminatory practices or biased perceptions of their intellectual credibility. Evans and Cokley specified that this occurrence should be addressed at the departmental and institutional levels. The most effective diversity initiatives have strong support from institutional leadership and also unfold at the departmental level.

**Summary**

Women currently earn more than half of all graduate and doctoral degrees in the U.S., but minorities are still underrepresented in doctoral degree programs and among university faculty. Women of color in academia are confronted with the dual challenges of racism and gender bias. Highlighting Collins’s (2000) theory of intersectionality, it can be difficult to tease the two forms of bias apart. There is virtually unanimous support for the need for mentoring experiences, which are often held to be critical to the career success of minority female faculty. Ideally, mentoring begins in graduate education and extends through the experience as a junior faculty member (Evans & Cokley, 2008). Some innovative programs offer mentorships for minority undergraduate students with the goal of helping them advance through the graduate and doctoral degree program (D. J. Davis, 2007, 2010; Dodson et al., 2009). The process of mentoring and support socializes the students in the culture of the academy, which may be very different from their own cultural background.
Many African American women prefer to be matched with a mentor by gender and race (Patton, 2009). However, the lack of diversity in the department often precludes this. Overall, the research supported the idea that academic women gain the most benefit from having multiple mentors either simultaneously or successively at different career stages. Of the two dimensions of mentoring, career support is the most advantageous to women (Tharenou, 2005). Indeed, the abundance of qualitative research on the experiences of African American women in the academy reveal a variety of ways in which mentors provide effective career support. At the same time, being the only or one of few African American women in a department increases the need for psychosocial support (Grant & Simmons, 2008). The increasing numbers of minority women in graduate and doctoral degree programs represent a strong candidate pool for academic careers. However, there is a clear and urgent need for effective policies and practices to create a positive diversity climate at the institutional and departmental level to support their scholarly and career development.

**Research Questions**

Four research questions were established to guide this study:

1. What factors enhanced success in female minority professors’ careers?
2. What factors hindered success in female minority professors’ careers?
3. What factors enhanced the success of female minorities in preparation for their current careers as professors?
4. What factors hindered the success of female minorities in preparation for their current careers as professors?
Chapter 3: Methodology

Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to explore the personal, professional, and educational factors that enhanced or hindered the success of minority female professors in higher education. Because of the characteristics of the study, a qualitative research methodology was selected. Using a qualitative approach, a complex intimate picture was built that contained a detailed report from the participants, who shared from within their own natural settings (Creswell, 2008; Shenton, 2004). Further, to grasp the factors that supported or hindered the success of minority female professors, a phenomenology inquiry was applied. According to Bryman (2004), analyses aimed towards gaining a perspective of an individual’s personal and professional experiences from that individual’s point of view is phenomenology.

Participants

“In qualitative inquiry, the intent is not to generalize to a population, but to develop an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon. . . . The qualitative researcher purposefully or intentionally selects individuals and sites” (Creswell, 2008, p. 213). The researcher used purposeful sampling to select participants. “In purposeful sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon” (Creswell, 2008, p. 214). Purposeful sampling allowed the researcher to select female participants who supplied the needed information required to reach the answer to the research questions.

The participants chosen for this study were minority female professors who worked at one of three Midwestern universities in relatively close proximity to the researcher’s location. The researcher intended to obtain 10-12 participants for the study
and did obtain 10 participants who represented various schools and programs within each university. This representation allowed for voices to be heard from several departments, for example, the school of education, the business and accounting department, and the science fields. The participants included African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans. These three groups comprised the majority who currently represent minority faculty and doctoral students on college campuses (National Science Foundation, 2008; Number of Full-Time Faculty Members, 2008). Selecting members of these groups supplied the researcher with a diverse viewpoint while also representing the current minority university population. Several avenues were taken to obtain the participants. Contact was made through school emails with the approval of the dean of each department as well as networking within local associations where participants worked.

**Procedures**

A qualitative phenomenological research method was used. According to Glesne (2006), “Qualitative research methods are used to understand some social phenomena from the perspectives of those involved, to contextualize issues in their particular socio-cultural-political milieu, and sometimes to transform or change social conditions” (p. 4).

Qualitative research is a type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the views of participants; asks broad questions, general questions; collects data consisting largely of words (or text) from participants; describes and analyzes these words for themes; and conducts the inquiry in a subjective bias manner (Creswell, 2008, p. 46).

