

I AM MORE THAN WHAT I APPEAR:
THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALE JOURNALISTS

by

Jacinda C. Jones

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the
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Master of Arts

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This thesis was prepared under the direction of the candidate's thesis advisor, Dr. Stephen Charbonneau, School of Communication and Multimedia Studies, and has been approved by all members of the supervisory committee. It was submitted to the faculty of the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters and was accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

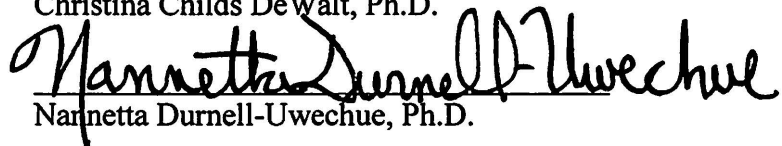
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ABSTRACT

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This study investigates the phenomenon of intersectionality between race and gender on the lived experiences of African American female broadcast journalists in the state of Florida. Seven in-depth interviews were conducted and compared to determine reoccurring themes taking place throughout each participant's experience in broadcast journalism as a result of their race and gender. Race, appearance, racial mentoring, and professional advancement were the common themes that emerged in each interview. Although there is a significant amount of research on African American women in the workplace, there is a greater need to focus on the field of broadcast journalism and the African American women who work in this field. Previous research on African American women in the workplace shows that women of color experience different work environments and treatment. The findings suggest African American female broadcast journalists experience a different work environment compared to their colleagues due to the intersection of race and gender.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

When we turn the television on to the news, we frequently see two people sitting behind the anchor desk and reporters in the field telling us the latest stories. As an audience, we see a perfect model image of broadcast journalists displayed on the screen. This ideal image fits into the box of what is considered an appropriate representation of broadcast journalists by the industry and broadcasting companies. The ideal broadcast journalist is an attractive or pleasing to the eye individual, dressed in business professional attire, well-kept hair, and an overall well-groomed appearance. This representation presents a surface level image that can be seen by the naked eye.

Often the audience doesn't realize that these journalists may share the same work environment or hold the same position, but they do not share the same experiences. Research shows African American women have unique experiences in the workplace due to the intersection of race and gender and as a result of the intersection African American women face more adversities while at work compared to their colleagues (e.g., Angel, Killackey, & Johnson, 2013; Beckwith, Carter, & Peters, 2016; Bradley, 2005; Combs, 2003; Feagin & Sikes, 1994; Gamble & Tuner, 2015; Hughes & Dodge, 1997; Kaba & Ward, 2009; McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017; Meyers, 2004; Meyers & Gayle, 2015; Price, Dunlap, & Eller, 2017; Simpson, 2010; Smith & Joseph, 2010; Swanson, Tanaka, & Gonzalez-Smith, 2018; Walkington, 2017; Wingfield, 2007). Crenshaw (1989) found African American women experience discrimination on more than one axis. Although there are multiple intersections (e.g., race, gender, class, age, religion) that can

change someone's experience, Crenshaw (1989) focuses solely on the intersection of race and gender.

Race and gender issues have been around for centuries, dating back to slavery, the women's suffrage movement, the civil rights movement, and now emerging into today's society. Race and gender issues remain prevalent in the world today with an increase in awareness surrounding police brutality and a rise in the number of people speaking out against harassment and sexual assault in the workplace (Clayton, 2018; Garcia, 2017; Gibson et al., 2019). Movements such as Black Lives Matter and the Me Too Movement have derived from racial discrimination and gender inequality issues and have gained recognition due to these critical issues and unfortunate circumstances people find themselves dealing with in society today (Clayton, 2018; Gibson et al., 2019).

Police brutality against Blacks dates back to the era of slavery, when "police disciplined Blacks and recaptured those who escaped enslavement" (Alang, McAlpine, McCreedy, & Hardeman, 2017, p. 662). Blacks were considered by the law as less than human and their owners could rape, torture, and lynch them without consequences (Leary, 2005). These acts of violence were often "perpetuated publicly as a way of terrifying the enslaved to prevent them from rebelling or attempting to escape" (Bryant-Davis, Adams, Alexjandre, & Gray, 2017, p. 859). These acts were done to maintain control and power over the enslaved (Bryant-Davis, Adams, Alexjandre, & Gray, 2017). The Black Lives Matter movement has risen in today's society "as a social movement in response to the numerous killings of unarmed African Americans" (Clayton, 2018, p. 448). The movement aims to address racism and systematic oppression, in hopes to eliminate racial injustice (Clayton, 2018).

The Me Too Movement was a turning point for sexual misconduct and harassment (Gibson et al., 2019). In 2017 many of the accused perpetrators “experienced negative consequences for their behavior” (Gibson et al., 2019, p. 218). Although the Me Too Movement was created by Tarana Burke in 2007 (Garcia, 2017), prior to 2017 sexual harassment was largely endured in silence (Gibson et al., 2019). Most cases went unreported and did not involve celebrities (Gibson et al., 2019).

This study emphasizes the importance of intersectionality between race and gender when dealing with discrimination and imbalances present in the workplace for African American women, specifically in the field of broadcast journalism. African American women automatically have to break through two barriers (race and gender) in their lifetime, while also dealing with the negative effects associated with race and gender. This results in a difference in experiences when compared to other individuals (e.g., Angel et al., 2013; Beckwith et al., 2016; Bradley, 2005; Combs, 2003; Feagin & Sikes, 1996; Gamble & Tuner, 2015; Hughes & Dodge, 1997; Kaba & Ward, 2009; McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017; Meyers, 2004; Meyers & Gayle, 2015; Price et al., 2017; Simpson, 2010; Smith & Joseph, 2010; Swanson et al., 2018; Walkington, 2017; Wingfield, 2007). African American women fall into the category of a minority and a woman (Crenshaw, 1989). These two marginalized groups conjoined together form a double barrier for African American women and make them subject to multiple forms of discrimination (Crenshaw, 1989; Walkington, 2017). White men have no restrictions placed against them by society, white women have a gender barrier present, and black men have a racial barrier held against them. African American women deal with a double burden every day compared to their colleagues. Research on African American women in

broadcast journalism is needed to help provide a better understanding on the hardships they endure due to their race and gender.

Intersectionality plays a crucial role in how the African American female experience is lived (Crenshaw, 1989). It is important to note intersectionality possesses many different dimensions that are all connected to one's discrimination (Crenshaw, 1991). Race, ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, class, or disability can all be studied when looking at intersectionality (Hall, Everett, & Hamilton-Mason, 2009). Although there are multiple facets of intersectionality, it is hard to examine all the aspects of intersectionality at once. This study solely focuses on the intersection of race and gender on African American female broadcast journalists.

There is a gap in the literature when it comes to the experiences of African American women working in broadcast journalism. There is also an absence present in the effects race and gender have on their experiences. Race and gender have a significant impact on the way African American women experience life compared to other individuals (Crenshaw, 1989). Research has shown African American women have a unique experience in the workplace compared to white men, white women, and black men (e.g., Angel et al., 2013; Beckwith et al., 2016; Bradley, 2005; Combs, 2003; Feagin & Sikes, 1996; Gamble & Tuner, 2015; Hughes & Dodge, 1997; McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017; Price et al., 2017; Smith & Joseph, 2010; Swanson et al., 2018; Walkington, 2017; Wingfield, 2007).

The study focuses specifically on African American female broadcast journalists in the state of Florida and compares their perceptions of their roles as broadcast journalists, the effect of race and gender on their experiences, and how their experiences

impacted their overall career as a journalist. The study uses in-depth interviews to ask the journalists a variety of questions stemming from race and gender. In these interviews, the personal experiences shared, and the questions asked focused on their career journey and how their race and gender has affected them along the way. The analysis of the interviews reveal race and gender is a reason why African American women are experiencing specific barriers and opportunities in their career. To help add to the research on African American women in broadcast journalism, it is essential to showcase their experiences in the workplace as a result of race and gender.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This literature review will examine previous research surrounding the stereotypes of African American women in the workplace, and the disadvantages African American women may receive because of their race and gender. The literature will then outline research surrounding African American female journalists in the newsroom.

The literature review will examine the experiences African American women have with discrimination and how the intersection of race and gender make it difficult for these women to advance in their career. Race and gender discrimination are noted as contributing factors that affect the physical and mental health of African American women (Hall, Everett, & Hamilton-Mason, 2012). Lastly, the literature review will provide background information outlining Crenshaw's (1989) theory of intersectionality and the importance of recognizing the role the intersection of race and gender plays in the lived experiences of African American women.

Existing studies about the workplace focus on how race and sexism play a role in the personal experience, financial, and occupation level of African American women (e.g., Angel et al., 2013; Beckwith et al., 2016; Bradley, 2005; Combs, 2003; Feagin & Sikes, 1996; Gamble & Tuner, 2015; 2015; Kaba & Ward, 2009; McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017; Meyers & Gayle, 2015; Price et al., 2017; Simpson, 2010; Smith & Joseph, 2010; Swanson et al., 2018; Walkington, 2017; Wingfield, 2007). Studies based on the "conceptual framework of gendered racism focus on how intersections of racism

and sexism impact minority women” (Wingfield, 2007, p. 197-198). Studies also discuss how black men are affected by their race in the workplace. There is a small amount of research available on the stereotypical portrayals and behavior patterns white colleagues expect from African American women (Walkington, 2017; Wingfield, 2007). Few studies aim to focus on the “lived experience” of African American women in the field of broadcast journalism and more specifically how their race and gender come into play while at work.

African American women experience occupational disadvantages based on their gender and race in the workplace (e.g., Angel et al., 2013; Beckwith et al., 2016; Bradley, 2005; Combs, 2003; Feagin & Sikes, 1996; Gamble & Tuner, 2015; Kaba & Ward, 2009; McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017; Meyers & Gayle, 2015; Price et al., 2017; Simpson, 2010; Smith & Joseph, 2010; Swanson et al., 2018; Walkington, 2017; Wingfield, 2007). African American women hold a dual status when it comes to the workplace based on their racial and gender identities (Walkington, 2017). Feminist researchers have attempted to change the mindset of other scholars by drawing attention to the ways in which racism and sexism intertwine in the black woman's experience (Wingfield, 2007). Crenshaw (1989) argued the intersection of race and gender must be taken into consideration when researching African American women and their experiences. The combination of race and gender create a unique experience for African American females and can be used to explain the discrimination they experience in the workplace and the stereotypes that are reinforced by the intersection of their race and gender (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991).

Walkington (2017) conducted a study to examine black women's experiences as graduate students and faculty in higher education to determine how race, gender, and class played a role in their work experiences. The study revealed racial stereotypes lead to lower wages, fewer educational and employment opportunity for Black female faculty in higher education (Aparicio, 1991; Sotello & Turner, 2002; Walkington, 2017).

Walkington (2017) found that black female faculty members face racial and gender discrimination at every level of their academic career. This double minority status impacts Black female faculty and graduate students profoundly because other "faculty and students view black female scholars as less capable educators and researchers (Walkington, 2017). This leads to fewer full-time, tenured positions for black female faculty and assumes black female graduate students are incapable of graduate level work (Walkington, 2017).