Using a phenomenological research approach for this study, the researcher was able to describe “the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept of a phenomenon” (Creswell, 2007, p. 57). Phenomenological research helped to gain insight into the structure of the lived experience of the female minority doctoral student, allowing for an understanding from the perspectives of those studied and a subject that
lacks data (W. Walker, 2007).

**Data-collection procedures.** Interviews were the primary source for obtaining data for the study. “An interview is a conversation that has a structure and a purpose. It goes beyond the spontaneous exchange of views in everyday conversations, and becomes a careful questioning and listening approach with the purpose of obtaining thoroughly tested knowledge” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008, p. 3). Face-to-face dialogue was the required interview format for this study, with the interview questions and prompts being the primary instruments used in conducting the interviews. Further, protocols were set and established for the interview procedure.

The procedural steps for the study included identification of the participants, completion of consent forms, university approval, conducting of interviews, data analysis, and reporting of findings. Recording the interviews allowed the researcher to make sure that an accurate account of the exchange was documented (Creswell, 2008). Further, the researcher took brief but thorough notes during the interviews. Each location was chosen by the participant and was free from distractions, allowing for their comfort. During the interviews, probe questions (subquestions) were used for expansion and clarification from the interviewee (Creswell, 2008). Each participant’s interview information was stored separately.

**Instruments**

The researcher created an instrument that contained the questions and prompts that were used in individual interviews. In-depth interviews were conducted to allow the researcher to gain a strong perspective from participants’ points of view (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008). Using an in-depth research approach permits the researcher to reproduce the participants’ perceptions through explicit accounts and explanations (Rubin
& Rubin, 2012). This form of data collection enables the compilation of information that is from present, past, and unobserved events while allowing participants to use their own words (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).
Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the personal, professional, and educational elements affecting minority females’ success as professors in higher education. Thus, the research questions focused on circumstances that hindered or enhanced their success in their careers as professors and circumstances that hindered or enhanced their success in preparation for their careers as professors. Four research questions directed this research:

1. What factors enhanced success in female minority professors’ careers?
2. What factors hindered success in female minority professors’ careers?
3. What factors enhanced the success of female minorities in preparation for their current careers as professors?
4. What factors hindered the success of female minorities in preparation for their current careers as professors?

Phenomenology was the method used in this qualitative research study. This approach allowed participants the chance to vocalize their thoughts, ideas, and viewpoints through face-to-face interviews. Comprehensive interviews were conducted with 10 minority females who worked as college professors and met the study’s criteria of being African American, Hispanic, or Asian female professors. With approved permission and signed consent forms, the interviews were recorded and then transcribed by the researcher. The interviews took a total of 4 months to complete and were conducted at the college where each participant was employed.

Description and Demographics of the Sample

A total of 10 participants meeting the study’s specifications agreed to sign consent forms and take part in the study. The demographics of each participant are provided:
1. African American, currently obtaining doctorate degree, all but dissertation completed. Assistant professor at a 4-year university.

2. Hispanic, currently obtaining doctorate degree, all but dissertation. Associate professor at a 4-year university.

3. Asian, doctoral degreeed. Assistant professor at a 4-year university.

4. Hispanic, doctoral degreeed. Assistant professor at a 4-year university.

5. Asian, doctoral degreeed. Assistant professor at a 4-year university.

6. African American, doctoral degreeed. Professor at a 4-year university.

7. African American, doctoral degreeed. Professor at a 4-year college.

8. African American, doctoral degreeed. Assistant professor at a 2-year college.


10. African American, currently obtaining doctoral degree, all but dissertation. Assistant professor at a 2-year college.

The findings for this research study were developed using participants’ responses to the interview questions. The interview questions were developed to gain answers and insight to use in answering the study’s research questions. Themes were identified for each research question. These themes, as well as a discussion of information emerging from the interviews that support the identification of the themes, are provided in this chapter.

**Results for Research Question 1**

What factors enhance success in female minority professors’ careers? Participants were asked what factors support their career growth. The themes that emerged from the interviews relative to this question were self-determination, mentoring, and support. The majority felt their determination was a key factor enhancing their success. One
participant stated that her determination in pursuing a doctoral degree and staying abreast of current information in her field of study strengthened her success. Another participant shared that taking a lead in her career and stepping outside of the campus life to broaden her recognition has enhanced her career success tremendously. “I have to be deliberate in choices, actions, and determination.”

One participant felt her success continued to grow, not because of her race or gender but because of her determination to be the best at what she teaches. “I stay knowledgeable and current in all aspects of my field. I make sure to know what I am sharing with my students and fellow co-workers is accurate.” Another participant shared that although the support of her department aids in her success, she has to fight for her place in the field and stay determined to succeed regardless of all obstacles thrown in her path. “I remember why I am here, all the hard work it took to get here, and that keeps me focused and determined to be the best that I can be within my field. I have strong will power and have always been determined to succeed at all that I do.”

Participants shared how determination keeps them going when obstacles become overwhelming. “My determination allows me to regroup and reorganize my thinking so that I may reach my goals and stay the course.” According to another participant, determination allows her to analyze all obstructions and use what is inside to reroute to achieve success. “When you face obstacles because of your race and gender, you must have strong self will and be determined to succeed or you will fail.”

Nine of the 10 participants stated that mentoring did or could have played a huge role in the success of a minority female professor’s career. One participant shared the following:

Having a mentor during this journey in my life has been a great asset to my
growth in this profession. The mentors that I have or have had helped me to understand that I was not alone in this adventure, that there were others out there that not only understood what I was going through but want me to succeed and prosper. Also, while I greatly appreciate all the mentors I have, the minority females that are my mentors seem to grasp my struggles with more understanding than the two white male mentors I have. They know because they have been down that path and they can share their knowledge and solutions with me.

One participant discussed how her mentor has been a sounding board and helps her to maintain a true prospective. Another participant had a strong view regarding minority female professors not always looking for the mentor who is a mirror image but, instead, getting a mentor regardless of race and gender. “While I do not have a mentor currently, I have been in this game for many years, if someone feels they need a mentor, they should grab hold to the best mentor. Regardless of their race or gender. I feel that we as females must not hold ourselves back just because we feel a male will not understand.”

Participants shared the knowledge and support that is gained from mentors. “I appreciate that as minority female professors they seem to comprehend my struggles and frustrations,” stated one participant. Another participant did not currently have a mentor but felt that by not having one, she was at a disadvantage in her department. This participant shared that if she currently had a mentor, she felt she would not have to struggle alone. Another participant had a very supportive mentor who was available to guide and direct her in the path that she should travel within this career journey. Three participants did not currently have mentors, and all felt that there were disadvantages that they had to overcome to be successful in their careers because of this lack of guidance.

Six of the 10 participants stated that the support of university presidents, department chairs, and fellow colleagues assisted in their continued success as a college professor. One participant described this:

At one particular university, I was the only female within the department;
also the only minority. I was often told that I could not do certain trainings or organize certain educational international trips because I was a woman. I did not have the support of my colleagues nor my department chair. I was instructed to only teach and to only use the textbooks that were written by male authors. I was not allowed . . . new ideas nor was my opinion considered. At my current university, I am viewed as an asset and my viewpoints matter. I can see the difference that having that support makes within my professional success.

“Having the support of my department, particularly my colleagues, lets me know that I am valued and that I am not just there to fill a quota, but that I am there because I am one of the best at what I do,” shared a participant. Another participant viewed her campus support as a major asset to her success. “If I did not have the support of my chair and colleagues, I would have left the profession a long time ago. It would be hard to gain success without that support.”

A participant valued the support given by her peers. “Being from Taiwan, I am not from this country. I see the support that I have from all as being family that wants each member to succeed.” One participant chose the university she is currently at because of its representation of being supportive of the faculty’s growth and continued success.

“When you are looking for a position, you hope that you are offered a job within a university that values and supports all of the faculty, regardless of race or gender,” stated a participant.

**Results for Research Question 2**

What factors hinder success in female minority professors’ careers? Each participant stated that there were no factors that hindered their success but, rather, factors that were obstacles they had to overcome to be successful as university professors. “I will not let anything hinder me, I work hard to overcome any obstacles that block my path to success,” stated a participant. The three obstacles that were most shared by the participants were lack of a mentor, lack of support, and not being respected as strong,
knowledgeable professionals. These themes are supported by additional information from the interviews.

“Having a supportive mentor allows you to grow and advance; without that advantage, it is like feeling around in the dark and hoping to find what you are looking for. I feel like I missed out on much-needed advice and guidance by not having a mentor here at the university,” stated one participant. Another participant supported this belief by stating the following:

I probably would be further along then I am if I had a mentor. There are a lot of politics in education, and if I had a mentor, then I could have gotten the support that I needed. I believe that not having a mentor, I wasn’t told everything that I needed to know to advance. I felt that trying to uncover the information and research myself was strenuous and would have been easier if I had a mentor to help me figure it out.