The stereotype of the modern mammy expects black women to submit and respect their white and male counterparts (Walkington, 2017). The modern mammy construction still demands "middle class black women in education to be subordinate to their white male bosses, but also assertive in such a way that professionally advances them. These assertions are only acceptable when aimed toward the benefit of other people" (Walkington, 2017, p.54). When black women's assertions are aimed directed towards their own benefit, their colleagues tend to negatively label them as aggressive, ultimately preventing the growth of black women in academe (Walkington, 2017). The negative affect of the modern mammy can lead to unequal pay, limited resources, and limited mentorship opportunities for black women (Walkington, 2017).

Gamble and Turner (2015) studied the career development and workplace experiences of African American females seeking executive leadership positions at colleges and universities in the state of Georgia. There is a low number of African American female college administrators, indicating post-secondary institutions in Georgia may be overlooking the talent and intellect of African American female leaders (Gamble & Turner, 2015). Although there may be a small number of African American college presidents in the United States, more women have appeared in leadership roles in the past decade than in previous years (Gamble & Turner, 2015). The barriers that hinder career advancement for women are “complex and come in myriad forms” (Gamble & Turner, p. 83). Highly educated and skilled women experienced the biggest challenges in corporate America (Gamble & Turner, 2017). The study found there are barriers present for African American women acquiring leadership positions in post-secondary institutions (Gamble & Turner, 2017). Majority of the participants agreed many restrictions were preventing African American women from succeeding, including lack of African American representation, lack of African American mentors, difficulty balancing work and home life, pressure to network with others to achieve leadership positions, and the need to take risks (Gamble & Turner, 2017). The women insisted a strong work ethic and support from managerial positions are needed for African American women to be successful (Gamble & Turner, 2017).

Angel et al. (2013) examined the perceptions of African American female district-level administrators about the barriers and challenges of advancing to a superintendent position. Political clout, race, and education were a few elements recognized as barriers in acquiring a superintendent position (Angel et al., 2013). African American women

described political structures in their community as powerful and influential (Angel et al., 2013). These individuals have the authority to make decisions and influence others to agree with their point of view (Angel et al., 2013). Geographic location and race were factors in preventing the administrators from applying to specific superintendent jobs, in areas where people were not open to having someone in an authoritative role who did not look like them (Angel et al., 2013). African American female administrators found it necessary to either have their doctoral degree or be enrolled in a doctoral program, before applying for a superintendent position (Angel et al., 2013). Most job listing for superintendents preferred a doctorate (Angel et al., 2013). Based on the finding in Angel et al. (2013) study, black women expressed seeking a superintendent position without a doctorate “would mean no consideration for the job” and there was no need to automatically exclude themselves from the running when they could at least meet the requirements on paper (Angel et al., 2013).

Price et al. (2017) studied the way black women perceive the intersectionality of race and gender in their careers as leaders in Intercollegiate Athletic Administration. Price et al. (2013) found black women were often underrepresented in sports leadership and were often used to serve as representation for both women and minority leaders when contributing to discussions (Price et al., 2013). Although black women’s race and gender were not perceived as a direct problem with career advancement, participants in the study found themselves stagnant in their career when compared to white women and black men in the Intercollegiate Athletic Administration (Price et al., 2013).

As the literature demonstrates, scholars have found that race and gender play a significant role in the experience of African American women in various fields (e.g.,

Angel et al., 2013; Gamble & Turner, 2015; Price et al., 2013; Walkington, 2017). Race and gender have been found to affect the career advancement, pay, and portrayal of African American women (e.g., Angel et al., 2013; Gamble & Turner, 2015; Price et al., 2013; Walkington, 2017). Regardless of career choice, African American women experience social barriers and different adversities compared to their colleagues when entering the workforce.

Stereotypes of African American Women

African American women are often stereotyped by others in society, and it's important to recognize the exact images people associate with these women and how these stereotypical images can affect African American women in the workplace (Bradley, 2005; Bogle, 1973; Collins, 1991; Combs, 2003; Jones, Buque, & Miville, 2018; Kaba & Ward, 2009; Manring, 1998; Wingfield, 2007). According to Kaba and Ward (2009) African American women contribute many skills and qualities to various occupations, but the lack of leadership opportunities limits their influence. Research shows African American women are viewed as the 'support system or modern mammy' in the workplace (Walkington, 2017; Wingfield, 2007). The image of the modern mammy expects African American women to give deference to their white and male counterparts and to question their abilities (Walkington, 2017). These racial stereotypes negatively impact African American women's workplace involvement and their encounters. Such stereotypical images include the mammy, sapphire, jezebel, and the angry black woman (Bradley, 2005; Bogle, 1973; Collins, 1991; Combs, 2003; Jones et al., 2018; Kaba & Ward, 2009; Manring, 1998; Wingfield, 2007). These stereotypes portray African American women as "selfless and nurturing, loud and aggressive,

sexually uninhibited, or emotionally strong and self-sufficient, respectively” (Jones et al., 2018, p.453).

The history behind the mammy originates back to the period of time when slavery existed in the United States. The mammy was the primary caretaker of the master’s household (Mitchell & Herring, 1998). The mammy was often fat, dark-skinned, less attractive, and devoted to serving the master and his family (Bradley, 2005). The media tends to portray the mammy as happy, caring, and always ready to help or serve others (Yarbrough & Bennet, 2000).

African American women are often overlooked in the workplace, in terms of promotions and opportunities compared to other groups. They are seen to be more of a target for discrimination at work (Combs, 2003, p. 386). Wingfield's (2007) study found “many women were expected to accept unreasonable demands, willingly accept compromising roles or silently accept disrespectful treatment to avoid potentially disrupting the smooth inner workings of the organization” (Wingfield, 2007, p. 202). In other words, colleagues expected Black women to fit the image of the modern Mammy and to sacrifice their personal life for the sake of the business (Wingfield, 2007).

African American women’s colleagues were disappointed when they did not comply to the tradition mammy roles (Wingfield, 2007). This expectation is socially significant because it sets up the foundation for societal ideals of a black woman’s position in the workplace; and how these societal expectations influence behavior (Collins, 1991; Wingfield, 2007). The refusal of the mammy role is primarily due to the disinclination of African American women’s willingness to conform to stereotypes, which cultivates a negative stigma of them. When African American women are viewed

as a modern mammy by their colleagues, they are confined into a small box where there are certain behavioral expectations of them as black women and individuals. These behavioral expectations dictate how they should behave while at work. The mammy should be a faithful, obedient servant or caretaker (Collins, 1991). If African American women do not meet these expectations, it may have an adverse effect on their relationship with their colleagues.

The sapphire is the opposite of the mammy. The sapphire was first introduced in the 1950's show *Amos 'n' Andy* (Bogle, 1973). In the show, the sapphire was always seen as the "nagging, complaining, sassy, wife of her Kingfish" (Bradley, 2005, p. 519). Her loud and unpleasant behavior made her appear unintelligent and incompetent by the people around her (Bradley, 2005). This affected her relationship with her husband because she was often ignored by him (Bradley, 2005). The sapphire is seen as loud and rude compared to the mammy who presents more supportive and caring roles.

Many may know Aunt Jemima as a popular brand for pancake mix, but the name dates back to the 1880s during the time of minstrel shows. In *A Slave in a Box*, Manring (1998) talks about how Chris Rutt started a self-rising pancake flour business in 1989. Unfortunately, Rutt did not have a name for his pancake brand yet. Rutt decided to name his pancake flour 'Aunt Jemima' after attending a minstrel show and being inspired by one of the characters in the show. One of the male performers was in blackface wearing a dress, apron, and bandanna. The performer was pretending to be a black cook. When the performer appeared on stage, he began to sing an 'Aunt Jemima' song, which was a massive hit with the audience. Rutt believed the Aunt Jemima character embodied the human form of southern hospitality (Manring, 1998). Aunt Jemima was often associated

with domestic work. The Aunt Jemima presents a conventional image of the black women as homemakers, providing care and support to everyone around them. The Aunt Jemima stereotype correlates directly to black women holding a supportive role in the workplace and serving as backbone for whatever the company needs.

The jezebel was the complete opposite of the Aunt Jemima. The jezebel portrayed black women as sexually aggressive, promiscuous, and sexually manipulative (Collins, 1991). Collins (1991) noted that “efforts to control Black women’s sexuality lie at the heart of Black women’s oppression” (p. 271). The jezebel stereotype stems from the slavery era, where there were a mass number of sexual assaults against black women by white men who claimed black women wanted and consented to sex (Collins, 1991; White, 1991). Hypersexualizing the jezebel produces a negative image of black women as sexual beings and negatively impacts the way black women are viewed as job candidates (Brown Givens, & Monahan, 2005; Collier, Taylor, & Peterson, 2017; Collins, 1991).

The jezebel is not the only stereotype that affects African American women in the workplace, the “angry black woman,” also presents a negative representation of African American women. The “angry black woman” stereotype assumes black women act “irrational, are impatient, irate, unfriendly, aggressive, and negative despite the circumstances” (Ashley, 2014, p. 28). The “angry black woman” is the most commonly perpetrated stereotype in modern culture by the media (Adams-Bass, Bentley-Edwards, & Stevenson, 2014). These stereotypes are harmful to society and have a negative influence because they only portray black women as one thing, loud and angry. The “angry black woman” stereotype presents an image to society that all black women share the same

characteristics and behave the same way (e.g., loud, aggressive, angry, impatient). The negative stereotypes of the “angry black woman” affect black women’s self-esteem and how others view them (Morgan & Bennett, 2006). The stereotypical images of the mammy, sapphire, jezebel, and the angry black woman demonstrate the historical racial stereotypes of black women and confirm that many of these misleading images still exist today.

Understanding the stereotypes of African American women is crucial to comprehending the contributing factors to racial discrimination endured by African American women in the workplace. Roles such as the Mammy and Aunt Jemima enable the domestic and supportive role of African American women, serving as the caretaker, cook, and support system. While the jezebel and “angry black woman” were viewed as both aggressive, the jezebel is more sexually promiscuous compared to the “angry black woman” who is unfriendly, rude and not optimistic. These stereotypes can be found in the workplace today and can contribute to the treatment and advancement of African American woman.

African American Women in the Workplace

Race and gender are the prime two elements that will alter the experiences of African American women (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). Common stereotypes of African American women can also contribute to their experiences and how their colleagues view them. These elements could be a potential cause of discrimination against African American women. Combs (2003) argued that “managerial African American women do not generally see overt discrimination as a persistent problem in today’s workplace. However, managerial African American women do experience covert discrimination and

subtle prejudice, leading to a lack of psychological and instrumental support that can contribute to failure and reduce the opportunity for career-enhancing informal network” (p. 387). The intersection of race and gender in workplace inequalities derive from racial and gender biases that permeate the daily experiences of African American women as they execute their jobs and make it difficult for them to seek career advancement and obtain higher managerial roles within their organizations (Combs, 2003).

African American women face numerous barriers when considering career advancement. African American women experience lower promotion rates than white women managers (Combs, 2003). The double barrier of race and gender positions African American women at the bottom of the totem pole for advancement and earning power (Combs, 2003). Kim (2011) ascertained that regardless of the university African American students receive their degree from, (e.g., historically black college and university or a predominantly white institution) they will start their careers at a lower salary than their white counterparts. African American women will also earn significantly less than African American men (Kim, 2011). This puts African American women behind their competition from day one and makes competing for executive leadership positions more difficult because African American women begin their careers at a disadvantage opposed to their colleagues (Combs, 2003). African American women between the ages of 25 and 29 earned more doctorate degrees than any other race in 2008-2009 (Kaba, 2012). Despite African American women being highly educated and obtaining more high-level degrees than anyone else, they remain at a disadvantage in the workplace (Kaba, 2012).

Parlea-Buzatu (2011) found there was a gap between rhetoric and the reality that African American women face regarding equal opportunities in organizations. The relationship between the stereotypes of African American women creates a specific perception of them, hindering African American women's opportunity from career advancement (Parlea-Buzatu, 2011). African American women face "many challenges to advancement as demonstrated by their low representation in influential leadership positions" (Parlea- Buzatu, 2011, p 333). Despite a small amount of African American women in leadership positions, African American women are the largest minority group to receive higher education degrees but still encounter barriers in the workplace (Parlea-Buzatu, 2011). Negative stereotypes are damaging to professional African American women (Johnson & Thomas, 2012). African American women are generally viewed as "support systems in the workplace in contrast to occupying a leadership position" (Cain, p. 20).

Racism and sexism are believed to play a significant role in occupations selected, salary, and benefits that African American women receive when employed (Brown & Keith, 2003). The combination of racism and sexism often lead to stress for African American women. These stressors are vastly different for African American women compared to white women, white men, and black men (Hall et al., 2012). Everyday stressors in the workplace may be intolerable for black women to deal with because they can be singled out and treated differently than their colleagues (Hall et al., 2012). As a result of stressors, the black woman's body is affected physically and mentally; Black women often have high blood pressure, diabetes, emotional distress, high infant mortality rates, and generally live shorter life spans (Hall et al., 2012).

According to Hall et al. (2012) a common stressor for black women in the workplace is dealing with people who do not understand the barriers black women face. Black women may experience a sense of loneliness and isolation when they are the only black person or one of the few black people in their work environment (Hall et al., 2012). Barriers may include having to prove their intelligence and knowledge of the field, demonstrating the necessary skill set for their job, while also having to continually explain your decision-making process, being judged on your appearance, and dialect (Hall et al., 2012). Black women attempt to control their reactions to stress by engaging in specific coping strategies such as walking away from a situation, shifting, or praying (Hall et al., 2012). Black women spending a lot of energy managing the stress of racial and gender bias in the workplace can lead to different coping techniques, including shifting (Hall et al., 2012). Shifting involves altering your appearance, language, or behavior to fit in and be accepted by society (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003). Research has found many black women in America believe “they must spend a significant amount of time, thought, and emotional energy watching every step they make, managing an array of feelings, and altering their behavior to cope with it all” (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003, p.60).

African American women typically do not see overt discrimination in the workplace, but subtle hints are present in the work environments through the treatment and opportunity available to them (Hall et al., 2012). This type of work environment ultimately affects African American women's ability to perform their jobs, making it hard for them to seek opportunities for career advancement (Hall et al., 2012). The stress of the work environment can cause African American women to have serious health issues

(Hall et al., 2012). Race and gender are believed to play a major part in their experience (Hall et al., 2012).

African American Female Journalists in the Newsroom

Current studies surrounding African American female journalists focus on stereotypes and portrayals in the media and how they portray other members of the black community (Beam & Di Cicco, 2010; Craft & Wanta, 2004; Meyers & Gayle, 2015; Ross, 2001). Few of those studies have focused on the role of race and gender in their work experiences (Meyers, 2004; Meyers & Gayle, 2015). As a result, there are personal testimonials available detailing the experiences of African American women in broadcast journalism (Simpson, 2010; Streitmatter, 1994). An example of a personal testimonial is the book *News lady*, which focuses on Carol Simpson, the first African American woman to anchor a national network newscast. The book covers her experiences navigating through the broadcast journalism and overcoming gender discrimination and racial prejudice.

According to Meyers and Gayle (2015) diversity in the newsroom makes a difference in the type of content produced. Meyers and Gayle (2015) found when African American female journalists cover stories on the African American community, they use different strategies to ensure there are positive black role models to counteract the negative images displayed on-air. This is commonly referred to as the need to balance stories (Meyers & Gayle, 2015).

Meyers and Gayle (2005) found that black women are not portrayed as negatively in the media as black men, but they are still not always displayed in the most favorable light. Many news stories present black women as women who don't work and have

several kids opposed to intelligent women, who know how to articulate themselves. Coverage on white women seemed to be mostly positive (Meyers & Gayle, 2015). African American female journalists felt the need to speak up when diversity in a story was needed or when a story included components that reinforced racial stereotypes (Meyers & Gayle, 2015). The study recognized the importance of race and gender and how the intersection of the two may affect workplace practices and experiences of African American journalists (Meyers & Gayle, 2015). The study found all journalists interviewed were aware that news coverage on American Americans regularly perpetuated negative stereotypes (Meyers & Gayle, 2015).

Meyers and Gayle (2015) concluded that stereotypical depictions of African Americans could be avoided by increasing the diversity within a newsroom, the variety of viewpoints told in a story, and the types of stories reported on. A tactic the journalists may use when looking for diverse sources is trying to find an African American doctor or lawyer and a white source who receives government assistance or did not finish high school, to help counteract negative stereotypes of African Americans (Meyers & Gayle, 2015). African American female journalists also made a point to educate their colleagues on African American culture and advise young reporters (Meyers & Gayle, 2015). These strategies are a way for the journalists to reinforce a fair balance in representation. The depiction of the black community is one thing African American female journalists try to address, to ensure there is an equal amount of positive representation on the television screen to counter the negative images (Meyers & Gayle, 2015). Executing content is just one piece of the puzzle. African American female journalists have to deal with hidden discrimination in the workplace, simply because of their race and gender.

African American female journalist Carol Simpson dealt with race and gender discrimination throughout her career, but she was able to overcome many challenges and have a successful career (Simpson, 2010). Simpson (2010) was told women's voices were too thin and not suitable to deliver the news. A man's voice was more suitable for news. Despite the gender obstacle, Simpson auditioned for the position anyway and became the first woman to broadcast news on WSUI. Simpson experienced resentment for the color of her skin and gender by the white males she worked with because as a woman of color she had received her job without any previous commercial broadcasting experience. Despite her talent, Simpson was assigned by her news director to cover what was considered women's stories, which included coverage of celebrities, movies, health, baby animals, beauty pageant contestants, etc.

After moving to Washington, DC, to be a correspondent for the NBC Nightly News, Simpson struggled with not being put on the air and being told her story ideas were not strong enough for national news. Simpson took a stance and stood up for herself. After threatening to expose her unfair treatment as a black female, Simpson began reporting and four years later she got assigned to cover Congress. After beginning a job at ABC, Simpson was able to see what other women were dealing with at work, including unfair treatment, sexual discrimination, harassment, lack of promotions, shaming, and embarrassment. Simpson was already conscious of her race, but gender was one more hurdle she had to get over, but she continued to push through the hard times. As a result, Simpson has had a very successful career. Regardless of the challenges Simpson faced as an African American female journalist, she stood her ground and continued to work hard. Simpson's journey emphasizes the importance of recognizing the connection

between the intersection of race and gender and its role in the experience of African American female journalists.

Intersectionality

The literature on intersectionality reveals the experience black women have in the workplace differs from the experience of white women and black men. While black women and white women can relate to topics concerning sexism and gender bias, they cannot connect to the difference in racial experiences. Black men can relate to black women when it comes racial discrimination, but their experiences still very due to the difference in gender identification. When racism and sexism are combined together, this creates a new intersecting experience for African American women.

Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality in her 1989 article “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex.” Crenshaw (1989) argues that race and gender can’t merely be analyzed as an independent or separate factor when dealing with African American women because they both have an impact on each other. According to Crenshaw (1989) African American women face many barriers and challenges for holding a dual role as an African American and a female and these factors (race and gender) help contribute to their experience. Intersectionality “posits that classical models of oppression within society, such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, class, or disability, do not act independently of one another; instead, these forms of oppression interrelate, creating a system of oppression that reflects the intersection of multiple forms of discrimination” (Hall et al., 2009, p.468).

Crenshaw (1989) suggests that “this single-axis framework erases Black women in the conceptualization, identification, and remediation of race and sex discrimination by

limiting inquiry to the experiences of otherwise-privileged members of the group” (p.140). Crenshaw recognized feminist theory and antiracist policy discourse failed to acknowledge and include black women in their research, contributing to the marginalization of black women. Feminist theory and antiracist policy discourse were both deficient in articulating “the full dimensions of racism and sexism” (Crenshaw, 1991 p. 1252). Feminist theory has neglected to incorporate race into its theory and antiracist theory has neglected to integrate gender into its research. Black women are often excluded from theories and discussions about their experiences with race and gender are often not accurately reflected in feminist theory and antiracist policy discourse.

The intersectional experience can include more than gender and race. Class, age, and religion can also be important intersections. Crenshaw (1989) suggests intersectionality must be taken into consideration when discussing African American women. Intersectional framework “has traditionally been used to examine how social categories interconnect concurrently, resulting in the oppression of racial minority women” (Rosette, Koval, Ma, & Livingston, 2016, p. 433). To document proper experiences and concerns of black women, feminist theory and antiracist policy discourse must alter their structure. Crenshaw (1989) recommends reworking the entire theoretical basis for “translating women’s experiences or black experiences into concrete policy demands” (p.140).

In the article “Workplace challenges in Corporate America: Differences in Black and White,” Smith and Joseph (2010) interviewed 42 African American and Caucasian men and women in corporate America about their work experience. The authors concluded there were many factors presented challenges to specific individuals, including

how race and gender linked together can create different outcomes for employees. The minorities felt unrepresented and underpaid in the workplace. African American participants agreed there should more effort put into diversity awareness.

Prior studies have found the interplay of race gender have significant impact on how African American women experience life in the workplace (e.g., Angel et al., 2013; Beckwith et al., 2016; Bradley, 2005; Combs, 2003; Feagin & Sikes, 1996; Gamble & Tuner, 2015; Kaba & Ward, 2009; McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017; Meyers & Gayle, 2015; Price et al., 2017; Simpson, 2010; Smith & Joseph, 2010; Swanson et al., 2018; Walkington, 2017; Wingfield, 2007). African American women face more difficulties and challenges because they hold a dual status in society, as a minority and a woman. Research also provides evidence that stereotypical images of black woman are still present in today's society and the media has a substantial role in the influencing society's views on black women through the depiction of black women on the television screen (e.g., news, television shows, movies, etc.) (Bradley, 2005; Gordon, 2008; Jerald, Ward, Moss, Thomas, & Fletcher, 2017; Punyanunt-Carter, 2008; Terry, 2018). This study examines the interconnections of race and gender and how it affects the experiences of African American female broadcast journalists.