One participant stated that having a mentor helps to learn how to navigate the system, how to operate the system within which they teach. Without a mentor, the navigations are a little more trial and error. Another participant stated that she has been in her position for over 20 years, and her battles were tougher to fight because she never had a mentor to assist in the struggles. “Not having a mentor for so many years became the norm, but I do feel that if I had a mentor I would not have stumbled as much, nor would there had been that feeling of loneliness.”

“Without the support of my chair, I do not think I would be as advanced in my career as I am,” stated a participant. The support that is gained from department chairs, presidents, and deans can set the tone for what is acceptable treatment and behavior for all staff. “By receiving my ideas and allowing me to be heard, the dean of my university sets the standards for how all faculty will be treated, regardless of gender and race.” A participant shared that she felt not having a strong support system has slowed her
progress and given her a negative view of the career as a college professor. “I often wonder if I am in the right career. I do not feel like I am regarded as a valued employee. I feel like I have a job and not a career, like I am just working to pay the bills, not to be a success. I feel no support within the department for me to succeed.” Not having administrative support makes confronting lack of professional respect difficult.

“I don’t know if it is a disadvantage as much as it is my truth, my reality, that I am going to have more students resistant to what I say because they are not sure that I carry expertise because of my gender and race,” stated a participant. An additional participant stated that the lack of respect that is given because of being a woman of color could be difficult to handle. Another participant’s response supported this view:

I think that I sometimes get a lot of push and pull in some of my classes because I am a Black female. I don’t think that I am asking more than any other professor, but I do feel that I get “who does she think she is to be asking me to do this.” I have seen some other teachers who are of a different race and gender who do not have to deal with this attitude from the students.

“Being Asian, Korean specifically, just adds another aspect to being a female professor. I often have to show the students that I know what I talk about,” shared a participant.

The respect, or the lack thereof, also comes from fellow faculty. One participant viewed fellow professors’ disrespect as barriers through which she continues to fight.

I feel that most of my competition comes from my White female counterparts and that they see me as being their major competition. First off, I have more degrees than anyone else in this department. I have more requests for speaking engagements, workshops, and conferences. I am more published than anyone here. However, I am often questioned on what I teach, my research, even when I share ideas within meetings. I feel a strong lack of respect from my fellow professors, and after many years in this department, I still have to prove myself.

“People do not feel like I am qualified because I am a Black female, and they challenge me all the time on what I know. This is a constant hurdle to jump,” shared another participant.
Results for Research Question 3

What factors enhanced the success of female minorities in preparation for their current careers as professors? Family support, perseverance, and determination were main factors that fostered participants’ success in their journey to become college professors. These three identified themes are supported by information from the interviews. “My husband and my children were my biggest support system during my doctoral journey,” shared a participant. “My husband and my country [Taiwan] were my support system when I came to the United States to obtain my doctoral degree. My country was the first to suggest I obtain a doctorate so that I could continue to teach,” stated a participant. “If it had not been for the support of my family and close friends, I do not think that I would have made it through,” shared another participant. The majority of the participants spoke of family support being a strong factor in their success as minority female doctoral students.

Determination and perseverance were positive characteristics that each participant possessed. One participant stated that her inner strengths pushed her to ask questions and stay focused during her doctoral journey. “My spirit and focus gave me the drive to expect difficulties in my doctoral program, which allowed me to be prepare to overcome them.” Three other participants shared that they knew that getting a doctoral degree would be difficult. However, they believed if they pushed forward, asked questions, joined professional organizations, and stayed persistent, they would succeed. “I persevered and I would not give up. I stayed the course and kept my eye on the prize, my doctoral degree,” shared one participant. “If I could share what helped me during my doctorate journey with a future or current minority female doctoral student, it would be stay determined and focused, and get a mentor,” stated a participant.
Results for Research Question 4

What factors hindered the success of female minorities in preparation for their current careers as professors? All participants shared that they did not believe there were factors that hindered their success in the journey they took in preparation for their current careers. However, most agreed that the lack of a good mentor was an aspect that could make the journey difficult. This finding is supported by the following discussion based on the interviews.

One participant felt she was at a disadvantage because she did not have a mentor. “Not having a mentor during my doctorate journey made overcoming obstacles more challenging.” “I would have liked to have had a close supportive mentor during my doctoral process. I feel that it would have made the years less lonely,” shared another participant. Another participant stated, “I was so lucky to have three minority female professors as my mentors during my doctorate program. I had a fellow classmate that did not have one and I saw the difference it made.” Further, one participant shared, “I was at a disadvantage with not having a mentor during my graduate studies; I did not get guidance on what direction to go.” “You must have strong determination and stay the course, especially if you are without a mentor during your pursuit of a doctoral degree.”

Summary of Findings

Research Question 1 asked what factors enhanced success in female minority professors’ careers. The themes that emerged from the interviews for this question were self-determination, having a mentor, and strong support from within the university. Research Question 2 asked what factors hindered success in female minority professors’ careers. The themes that were revealed from the interviews for this question were not having a mentor, lack of a supportive university administration, and lack of respect from
colleagues and students. Research Question 3 asked what factors enhanced the success of female minorities in preparation for their current careers as professors. The themes that became apparent from this interview question were the support of family, strong perseverance from the minority female, and overall self-determination. Research Question 4 asked what factors hindered the success of female minorities in preparation for their current careers as professors. The theme that emerged from this question was the lack of a good and supportive mentor.
Chapter 5: Discussion

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the elements that affected minority female success as professors in higher education. The researcher sought to determine factors that hindered or enhanced their success in their current career as professors and factors that hindered or enhanced the preparation for their current careers as professors. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the findings relative to the research literature.

Research Question 1

What factors enhanced success in female minority professors’ careers?

Constructed from the detailed data analysis, the findings indicated that having self-determination, a good mentor, and a supportive university administration staff as factors that enhanced the success of female minority professors. Self-determination was a factor participants referred to when speaking of their success. Self-determination includes motivation and behavior (Halbrook, Blom, Hurley, Bell, & Holden, 2012). Participants credited their determination and motivation for their success. Having strong determination to be successful despite the obstacles creates behaviors that are built by an individual’s motivation. Holmes (2008) discussed the importance of self-appreciation to survival for women of color. All of the participants showed self-assurance and determination to achieve success within their careers.

The interview feedback conveyed that having an encouraging mentor did or would have intensified the success they have as professors. The information acquired in the study coincides with the literature in that mentoring is deemed vital to the success of minority females pursing advanced academia degrees and collegiate careers (Anyaso, 2008; Daniel, 2009; D. J. Davis, 2007, 2010; Dolan, 2007; Felder, 2010; Grant &
Simmons, 2008; K. G. Hinton, 2006; Johnson-Bailey, 2004; Moody, 2004; Patitu & Hinton, 2003; Patton, 2009; Patton & Harper, 2003; K. L. Walker et al., 2001). The data also supported the literature findings in that having a mentor of the same race and gender can promote successful growth (Grant & Simmons, 2008). Although the literature suggested that cross-race mentoring has advantages such as White mentors possessing connections to the right professionals and associations, there are also disadvantages (Dolan, 2007; Stanley & Lincoln, 2005). One participant indicated that both a White male and a Hispanic female mentored her. “Having someone that mirrored me allowed me to be more open and feel more at ease to ask deeper questions than with my White male mentor.”

It can be critical for minority professors to have supportive mentors. “It’s crucial to have strong mentors who can help navigate the system and teach how to survive in a low-context place while maintaining a unique culture within the framework” (Adam, 2012). Further, there’s a lack of minority female professors, which will mean a lack of said professors to mentor others. “It’s a problem that there aren’t enough good mentors for women” (Ibarra, as cited in Adam, 2012, p. 24). Often, minority females require assistance in being mindful with whom they are while they gain traits and actions that will aid their success among their male counterparts (Adam, 2012).

Overall university support can assist in the success of minority female professors. Universities need to build and foster collegiate communities that awaken the talents of minority females and appreciate the contributions these women make. Hornsby, Morrow-Jones, and Ballam (2012) recognized that to accomplish such a goal, universities have to carry out the following:

Orient faculty emphasizing institutional values and their membership in and
responsibilities towards departments and institutional communities. Develop all faculty as leaders, and value them for leading in a variety of contexts, such as department chairs, laboratory supervisors, research team lead, committee chair, and so on. Select academic leaders on their leadership competencies rather than their scholarship or their position in an artificial rotation. (p. 108)

It should also be added that universities must not overlook an individual because of race and gender.