Based on the above literature review, this study forwards two research questions to expand our knowledge of how African American women's experiences vary in the workplace. Race is defined as the supposed biological differences between groups, but influenced by social and political considerations (Baldwin, Means Coleman, Gonzalez, & Shenoy-Packer, 2014, p. 334). Race focuses more on the physical appearance of an individual, including their skin tone, hair color, eye color, and bone structure.

The first research question focuses how race plays a role in the experience of African American female broadcast journalists in workplace. It is important to understand how the physical appearance of their race affects the way people perceive African American female Broadcast journalists and their ability to do their job, along with how race affects the treatment and opportunities received. As a broadcast journalist, your physical appearance is the first thing people see when they view you on television.

- RQ 1: How do African American female journalists describe their experiences as broadcast journalists in relation to their racial identity?

The second research question focuses on Crenshaw's (1989) theory of intersectionality, which considers both race and gender when analyzing lived experiences. It is important to note race and gender present two challenges for African American women compared to their white colleagues and black men. The intersection of race and gender creates a distinct experience for African American women and research question two will explore perspectives of African American female broadcast journalists to better understand and figure out what is so unique about their experiences.

- RQ 2: As African American women, how has race and gender impacted their careers as broadcast journalists?

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Methodology

This study used qualitative, in-depth interviews to explore the lived experiences of African American female broadcast journalists; their racial identity and gender mediated those experiences.

According to Hesse-Biber (2017), in-depth interviews allow for a more conversational approach to finding out information on a specific topic by allowing the researcher to serve as an active listener while the interviewee shares their personal experience and individual perspectives. In-depth interviews also allow people to understand and make sense of their individual experiences, so they can effectively express their perspective (Lewis & Reese, 2009). Lewis and Reese (2009) found, at times, it might be difficult for people to accurately describe their ‘internal frames,’ and interviews are a useful tool to assist by connecting the text to human behavior (p.89). Interviews have emerged as a “popular research tool for understanding how journalists approach their work” (Lewis & Reese, 2009, p.89). However, conducting in-depth interviews with journalists presents its challenges because these professionals are used to using interview techniques on a regular basis (Lewis & Reese, 2009). In addition, journalists are difficult to get in contact with due to the nature of their work and it is difficult for journalists to find time out of their fast-paced work environment to sit down for an interview (Lewis & Reese, 2009).

For this study, a purposive sample of seven ($n=7$) African American female journalists from across the state of Florida were chosen. According to Hesse-Biber (2017), a purposive sample is selected based on specific research goals as well as consideration of the resources available to the researcher.

Prior to recruitment, the researcher found a list of news stations in Florida via google. The researcher searched each local network-affiliated television station in that specific region of Florida. The researcher used the station's website to filter through biographies and find African American female journalists. The email address and social media information (e.g. Facebook and Twitter) of each journalist was collected from the biography page. Email addresses found on the biography page were used to compile a list of potential participants. The list included the journalist's name, geographic location in Florida, the station's call letters, and the email address of the specific journalist. The list of potential participants was compiled over a four-week period. The researcher contacted the journalists via email over the same period of time (four weeks) with a recruitment message. A follow up email was sent two to three days after the initial email was sent.

Participation in the study was completely voluntary. No compensation was given in exchange for the journalist's participation. Each participant was given three documents prior to the start of the interview. The first document was a questionnaire (see Appendix A) about the journalist's level of education, experience in the field, age, and the number of months or years the participant has been in their current position. The second document was the consent form (see Appendix B). The consent form outlined the purpose of the study, associated risk, confidentiality expectations, and contact information for the researcher and the researcher's faculty advisor. The consent form also requested

permission from the participant to allow the researcher to record the interview with an audio recorder; no visual recording was involved. Each participant had the right to deny audio recording during the interview. The researcher informed each participant they could stop the interview at any point, if they felt uncomfortable or go to the next question, if they felt they were not able to properly answer the question being asked. A signature was required from the participant and the researcher to ensure both parties understood the terms and agreements in the consent form. The consent form and questionnaire were completed before the interview began. Participants were either asked to fill the information out in person or scan/fax the information over before interviewing. Prior to the beginning of the interview, the study was explained along with the information on the consent form. The third document was a participant copy of the consent form. The study is anonymous, and each participant was ensured no identifying factors linking them individually to the study would be released. In the study, each journalist was assigned an identification letter which was used to identify each participant in the study, for example Journalist A, Journalist B, Journalist C, etc. Once the interviews began, the journalists were asked all open-ended questions.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted in January 2019 and skype interviews were conducted in February 2019. Due to time and travel restraints, skype interviews were conducted to reach different journalists statewide. Although the skype interviews were not in-person, a face-to-face interaction was still established. Skype interviews were also available for individuals who were not in the initial location of the researcher. All interviews were conducted one-on-one and not in a group setting. One-on-one interviews

allowed journalists the chance to share their personal stories and experiences in their own words without influence of outside parties.

Interviews were held in a conference room or neutral meeting location. The interviews varied in length but averaged 45 minutes to an hour. The researcher prepared the interview questions in advance. The interviews were semi-structured to allow for a shift and deeper look into specific areas depending on the response of the journalist (Lewis & Reese, 2009). The questions were administered individually, and the participant was given ample time to answer. Follow-up questions were asked if there was a need for further explanation or an example needed to support a statement made. Directly following each interview, the researcher transcribed the recorded audio. After all the interviews were transcribed, the researcher read through the transcripts twice. During the second reading the researcher began to identify specific themes occurring in each transcription.

Sample Characteristics

The journalists ages ranged from 26 to 60 years old; their experience in the field ranged from 3 years to 30 years. The journalists were asked a number of questions dealing with their personal experiences with race and gender in the field of broadcast journalism, as well as similar questions related to other African American female journalists in the field (see Appendix C). The sample included four news anchors and three beat reporters at local network affiliated television stations.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Overview

The intersection of race and gender plays a significant role in the experiences of African American female broadcast journalists. The findings detail the experiences of each broadcast journalists and how race and gender have affected their experiences in the workplace. Of these seven journalists, nearly all expressed the important role race plays in their careers, while examples of racism and sexism varied due to their separate lived experiences. While race was noted as a major factor in the treatment and experiences of African American women; gender did not play a role in every interaction the journalists had. Only when race and gender intersected together, did the journalists experienced different workplace challenges.

Baldwin et al. (2014) define race as the supposed biological differences between groups but influenced by social and political considerations. A person may assume someone's race based on the color of their skin and physical features, which are all apparent to the eye (e.g., eye color, skin tone, hair, bone structure). According to Baldwin et al. (2014), gender is defined as cultural and social expectations based on biological sex. Marginalized groups have struggled for years with obtaining fair treatment, equal pay, and the same opportunities. Issues focused on race and gender present barriers for marginalized groups.

When asked interview questions surrounding the topic of race and gender, the majority of journalists emphasized the significant role of race in their experiences, and how race is the initial barrier that presents an obstacle for African American female broadcast journalists, when it comes to opportunities and career advancement. Although gender is an apparent contributing factor to roadblocks, only when combined with race, did the journalists think gender played a crucial role in their experiences.

The research questions that guided the study were:

RQ1: How do African American female journalists describe their experiences as broadcast journalists in relation to their racial identity?

RQ 2: As African American women, how has race and gender impacted their careers as broadcast journalists?

The data revealed the adversities African American female journalists face in broadcast television, the scenarios they are placed in as result of their race and gender, and the opportunities awarded to them (or not) as African American women. The most prevalent themes that surfaced during the interview included: race, appearance, racial mentoring, and professional advancement. Some of the journalists shared similar experiences, while some encounters differed from the majority. The interviews provided a stronger understanding of lived experiences of African American female journalists and how their experiences are unique and differ from any other race or gender.

Research question one, asked the journalists to describe their experience in relation to their racial identity. The respondents answered the question in a number of

ways including touching on the important impact their race has on their experience, along with the value of appearance and racial mentoring.

Race

The overall theme of race is frequently mentioned throughout each interview, relating to research question one. While some journalists had direct encounters where their race was an important factor in their experiences at work, others did not. All journalists unanimously agreed that race played a significant role in some aspect of their career journey or is crucial to the career journey of African American female journalists.

Journalist A had a unique experience to tell because she dealt with racism in the beginning of her career due to the geographic location of her job.

Race has played a significant role in every aspect of my journey. I remember in parts of West Texas when I was starting out in my career, there were places I was told that I couldn't go. Racism was still very heavily concentrated in certain pockets in that area. I remember an instance covering a story where I had preparation time, and I knew I was going to this place the next day with a white photographer. I was told to make sure I packed a lunch because the photographer and I couldn't stop because he was white and I was black, and that wouldn't go over well. The station was good about protecting people with security. Although some may say, why would you send a black reporter there? I remember safety was a key concern of the station. I had some similar scenarios at other jobs too. Depending on where you are and where you know that mindset is still very alive and well.

The location of your job dictates the kind of environment you will be surrounded by. The world consists of many regions with different cultures and within those individual cultures are people with different practices, beliefs, values, and viewpoints. When placed in an unfamiliar environment, you may be subject to dissimilar elements. Journalist A recognized she was working in an area where the cultural perspective of the people were different than what she was used to. Angel et al. (2013) found that

geographic location and race were factors in preventing African American women from pursuing advancement opportunities within their careers. African American women would not apply for jobs in specific locations where they felt the culture was not welcoming to black people (Angel et al., 2013).

In addition to the personal encounter Journalist A dealt with involving her race, she believed generally it is much harder for African American women to be successful.

Race plays an aspect in terms of advancement in this industry. I think it's much harder for an African American female to be promoted and rise through the ranks. I think a lot of times skin color comes into play. Whether your skin tone is accepted or not, which brings us into the light skin versus dark skin debate. Now you have the curly, well natural hair versus straight hair debate. The challenge is still there for African American men, but African American men are valued more because there's fewer of them, whereas there are so many African American female journalists trying to break into the industry. There is an incredible pool of talent to choose from.

It's important to note although African American men experience their own challenges, we find African American men only possess one barrier against them (race) compared to African American women who have two barriers (race and gender) placed against them (Crenshaw, 1991). The intersection of race and gender make it difficult for African American women to advance in the workplace (Combs, 2003). According to Journalist A there is a greater need to fill the shortage of African American men in broadcast journalism opposed to African American women because there is a scarce number of African American men interested in this career compared to the vast number of African American females trying to obtain a job in broadcast journalism.

Journalist B had a different perspective regarding race. She believed African American female journalists are hired because of their race, to help fill a diversity quota.

Specifically focusing on African American women in broadcast journalism, these women are highly unlikely to be hired if there are already a substantial amount of black women currently working at the news station.

If you're on-air talent in this field, I believe that you're pretty much hired because of your race. I always tell people who are looking to be a reporter or anchor, to look at that company's website. If they have a lot of Black women, you're probably not going to get the job because they've already met their quota. In this business, they don't necessarily come out and say that I'm looking for an Asian, Hispanic, an African American woman, or a male. They pretty much know that, "I could use that right now." Also notice that the number one stations are those that have a very diverse pool of candidates.