**Research Question 2**

What factors hindered success in female minority professors’ careers? The study uncovered three notable findings in relation to this research question. Aspects that were considered obstacles for success were lack of a supportive mentor, lack of support from the university administration, and not being respected by faculty and students. It was evident that the participants had strong opinions in regard to having a supportive mentor and working within a university that supported and valued them. The mentor-mentee relationship is a valued relationship (Patterson, Dahle, Nix, Collins, & Abbott, 2002). However, what was also shared in reference to this research question was the barriers brought about by not being respected as a knowledgeable professional.

The literature validated this belief. It is not uncommon for minority female professors to be challenged by students with regard to their intelligence and authority (Anyaso, 2008; Harris, 2007; Mahtani, 2004). After recording of one interview ceased, the participant stated “I have a class to go teach and I pray that my White male students let me complete a lecture without challenging me on my authority.” When asked if this lack of respect from students was reported, the participant shared that it was but the department chair instructed her to “toughen up.” Another participant, who was Asian, stated she was often challenged because of her accent. Literature in regard to instructing in a nonnative tongue supported that participant’s experience. “An American student
seemed to have a hostile attitude towards me. She often talked to others when I was speaking. When I asked her why she was not paying attention, she answered, ‘I don’t understand you’” (Li & Beckett, 2006, p. 87). Instead of seeking out these nonnative professors for further clarification, students often chose to challenge or completely ignore them (Li & Beckett, 2006).

Further, minority female professors may receive disrespect and challenges from their fellow faculty members. Many minority females often have their intellect and research challenged by coworkers. “One example is academe’s continual efforts to delegitimize the scholarly work and other contributions by faculty women of color” (Berry & Mizelle, 2006). These are all obstacles that minority female professors must overcome to successfully grow.

Research Question 3

What factors enhanced the success of female minorities in preparation for their current careers as professors? Although having a good supportive mentor was a factor in the success of minority female doctoral students, which coincides with the literature, most of the participants credit family support and personal perseverance as key to their successful preparation to become college professors. Several participants shared that without the support of their family, they are not sure if they would have made it through their doctoral programs. Rackensperger (2012) supported this view by discussing the connection between positive family involvement and educational success. Furthermore, Dapremont (2011) explained that family support helps students stay focused and on track when they begin to feel discouraged. One participant stated, “My emotional support came from my very supportive husband. Without his support and push, I would have not succeeded within my program.”
In addition, participants were determined to succeed and used their inner strengths to push forward, pass all obstacles. This connection between success and determination is supported by the literature. Shekhar and Devi (2012) maintained that self-determination and achievement motivation are essential to academic success. Adult students are generally more passionate and motivated when pursuing graduate-level degrees (O’Connor & Cordova, 2010). Each participant understood that motivation must be present to be successful in their doctorate programs (Hegarty, 2010).

**Research Question 4**

What factors hindered the success of female minorities in preparation for their current careers as professors? Most of the participants agreed that without a supportive mentor, the doctoral journey could be a bumpy road. The research supported this view. Felder (2010), Patton (2009), D. J. Davis (2007, 2010), and Daniel (2009) all expressed the important of mentoring to success. Participants without mentors spoke of feeling alone and having no one to help guide them through what could have been a difficult process. “There is the saying, if getting a doctoral degree was easy everyone would do it. So if we know that, why aren’t we supplied mentors to assist in such a difficult task?” asked one participant. Participants with mentors spoke of the support and guidance they received. One participant compared her path with a mentor versus her fellow classmate’s path without a mentor. “It was difficult to watch her struggle. Whatever I gained from my mentor, I shared with her.” Felder (2010) referenced similar aspects and compared the students looking for that mentoring support to being in a “swamp and trying to find the dry spot” (p. 464). In addition, Joseph and Green-Powell (2009) associated the lack of mentoring for minority female doctoral students with the lack of minority female professors.
Implications

The study supported the need for positive mentors for minority females during the preparation to become college professors and maintaining mentors once they are within the profession. Mentors appear to be key to the success of minority female professors. Having a mentor allows minority female professors to feel a sense of direction, a support system, and someone to look to for guidance. Further, although cross-race mentoring is better than no mentoring, most minority female professors may gain more from mentors who are also minority females. This allows for more openness and comfort in asking awkward or gender- or race-related questions.

The study also substantiated the need for a supportive administrative university leadership team. Facing disrespect from students as well as peers can hinder the successful growth of a minority female professor. A supportive college president, department chair, and overall university administration must not only seek to understand their minority female professors but also assist the campus as a whole to respect their intellect and authority in and out of the classroom.

Relevance

The problem addressed by this research study was the lack of minority female representation as professors in higher education. The information supplied within this study could be used to address this issue. University leaders may find the information helpful in recruiting and retaining minority female professors. The lack of minority females in both doctoral programs and the professoriate are well known. This study shared a view to what may assist in the success of minority female professors and aid in the growth of this population.

The responses provided within this study may bring about implementation of
mentoring programs for minority female doctoral students and professors. Furthermore, developing cultural awareness training for faculty and students may also be considered. In addition, it also seems important to continue to gather information and feedback from minority female professors for modification in university practices and procedures. Implementing surveys and questionnaires to faculty and students seeking their thought process can be beneficial.

**Limitations**

The researcher interviewed only 10 minority female professors. The findings of the research are not a generalization of all minority female professors. Further, the study was limited to Asian, African American, and Hispanic female professors; other nationalities were not included. Only participants working at universities within the researcher’s close proximity were used. Last, the results represented the participants’ perceptions of their experiences and views. Other minority female professors may have different viewpoints and beliefs.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

College campuses want a more diversified staff. They seek to expand their minority female professor population (Myers & Turner, 2004). The participants in this study shared information that can assist colleges in making this expansion. Although there are no quick fixes to the barriers minority female professors face, college leaders can use the study’s findings to not only improve the success of their current minority female professors but also support their minority female doctoral students so that they may aspire to go into the professoriate field.

Following are recommendations for future studies and inquiries:

1. Replicate this study with a large population of minority female professors.
2. Implement a study on how university administrators view their minority female professors’ success.

3. Implement a study with only minority female doctoral students and why they would or would not choose a career as a college professor.

If this study was conducted again, it might be better to rephrase questions that asked, instead of what hindered success of minority female professors, what obstacles had to be overcome for minority female professors to attain success.
References


Gose, B. (2007, September). The professoriate is increasingly diverse, but that didn’t


Appendix A

Interview Questions
FEMALE MINORITY PROFESSORS’ SUCCESS FACTORS INTERVIEW

The interviews will be conducted with participants that fit the criteria of the study. The potential subjects will be minority female professors that are employed as full-time professors at four-year public and/or private universities and colleges that are of the Asian, African American, and Hispanic decent. All other races will be excluded due to the criteria of the study. All male professors are excluded due to the topic of the study.

1. Were you the first to obtain a doctorate degree within your family? If not, were there other females within your family with doctorate degrees?

2. Were there any factors within your personal life that guided you to a career in education?

3. What influenced you in choosing a career as a college professor?

4. Did you have any minority females as professors in your undergraduate or graduate educational programs? If so, did they have any influence in your decision to become a college professor?

5. Did you have a mentor while obtaining your doctorate degree? If so, was said mentor of your race and/or gender? Do you think the gender and/or race matters in mentoring?

6. If you had a mentor during your doctoral educational journey, what were the benefits? Were there aspects of having a mentor that were missing?

7. If you did not have a mentor, do you feel at a disadvantage for those who did?

8. What were your support systems during your doctoral journey? What aspect do you feel if any, were missing that would have enhanced your success as a doctoral student?

9. As a minority female professor, are there any obstacles that you feel are a disadvantage to your success within your career? If so, what are they?

10. Do you currently have a mentor? If so, what are the benefits? If not, do you feel
that this is a disadvantage to your career growth?

11. Are you a member of any organizations that cater to minority female professors?

12. Do you know the number of minority female professors on your campus? If there are other minority female professors at your college do you socialize together? Why or why not?

13. Do you feel that your career as a college professor continues to successfully grow? What factors do you feel supports or hinder said growth?

14. If you could share advice to future and current minority female doctoral students what would you share?

15. What advice would you share with new female minority professors to assist them in their success as college professors?

16. Any advice you would share with college presidents that they could use to assist their minority female professors in successful growth?

17. If you could name one thing that was most helpful in preparing you to be successful as a professor, what would it be?

18. If you could name one thing that was an obstacle in your preparation to becoming a professor, what would it be?

19. What factors contribute to your success today as a professor?

20. What factors can be seen as obstacles in your growth as a successful professor?