Race didn't play a prominent role in the experiences of Journalist C. However, she can recall specific incidents where her race was a factor in the treatment she received while reporting in the field. Occasionally Journalist C would receive backlash for people thinking she is associated with fake news while at political rallies, where race becomes the prime focus when attending these specific political events. Journalist C suggest the work environment of broadcast journalists is not solely restricted to the television station; it could take place outside the station while reporting.

Sometimes you will experience racism and discrimination in the political climate. I had a gentleman show up to an event and in front of my face begin to record myself and the photographer with his phone. The entire time he was saying "here goes the fake media out here, only covering one side." This is more of an issue resulting from my job as a journalist, but sometimes issues of race come up. This depends on if you go to rallies where you have both political parties present or if you're at a rally with one political party. If you're in the middle of both parties trying to get both sides of the story, you can get caught in the mix of both parties trying to advocate for their political party. At political rallies, I'll hear people jeering or making rude comments because of my race. But I have only noticed that when covering politics.

Journalist D could not attribute directly to how race played a significant role in her career journey. However, Journalist D could speak for other African American women who may experience some difficulties throughout their career. Journalist D suggest there is an overlooking of African American female journalists and this is a crucial problem when it comes to opportunities available in broadcast journalism.

It can be tough going because you often get overlooked. This has been the experience of many people who I've known in the field. These women have been able to acquire jobs, get promoted, but it's much more slow-moving for them, then it's for white males. Another observation is, we often start off reporting on soft news where you're getting the assignments that are not the prime assignments, that can get you noticed in your career.

Despite being left out, African American females are able to move through the ranks and advance in their careers (Combs, 2003). Some journalists detailed experiences where they had to work harder than the opposite sex or harder than another woman, just to be seen at work. A strong work ethic generally has "positive implications for achievements in work and school settings" (Lee, Padilla, & McHale, 2016, p. 2278).

Journalist E realized race would be a major component in her journalism career when she began graduate school. Journalist E was asked by the news director of her University news show to take a course in voice and diction before being able to work on the news show.

The news director recommended to all the African American students that we take this voice and diction course. He said African Americans have a southern dialect, that they have to learn to remove to do the news. He mentioned our dialectic or the way we speak, is not considered a representation what you would put on the news and we have to adjust our voices to sound like the news. Essentially if you ask me, it is to sound white. He didn't say that directly because he's not that type of person to say that, but I think he was preparing us for what we may run into as we go out there and look for jobs. Ultimately, I believed it helped me. I find

myself using those skills and the tools that I have learned in that course when I'm out here in the field every day. At first, I was offended, but I'm glad I did it. It was very helpful. That was the first incident where I saw race come into play.

Journalist E's experiences suggest African Americans have to take an extra step in order to do well in life. There was an underlying theme of work ethic present in Journalist E's experience. Work ethic is a value based on hard work and diligence and deserves to be rewarded (Jenkins, 2018). Work ethic is a learned behavior and not something you are born with (Jenkins, 2018). Journalist E had to showcase a strong work ethic, in order to level the playing field. As a result of the voice and diction class, Journalist E was able to have an advantage over other journalists when beginning her career.

Journalist F expresses the need for African American female journalists to hit the ground running and always try to be ahead of everyone else.

Nothing has ever been very blatant in my experience, but sometimes even if it's not blatant there's still a little pinch. I think it's more so the expectation. It's almost like how your parents say you have to be 10 times faster or be two steps ahead of everyone and that mindset does not stop. If they tell you that in grade school, it's intensified when you're in the career world and when you're in the corporate sector. Even if you are great and naturally talented, you have to be 10 times more of that coming out the gate. You're not really afforded that opportunity to have self-discovery to really grow in roles and as you fight that, you are seen as difficult to work with. It's like you can't win but you have to fight.

Women generally do not receive equal opportunities compared to men in terms of the hiring process, promotions, and networking (Everbach, 2006). African American have to overcome race and gender barriers in order to advance in the workplace. Beckwith et al. (2016) found that African American women "have to work harder and outperform their counterparts" (p.123).

Journalist G expressed the limited amount of positions available for African American female journalists in front of the camera. As a result, there is less opportunity for African American females unless another African American male or female leaves the station. Journalist G hints towards the reality that African American women are only hired when they need to replace another African American female journalist who has left the station.

In this business, when you are in front of the camera, there are only a few seats at the table. TV stations notoriously do not have a soul train cast of anchors unless you're in an Atlanta market or perhaps Chicago; just depending on the market, it is very rare that you will have more than one or two journalists of color on air. Now that the field has opened up quite a bit and you see more diversity celebrated. Depending on the market we're trying to get into, if there's a certain amount of us already at that station and contracts are not up, you already know it's very unlikely you will get an opportunity unless a black male or female because there's normally just a few spots for us.

Along with Journalist G comments on job opportunities, Journalist B and Journalist G both perceive the field of broadcast journalism to have an insufficient amount of opportunities available for African American women. The limited opportunities contribute to the fact that broadcasting companies only have room for a select number of African American female journalists at a station. This refers back to a similar opinion expressed by Journalist B, the idea that broadcasting companies have a diversity quota to meet and only hire a specific number of African Americans until their quota is filled.

Race is seen as a vital component in the experience of African American women in broadcast journalism. Race was perceived to be involved in the hiring process, reporting in the field, and when considering the overall experience of African American

women. Race also contributes to the beauty standards of African American women. They are often viewed as unattractive because African American women do not possess the typical features of European women (Boepple, 2015; Bryant, 2013; Taylor, 1993). Those typical features include a thin nose, thin lips, light colored eyes, fair or lighter skin, and straight hair (Boepple, 2015; Bryant, 2013; Taylor, 1993). These features are viewed as the standard of beauty in America and put forth the notion that white women are beautiful and black women are not (Boepple, 2015; Bryant, 2013; Taylor, 1993).

Appearance

The appearance of an African American female journalists relates closely to research question one. All journalists emphasized the importance of your appearance in broadcast television. The journalists expressed the notion that most African American female journalists don't feel comfortable wearing their natural hair because it is not the ideal beauty standard to present while on television. Instead of wearing their hair natural, most African American female journalists wear their hair straight (flat iron or chemically relaxed), wear a weave (sew-in), or wig to work. When it came to other aspects of appearance, make up was needed for all on-air talent, but clothing selection for African American female journalists was limited because of their skin tone.

Journalist A expressed how the beauty standards for African American female journalists are different compared white female journalists.

The beauty standards are different. Making sure you're a size two or size four, and not a size 10. Making sure you have longer and straighter hair. I'm naturally curly and it would be great for me to wear my hair curly and do a wash and go, like I do on the weekends. I've made the personal decision not to wear my hair curly. While I have worn my hair natural on TV before, I don't anymore.

Journalist A realized at a certain point, wearing her hair straight was an easier solution than wearing her hair in its natural state.

I don't want to wear my curly hair on TV. For me, it just doesn't work. I think some people have great curly hair and great natural hair, where they can get up and go. It doesn't work like that for me, so it's easier to wear my hair straight, wear a weave, or whatever the case may be, especially in Florida with the humidity. The weather dictates hairstyle a lot. I think you'll see African American women with different hairstyles dictated based on the weather. At the end of the day, you have a choice to make and I think you're starting to see more African American or minority female journalists emerge and they're taking a stand against certain things they are not going to do, whether it be straightening their hair or wearing a wig. You're starting to see more people on TV embrace who they are, but it's a fine line. Do you want the job or do you want to truly be true to yourself? What's more important to you? That's a personal decision.

Journalist A implies natural hair presents a struggle for African American female broadcast journalists because they have to consider the style of their hair (natural or straight) when considering obtaining a job in the industry. This struggle adheres to the issues surrounding beauty ideals of African American women because African hair is considered unattractive and inferior to straight hair (Thompson, 2009).

When looking for a job, the controversy over straight or natural hair became a problem for Journalist B. With the guidance from her mentors, Journalist B was able to find a solution to her job search and obtain a job. Journalist B discusses her personal battles with appearance in the industry.

I think this is the hardest business for Black women to go into regarding appearance. Sometimes if your skin is too dark, you may not get the big position because it will go to someone of a lighter complexion. While other times, that may be the only reason you receive the position. Then you have the hair issue. When I first started in this business, I did two resume reels. I did one that had my natural hair as an afro, and then I did another one with straight hair. Some of my mentors, who were also Black women said to me, "You're not going to get a job. Do you want a job or are you getting a job to make a change? Is it all about your hair right now? Why

don't you get on air first, and then decide how you're going to do your hair?" Once you're on the air, then you can try and change your hair, once you've got teeth in the game. Then the question becomes which look do I put on my resume reel? And it was the straight hair look that won. News directors told me, "You're really good. You have a great voice. You write well, but your hair is distracting." And then they said, "Let me give you an example. The TV screen is a square, so when I see this big shadow from your hair, that's all I'm thinking about."

Journalist B's experience infers that African American women have to consider all aspects of appearance when pursuing a job in broadcast journalism, and that the natural appearance of an African American woman is not always accepted. Straight hair remains a beauty norm in today's society and is often viewed as more professional than natural hair, which is viewed as more radical in the professional world (Bellinger, 2007). Journalist B continues to elaborate on the additional struggles African American female journalists have to handle when it comes to their overall appearance.

The appearance is the biggest struggle that I have. Every single day, it's tough getting up. It's almost like you're putting on a costume from the hair, to the make-up, to the eyelashes. Is my nail color the right color? African American women are a very colorful group of women. We love to wear our colors, our patterns, but every time I have to choose to wear that, I also know that I'm taking a chance. I've seen women been told to go home and change. "Your nail color is too bright. You look like you're going to a party." But then, I've also seen us take chances and viewers fall in love with us. It's really about timing in this business and just being confident. I've worn patterns on air before. Have I done the natural hair? No. Have I thought about it? Yes. The only problem with this business is that we're characters, and they don't like for you to look different every week. And guess what? Even to wear my hair in an afro, I have to two-strand twist it and it doesn't always work out. And the best way for us to protect our natural hair is to keep it braided in cornrows. But can I wear cornrows on air? No. So appearance is a hard thing to deal with.

The observation is that African American women have to question every detail of their appearance in broadcast journalism, including hair, makeup, attire, nail color, etc. The burden of spending so much time on appearance is perceived as a nuisance for

African American women to cross-examine every detail of their appearance. Appearance plays into viewership because you want to be relatable to viewers.

Journalist C indicates one day she would like to wear her hair natural on air, but as of right now she's not ready to take that step towards going completely natural on television.

I would love to go natural, but I don't feel where I am now, they're ready for that. I'm definitely moving toward it happening one day, but I don't think right now is the right time. I saw an article the other day about an incident where a woman of color was fired because she did that. She went completely natural and didn't have her straight hair anymore, and she was fired. I don't think that would happen here, but I wouldn't spring natural hair on them without telling them first.

Natural hair seems to be a recurring theme among the journalists. Journalist D expresses the want to wear her natural hair, but the resistance due to where she is at in her career and the possibility of management not being receptive to natural hair. This presents a concern that wearing your natural hair may be a risky choice for African American women in broadcast journalism, who don't want to take a chance losing their job over wearing their hair natural. African American women may feel forced to wear their hair straight or natural, in fear of being fired if they decide to do otherwise. Black women have an abundance of hairstyles they can do with natural hair, but punitive measure have been taken to restrict African American women from wearing their natural hair (Thompson, 2009).

In 2018, news anchor Brittany Noble Jones was fired after receiving various critiques on her natural hair and filing two complaints against her company (Callahan, 2019). Noble Jones was told by her news director that her natural hair was unprofessional, and she should change her hair back to straight (Callahan, 2019). Noble

Jones was informed by the company that on-air talent could not have shaggy or unkempt hair (Callahan, 2019).

Journalist D expresses her take on the beauty standards for African American female journalist.

I think in this day and age, the standard look for women of color is they still need to look like a white woman. Looking like a Caucasian woman seems to be what people are looking for. Anything outside of that, you better have something special going on. I would say pressed hair, makeup and business professional outfits should resemble the traditional look of a Caucasian female anchor. This tends to get you accepted, much more so than having dreads or natural hair. Also, you don't want to wear a whole bunch of colors or prints. Essentially, don't look ethnic.

Journalist D concluded that African American females should strive for that Caucasian aesthetic, if they want to be accepted in broadcast journalism because this is the ideal beauty standard in the industry. This is a presumed action of African American women to conform to the European beauty standards (Makkar & Strube, 1995). Black women who do not meet the established beauty standards and are more likely to be unemployed compared to those who meet the preferred European beauty standards (Robinson-Moore, 2008).

Journalist E discusses the importance of appearance when applying for a job. She goes into details about what a news director typically looks for when reviewing the reels of potential hires.

When you send your reel into a station, the first thing a news director looks for is "how does she look on tv?" That will keep them there for an extra 15 seconds, and then they go into "what is her presence like on screen? How does her voice sound with storytelling?" I think appearance has always been number one. They will take that over anything. It's like if you look the part, they can help you play the role. I'll take my station for example; the majority of the journalists are white. For African American women, I think they want us to portray who we are not. A lot of us have naturally curly hair and they want us to wear our hair straight for the most

part. Can I walk into work and wear an afro? Yes, but will it be accepted? Most likely not.

Journalist E conveyed a similar opinion to most of the journalists about the importance of your appearance in broadcast journalism. Journalist E mentioned a significant detail regarding the value of your appearance. She revealed appearance is highly valued. In some cases, the news director will hire an attractive person and work with them on their skills, if they need a little bit of improvement opposed to hiring someone who doesn't live up to the beauty standard. Attractive people are more likely to be hired and given an opportunity (Robinson-Moore, 2008). Your physical look is not the only thing that goes into your appearance; your clothing selection is also an element of appearance.

Clothing would depend on the person and what they want you to wear. You may have a decent looking body, so they don't want you to show off your body too much. I've seen in the news, newscasters that are women of color receive backlash saying, "oh their clothes are too tight on tv." While at the same time you'll have a weather girl sitting right next to her wearing a fitted dress, but she doesn't receive the backlash because she doesn't have the curves. I feel like they want you to look a certain way. The hair has to be a certain way. I think they want you to try and mask as much of your culture as you can. They don't want to completely whitewash you because they want to see that specific demographic say, "oh hey, we have a black person on the news." The company doesn't want to say that they don't have any blacks people on the news, but they're not going to let someone go full African American on the news. I think they want you to wear certain type of clothes. And for myself, what I've noticed is I have so many dresses in my closet, but I have not worn a dress yet. I've only worn tops and pants and its 85 degrees today, and I'm still not wearing a dress because I feel I would feel uncomfortable. I feel I would be looked at for the way my body looks and not for my reporting.

Journalist E continues to convey the idea that African culture is not widely accepted in broadcast journalism. She speaks to the notion that African American female

broadcast journalists must meet the physical attributes associated with the European beauty ideals.

I think the world has a set idea of African American women. They are always at the bottom of the list when it comes to beauty “oh they are not that pretty; they are not beautiful.” If you are mixed, then you’re considered beautiful, and there’s no question about it. White women are viewed as beautiful too. When it comes to beauty standards, I feel like African American women always fall short on that list. You’re told this is not how you want to look, instead you want to look like this. You want to have nice straight hair. Your natural kinky curly hairstyle is not a look to have or you want to be Hispanic with straight hair. I feel like it’s our culture and our skin tone that’s always the problem. People don’t seem to accept a lot of our features, “oh that’s not considered beautiful.” We are constantly told what you should strive to look like. This is for television, it’s not for a newspaper or radio. Radio, it’s all about the voice. How do you sound? Because nobody can see you. Newspapers are all about your writing. You don’t have a personal attachment, other than your byline. On these platforms, the main focus is the content, not on your appearance. When it comes to news, you have to see these journalists on the screen. I believe in most cases new directors or people at news companies will take the look of a Caucasian woman or Hispanic woman over an African American woman because black women are not considered the ideal beauty standard.

Journalist E points out a significant aspect about broadcast journalism. When compared to other journalism platforms, broadcast journalism is the only form of journalism where people physically see you and judge you based on your appearance before hearing your content. This emphasized on the importance of appearance in broadcast journalism. Journalist E suggested an underlying theme of colorism. Indicating there may be a preference for white women or women of a lighter skin tone because they are deemed more desirable than African American women. Black women are particularly “vulnerable to the effects of European standards of beauty because the standards emphasize skin colors and hair types that exclude many black women, especially those of a darker skin” (Bryant, 2013, p. 80).

Journalist F discusses the typical appearance of an African American female broadcast journalist. Expressing how she loves to see African American women embracing their natural curly hair, but she does draw attention to the fact that all-natural hair textures are not accepted.

I feel like you don't really know what the standard or model is. You know that you probably need to either have a weave in or you need to wear a wig, along with having a certain type of outfit. I can't even tell you, who we are trying to look like. There's no model or standard, there's just certain things you just don't gravitate towards. I love when I see women who are able to wear their natural curl pattern. However, it's never 4C type curls. It's more along the style of the pretty "J. Lo" curly hair. It's like we get a step closer or close enough where you can be your authentic self, but it's still not good enough.

An important takeaway from Journalist F is the difference in hair textures.

Although natural hair is slowly becoming acceptable in broadcast journalism, all hair textures are not received well by the industry. Journalist E makes an important note that looser curl patterns are more widely accepted than tighter curl patterns. Making the assumption that looser hair textures are considered more attractive opposed to tight kinky curls. Perhaps, the looser curl pattern is more closely related to the European beauty ideals of the need to have straight hair to be considered beautiful. Issues of colorism and hair texture among the black community date back to the era of slavery. Light skinned slaves were considered from a European perspective to have "good hair," while dark skinned slaves were considered to have "bad hair" (Byrd & Tharps, 2014). Good hair was defined as "long and lacking in kink, tight curls, and frizz," the straighter the better (Byrd & Tharps, 2014, p. 18).

In regards to the ideal appearance of African American female journalists, Journalist F expresses her take on what people generally expect from their appearance.

It is a very polished look. Whatever style you have going for yourself, make it very concise and professional. She would probably wear a pretty standard dress with heels. You can be curvy but not too much. It's almost like you're Miss USA, but you're a journalist. She appeals to corporate and she's what young girls aspire to be. I've had experiences where I might come into the position with extensions or clip-ins and then decide I want to do the big chop or cut my hair. It's a natural for women to go through phases with their hair. It may be Summer, so we want to do highlights. Maybe it's Fall and I want a darker hair color. When I presented the idea of cutting my hair, I had a white middle age male manager, who said it would be confusing to viewers because I started off with 12,14,16-inch hair and now I want to cut my hair. It wasn't going to be an Amber Rose or Jada Pinkett Smith cut, but it was just going to be a short cut. I was not allowed to cut my hair.

Consistency is key when it comes to appearance because the viewers should be able to recognize your specific image. Journalist F had a unique experience with her appearance. She wanted to cut her hair, but management told her she couldn't because her look would not be the same as when she started. Journalist E and Journalist F both mentioned that African American journalists cannot be too curvy, regardless of the shape of their natural body. These comments relate back to the value of appearance and suggest curvy bodies don't fit into the box of beauty standards for African American female broadcast journalists.

Journalist G perspective on appearance is similar the majority of the journalists concerning the acceptance of natural hair. Journalist G conveys the message that natural hair is not really widely accepted in the broadcast journalism.

I would say the appearance is one of the biggest things that I struggle with and probably a lot people of color struggle with whether or not to wear their hair natural on air. Consultants will come in and say you don't look polished enough if you have natural hair. So that's always been a struggle, but I don't have to alter my appearance a lot in order to be able to do my job. I'm pretty much allowed to be myself to a certain extent.

African American women are expected to conform to the European beauty standards (Makkar & Strube, 1995). African American women naturally have kinky or curly hair. Journalist G's comments on hair are an example of the way black hair is juxtaposed to Caucasian hair. According to Byrd and Tharps (2014) Europeans began to categorize the appearance of Blacks including hair and skin tone, causing African hair to be viewed as unattractive and inferior by Europeans. Journalist G outlined experiences that brings awareness to beauty standards in American.

Regardless of how journalists described appearance, race was a differential aspect among the physical features of white woman and black woman. Appearance is very important for African American women in broadcast journalism. The outer appearance of African American women is also something that may draw colleagues to them to seek advice surrounding the black community or other minorities.

With appearance being a dominant and recurring theme throughout the interviews, it was a leading influential component in the work life of the journalists. Race was another consistent theme that emerged throughout the interviews, demonstrating race was a factor in multiple facets of their work experience. When covering topics surrounding the black community, nearly all the journalists were faced with the challenge of educating their colleagues around the ideology of race.

Racial Mentoring

The journalists were asked if their colleagues ever leaned on them for advice or knowledge on black centered topics. Most journalists found they were often approached to add their perspective on the black community or other minority groups. Racial mentoring was a valuable aspect because the journalists pointed out it presented a double-

edge sword. While racial mentoring encouraged more involvement from African American women, it showcased the lack of diversity in the newsroom and highlighted the reality that African American women are only valued when needed. Meyers and Gayle (2015) found that African American female journalists made sure they educated their colleagues on black culture and mentored young reporters on how to cover stories involving race.

Journalist A found that her colleagues often asked her opinion on black topics, specifically relating to if something was appropriate or offensive.

I'm asked, "How would you phrase this? Is this politically correct?" People are very conscious and very sensitive. You would ask me a question about how I would view something like Martin Luther King Jr. Day and my white co-worker who's sitting next to me would ask something regarding the usage of the content. Is this appropriate? Does this offend you? A lot of times there's slim pickings. When you look at the data, there aren't as many people of color in the news. There's more now than before, but when you have that one person of color, they're your go-to source for everything ethnic.

When colleagues want to make sure they are politically correct and free of error during the newscasts, they tend to lean on Journalist A for advice. This highlights a lack of diversity in newsrooms, where various voices are needed to add different perspectives. Women and minorities have been found to add a unique point of view to issues in the newsroom (Meyers & Gayle, 2015).

Journalist B talked about the importance of having diversity in the newsroom and how different input is needed for news. She mentions how her colleagues may ask for her opinion on black content, but sometimes they may pose a question to the entire newsroom.

I may be asked my opinion on using "African American" versus "Black," especially when it comes to police shootings. Was this a race issue or not?

Did this just happen to be a police shooting? Do they specifically come to me? Not necessarily. They may put it out there to the newsroom, but I think that our voices hold weight in that. The more of us in the newsroom, making those decisions, the better the product is. Even the photographer plays a role in the way they photograph things. Do we necessarily need to see someone crying? For example, if we are picking a picture of a black kid that was shot, which image do we chose? When you go on his Facebook page or if his family is sending us pictures and it's of him carrying \$100 bills with the chains on. Well, can we ask for a better picture? That's okay to do that or do we just zoom in on his face? Do we have to paint the boy this type of way, not knowing where he got the money from? I'm not making any excuses, but we don't have to paint the narrative like that, and it's so important.

Journalist B reflects on the importance of having multiple viewpoints present in the newsroom. Diversity is indicated as a value to the newsroom because a staff that consists of different ethnicities and genders can provide different viewpoints when dealing with topics concerning how to adequately represent a diverse group of people in the community. Harp, Bachmann, and Loke (2014) found that diversity is needed to ensure various perspectives are being represented in the newsroom. Women and minorities are also known to provide a unique perspective (Meyer & Gayle, 2015). African American female journalists felt the need to speak up when diversity was needed in a story or when elements of a story reinforced racial stereotypes (Meyers & Gayle, 2015).

Journalist C viewpoints correlate to Journalist B, regarding the value of diversity in a newsroom. Journalist C emphasizes the importance of diversity when race is an element.

I have been asked questions when we're covering stories that deal with race. I will be brought in and asked for my opinion, which I really like because it's important to have different opinions. If you need to have people in the room that don't look alike, that's a good thing. A diverse group of individuals may come up with several ideas, that may not have

been mentioned if there wasn't more than one race or gender present in the discussion.

Journalist C was also sought out for advice when it came to black centered topics. She was appreciative of her colleagues going out their way to make sure the information they were covering in their story was a good representative of the black community. She points out the need for a diverse newsroom and why it's important to be diverse. This is extremely helpful when trying to understand different culture and their values, you may have someone present who can elaborate more on the current topics or issues occurring in a specific community. Harp et al. (2014) argues diversity is needed to better represent different groups of people and "a multitude of experiences represented by a diverse group of voices will better reflect a culturally diverse community" (p.300).

Journalist D commented on her station being more aware of issues surrounding race. Through the years Journalist D has tried to make her peers more conscious of how to report on certain topics.

Sometimes people come to me. For instance, this is Black History Month and everything that has touched upon a black issue, other producers have come to ask me what I think about it. They're particularly cognizant of it right now because it's Black History Month. Prior to that, one or two of them may come over to the desk and say something and sometimes not. At this point I've been able to start raising the consciousness around how we cover certain things. Now I'm starting to get more questions regarding my input on certain story ideas, "we are starting to do a story on this, can I get some input?"

Journalist D has not had many incidents where people come to her for advice on black centered topics because she began to raise awareness around covering sensitive topics when she started working at the station. As a result, people may come to her occasionally for advice but overall her colleagues are very aware of how they should

proper depict certain stories. Journalist D points out a unique find that her colleagues come to her for advice during Black History Month, which is only one month out of the year where they recognize it is important to portray the black community appropriately. If there was more diversity in the newsroom, then perhaps the staff would be more conscious of the need to always properly portray blacks and minorities on the news.

Journalist E mentioned the only time she is approached about topics on the black community, is when someone is asking about a specific celebrity or information revolving around entertainment news. This information is usually brought up to her by colleagues, who may not know exactly what is going on, so they turn to her to be informed.

I remember 21 Savage was supposed to be in Florida performing at some local universities prior to his arrest. At the time when he was arrested, several of my colleagues asked me “Who is 21 Savage?” Of course, they have to come ask me. I told them I can play some of his music for everyone. I find that they come to me for that type of news, whether it be entertainment news or black culture. They will come and ask me “who is this or what is going on with this?” Sometimes they will use certain celebrity news as a kicker or fun fluffy news in their newscast. My colleagues will come to me and ask “Did I say this right? Is this okay to say? Am I forgetting something, or did I get this wrong?” I feel like they always come to me for that confirmation and that’s always the case. I feel like that will always be the case, especially if you are one of a small group of African Americans at your station. People want to come to you to make sure they get it right because we know what can happen if journalists get it wrong, there can be backlash. I think they try to avoid any backlash by getting out in front of it. It may be as simple as asking “hey before I put this up there, can you tell me if I’m saying this right or is this okay to say?” They don’t want to offend anybody. I appreciate that they do ask questions ahead of time. It’s better to get out in front of it, then to offend people.

Journalist E is used as an advocate for the black community and explaining what is happening in their culture. There is an assumption present about African American women, that they automatically know about rap or entertainment culture because of their

race. Although we shouldn't assume Journalist E knows anything about rap or entertainment culture because of her race, people still do. There is a strong perception that Journalist E is knowledgeable of this information because she is a black woman. Journalist E's experience suggest that African American women are not as valued as others in the newsroom because they are only consulted with for soft news.

Journalist F did not personally experience the same thing as the other journalists, but she expressed the need for management to consult with African American employees regarding certain topics, they may have a vast amount of knowledge on.

I don't think I've experienced people coming to me for advice, but it's needed. Even with the recent stories that come out. We can use Esquire magazine cover as an example. It's tone death, its apart of the series where they are painting a better understanding of the American experience. The first feature cover is a 17-year-old boy from Wisconsin and it's Black History Month, now that is very tone death. A lot of times it may be African Americans in the room, but they are not consulted with. I've never been consulted on whether something is offensive or if it's appropriate. Far too often we see a situation where the consulting is not happening, and we are not in the room. I would love to see a shift where more of us are in those managerial roles. I haven't seen African American men or women in those managerial roles at any of the stations I worked at.

Journalist F noticed there was a lack of African Americans in leadership positions. Cain (2015) found that African American women believed they did not have a fair share of opportunity for advancement. Journalist G touches on the need to have African Americans present in the newsroom to help provide a different perspective. Journalist F and Journalist G shared similar experiences regarding colleagues approaching them for advice.

I don't think people come to me before they write something or go on air. Every blue moon somebody might. Most stations will have editorial meetings throughout the day and that's really where we will hash out different stuff and people will ask questions. I will always, if it's necessary jump in and say, "that's a really important story, and here's why," to

provide my colleagues with some background information. And sometimes topics don't always deal with people of color. Sometimes it's history, like the Holocaust sometimes it's just underserved communities where we don't get their message out.

Most journalists agreed that diversity was an issue that needs to be addressed in the newsroom. Often times they are sought out because of their race to provide advice or their opinion on topics surrounding the black community. While the advice did not always focus on the black community, there is a need to properly represent and cover all forms of stories on race and other sensitive issues. Diversity within managerial positions is needed to help produce different outlooks on topics. African American women contribute many skills and positive qualities to various occupations, but the lack of leadership opportunities limits their influence in the workplace (Kaba & Ward, 2009). Structural barriers, race, and gender differences are contributing factors preventing women from advancing to management positions (Everbach, 2006). African American women face many challenges when looking for advancement in the workplace and is evident by the low representation of black women in influential leadership positions" (Parlea- Buzatu, 2011).

RQ 2: As African American women, how has race and gender impacted their careers as broadcast journalists?

The respondents answered research question two in various ways including how their experience has affected their advancement in their career and the limitations that have been presented to them as African American females. Not all respondents addressed advancement or limitations in their interview, so the responses below are limited to the journalists that addressed their concerns directly.

Professional Advancement

Some of the journalists expressed the opportunities they had available to them because of their race and/or gender, while others discussed the limitations they had to deal with as an African American female journalist. All of the journalists did not express their perception on advancement or limitations in their interviews.

Although race and gender hold as two barriers against African American females, Journalist A was granted some opportunities specifically because of her race. Journalist A expresses the opportunities she believes would not have been offered to her, if she was not African American.

I had the privilege of covering President Obama's first Inauguration and I think I was sent because I was black. I was able to follow a black church congregation and detail their story as well, maybe in a more intimate way because we could relate since we were crossing that color line.

Journalist A had some positive experiences and opportunities granted to her because of her race, but she also believes her race and gender has hindered her advancement in the workplace. Journalist A details how her race and gender affected some of the career opportunities, including being overlooked for promotions. Journalist A also addressed the difficulty for African American women in broadcast television and the barriers holding them back from being successful. Race and gender position present a double barrier for African American women and place them behind other women and men, when it comes to advancement, money, and power (Combs, 2003).

I think I've been passed over for promotions, simply on the basis of my skin color and would the audience be perceptive of an African American female anchor when the majority of the viewing audience is probably Caucasian. I think it hard for African American women to find jobs in certain markets. There is influx of African American women who want to be journalists, who want to be on TV, and are going after those prime

positions. Not necessarily reporting jobs, but those anchor slots. This is an exaggeration, but if you only have 200 slots and you have 700 African American females mostly applying for jobs, obviously it's not going to work. This traces back to societal standards. Black women are not necessarily seen as desirable and as beautiful as their white counterparts. Therefore, the station will put up there and market what's going to sell and bring in ratings. Ratings in return will bring in money.

Journalist A then pivoted to the point surrounding the huge influence society has on what is considered acceptable beauty ideals for African American women. She explains how it is tough for African American women to gain that “prime spot” in broadcast journalism. The prime spot refers to an anchor position. She explains it hard to secure a job at a station that already has its needed amount of African American female broadcast journalists. Journalist A has faced many obstacles in her career. She expressed a significant experience when she first began working in the field. Her news director never approached her directly about the pronunciation of her name, but he later admitted he thought about asking her to change her name to something easier to pronounce. Perhaps a simplified version of her name.

I remember an incident early on in my career. My name is different. I don't think it's very ethnic sounding but it's not a traditional name. I remember later on at my first job I befriended the news director and we became very cordial. He told me when he hired me, he thought about asking me to change my name to something simpler. I guess my name was too complicated for the audience, so I can only imagine. I do know of some instances with African American female journalists, who probably have more ethnic sounding names, using their middle name or shortening their first name to ease into the business a little bit better.

Journalist A is the only participant that experienced a managerial figure (news director) questioning the pronunciation of her name. Many ethnic groups have unique names that are distinct and identifiable to their culture (Wilson, Gahlout, Liu, & Mouly, 2005). Ethnic names have been found to have an effect on the employment opportunities

for minorities (Wilson et al., 2005). Discrimination was also found in the workplace against job applicants whose names were perceived as sounding black (Wilson et al., 2005). Ethnic sounding names may “signal a lack of assimilation, trigger more pronounced stereotypes, or may cause psychological discomfort because of pronunciation difficulties” (Wilson et al., 2005, p.66).

Journalist F also experienced some tough situations throughout her broadcast journalism career. She felt she was being treated a certain way because she was an African American female. Journalist F discussed the difficulty of navigating through a tough career situation.

In the hiring space you may be afforded the opportunity to fill in for a role, but not hired full-time. It could be based on perception and everyone's perception is different. Some may say “well, that person was more qualified,” but you were qualified to fill in and you were qualified to hold down the fort until the company hired another person. It's certain things like that, that are subtle. This is the way African American female journalists receive discrimination, through little subtle jabs. And if you say anything about the treatment then you're being emotional. If you act on anything, you're being difficult to work with. It's tough because you know you have the spirit of discernment, where you know something about the situation isn't right. You may feel a certain way about the circumstances, but you still want to have a job. You still want to be able to grow in the industry, but there's so much that needs to change before you really feel confident in what you're doing and not just capable.

Journalist F expresses similar experiences related to Journalist A. Both women were overlooked when it came to advancement opportunities. Journalist F expresses the presence of covert forms of discrimination. African American women generally do not see overt discrimination at work, but they do experience covert discrimination and subtle prejudice (Combs, 2003). Journalist F conveyed that as an African American woman, you can't react to these subtle jabs because you can be perceived as difficult to work with. You don't want to be labeled as difficult because that can affect your opportunity for

advancement. This insert regarding African American women being perceived as difficult to work with connects back to the stereotype of the angry black woman (Ashley, 2014).

The angry black woman is the most commonly used stereotype to describe African American women as unfriendly, aggressive, and negative (Ashley, 2014; Adams-Bass et al., 2014).

Journalist G expressed how she felt earlier in her career when she was often overlooked for promotions, even when she was more qualified than the other applicants. When looking at the influence of race and gender on job promotions, many scholars have found African American women are often passed over for promotions (Combs, 2003; Gamble & Turner, 2015).

Many of the times the people I would be competing with at my station to get promotion were not people of color. They would come to the table with far less than me, sometimes they would be right out of school with zero experience. My bosses would say "well it's going to be between you and her as far as who will get the promotion." And many of times people leap frogged right over my head. So yes, I definitely believe that race played a part early on in my career, as far as the opportunities I received.

In addition to this incident, Journalist G had another occurrence where she was passed over for a promotion. Although Journalist G was never directly told she did not receive a position because of her race, she inferred her lack of promotion was a result of her race.

I do believe in several situations in my career, I was not able to advance to where I wanted to advance because others had a set agenda of what they wanted our news team to look like. I do know for a fact that happened and has happened to me in the past. This is clear when all your reviews are exemplary: works hard, goes to extra mile, team player, works more as a managing editor, and not just an anchor. Then when it's time for you to get promoted and people from the outside are chosen instead of you, even after you've been in the community for 8,10, or 12 years, people are hired and promoted from across the country to come in. It becomes very clear, that these decisions have to deal with race.

African American women are most likely perceived as being treated unfairly in terms of promotion and training opportunity (Combs, 2003). They are also more likely to be a target of discrimination at work (Combs, 2003).

Journalist E believed her race and gender was the reason she had issues finding a job. In this specific instance, Journalist E spent a significant amount of time talking about her experience of trying to be a sport journalist, but ultimately not being able to acquire a job in sports journalism. She believed she did not receive an opportunity because of her race and gender as an African American female. She began detailing her struggle to find a job.

At news stations, there is usually one job for sports. The ratio is 1 to 10. I graduated June 2017 and I gave myself 6 months to find a sports job. Everybody's journey is different. Once January 2018 came around, I realized I had to start looking into news jobs. I knew it would be a tough journey finding a sports job, but I didn't anticipate it would be so much of a struggle. One day I said hey, let me go look into news jobs. As soon as I looked into news jobs, the offers started flowing in.

Journalist E continues to further explain her struggles and how gender discrimination is still a present issue in sports journalism. Journalist E felt her gender was a factor into her being overlooked for positions in sport journalism.

If you ask me, I'm sports reporter and I'm just filling in for news. I think a lot of stations overlooked me because I was a female and that's a big thing in the sports industry. Not only tv news, but overall. Female journalists in the sports industry, started popping up 20-30 years ago. There was a time where females journalists weren't even allowed to be in the locker room after the game or in the press boxes. They didn't have a presence at all. It was a lot of controversy around that. Now you look at it, okay women are allowed to be there, but may I have been looked over for a couple of sports jobs for a male counterpart? Yes, I do believe that.

Journalist E describes an example of sports reporting, where she is clearly being ignored and overlooked in a male dominated environment.

I've covered just as many male sports as I covered female sports. Are there as many of female teams as males? No, but from my experience I have always covered both an equal amount of time. I would hope that the male connection is not the case as for why female sports reporters are not hired because they want to keep a male connection there instead of a male to female connection. When a lot of sports reporters go to the press conferences after the game, there are not a lot of female sports reporters there. I always noticed in several instances, you will have your hand up to ask a question to the team and not be acknowledged. I have always been overlooked versus the 15 males in front of me. What I've always done is sit in the front to try and get noticed more. I don't want to sit behind these men because they may be like "who is that? why didn't she raise her hand?" What would typically happen is before they even got to my question, they would always be ready to go and start packing up. And just about everybody's question was answered or at least acknowledged, so I always experienced that.

Journalist E believed the intersection of her race and gender was a crucial factor that hindered her from succeeding as a sport journalist.

Sports is made for men, outside of the sports that are played by women. In my pursuit of a sports job, I feel like being a woman may have factored into one of the reasons I didn't get a job. I believe in most instances, me and a guy could have the same resume, but they will take the guy before they take the woman for a sports job. I always considered that when I was looking for a sports reporter job. I also thought race and gender together, took a toll on me in the sports industry. If you're a girl, what do you know about sports anyway? And she's African American. What I have noticed because I follow a sportscaster Facebook group page. If the station has a female sports reporter. I want to say 80% of the time, she is Caucasian or Hispanic. She's not African American, so that's something else where I think race and gender plays a role as far as not advancing in the workplace, specifically the lack of advancement in sports journalism, and overall contributing to the difficulty of finding a job.

As previously discussed in the literature review, African women have a double barrier placed against them in life. The involvement of women in sports journalism has grown over the past decades, however the number of women is still overshadowed by the amount of male sports journalists (Schmidt, 2013; Swanson, 2009). Journalist E mentioned if a woman was able to receive a sportscaster's job, then she is usually

Caucasian or Hispanic. This infers there is still some sort of beauty standard working against the appearance of black women. Physical features resembling those of a white woman are considered to be more attractive than the features of black women (Boepple, 2015; Bryant, 2013; Taylor, 1993).

Along with the sport journalism, Journalist E spent a considerable amount of time discussing her African American female colleague, who may be dealing with obstacles because of her race and gender.

I have noticed that the other African American female at the station, is good at reporting. She's one of the photographers and she's a great reporter, but she will only go on air and do a story every now and then. Because she is such a good reporter, I always wondered why the station hasn't made her a full-time reporter? I always questioned if it was because she wears her natural hair and doesn't really wear makeup. She has a nice beautiful deep skin tone. Television always wants you to have a certain look on the screen. That goes without saying, this is just something you know. I wonder if they look at her and just say she doesn't fit what we want on TV.

Journalist E observed that her colleague may be struggling with being put on the air as a full-time reporter because of her race and the way she presents herself. Journalist E suggest because she does not conform to the beauty standards for an on-air role, she is not granted the opportunity to fully pursue this position. Anderson (2017) found that the “upkeep of personal hygiene and grooming are compulsory for both male and female broadcast journalists, women find that the professional standards for their success are set higher because of an overemphasis on physical appearance and beauty, leaving their journalistic talent and capabilities second to subjective, superficial values” (p.4).

When asked how skin tone plays a role in the reporter and anchor position African American female journalists may receive, Journalist E believed it definitely played a major role.

The other African American girl at my station is a photographer, but she reports too. She doesn't just go out and get VO/SOTs, she actually reports sometimes. The photographer has a much darker skin tone than I do. Do I think people are more receptive of me, at work than her? Yes, I think her skin tone is the reason she is in this specific situation. To be completely honest, I have a lighter skin tone and I can wear a weave to have straighter hair. She has a darker skin tone and wears her short natural hair. She has been there reporting at the station for over a year and I have only been there for two months. If they put both of us in a room together and put our resumes next to each other, she may have more experience in the field than I do on paper, but I guarantee they would put me on air before her because of my appearance. That's me being completely honest, knowing the reality of how it works. She is way more qualified than me, but because of my look, they will put me on TV before her. It's very unfortunate, very discriminating, and just disgusting.

Journalist E brings issues of colorism to the surface. Historically black women struggle with their beauty because of the standard put forth by society to tell them what is and is not considered beautiful. (Boepple, 2015; Bryant, 2013; Taylor, 1993). Even though her colleague is a talented reporter, her outer appearance works against her in broadcast journalism.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The results of the study emphasize the importance of recognizing how the intersection of race and gender play a significant role in the experiences of African American female broadcast journalists. The effect of this intersectionality causes African American women to have differential experiences compared to white people and black men (Crenshaw, 1989). Although the experiences of other African American female professionals (e.g., Angel et al., 2013; Combs, 2003; Gamble & Turner, 2015; Hall et al., 2012; Price et al., 2013; Simpson, 2010; Walkington, 2017; Wingfield, 2007) may not directly reflect in the experiences of African American female broadcast journalists, the findings still produce common barriers among these women. The results indicate race, appearance, racial mentoring, and professional advancement were all elements of the journalists' experience affected by the overlapping of race and gender. The study added to the conversation of literature surrounding African American women in the workplace, African American female broadcast journalists, and the intersectionality of African American women.

In addition to contributing to scholarly research, the study provides important information to journalists working in broadcast journalism or anyone aspiring to break into the field. The research brings awareness to problematic issues of race and gender present in the workplace for African American female broadcast journalists. The results help raise the consciousness around the obstacles and encounters African American female broadcast journalists endure as a result of their race and gender. The information

provided by the journalists provides a segue into their work lives for other African American female professionals and young women considering a career in broadcast journalism, but despite those adversities African American women may face in their careers, they can prevail and become successful journalists.

Discussion

Regarding Research Question 1: How do African American female journalists describe their experiences as broadcast journalists in relation to their racial identity?

Collectively, the journalists' agreed that their perceptions of their experience linked directly to their racial identity. Race is a major component that consistently impacts their career journey. Nearly all journalists expressed the crucial role race plays in the workplace, emphasizing on specific situations where race was an apparent factor. Throughout the interviews, the journalists discussed their individual experiences and disclosed some insightful information. It is important to note that all journalists did not experience the same situation when it came to race.

The interviews highlighted the idea that television companies try to reach a diversity quota within the station, which leaves only a specific number of positions available for African American women. This contributes to the limited amount of opportunities African American female broadcast journalists have for advancement. The research also highlighted a perception that African American women are constantly being overlooked for positions in broadcast journalism and to overcome these challenges African American female journalist must have a strong work ethic and work harder than their colleagues.

Along with race serving as an element relating to their experience, appearance was also a component that all journalists unanimously agreed was vital as a broadcast journalist. The controversy between natural and straight hair was recurring throughout the interviews. African American female journalists have to consider all aspects of appearance when pursuing a job in broadcast journalism including their physical appearance, hair, makeup, clothing, etc. African American women often had to conform to the European beauty standards in order to succeed in their careers. The journalists outlined experiences that bring awareness to beauty standards in American. There were also references to colorism in the findings. Historically, black women have struggled with beauty ideals placed on them by society

All journalists expressed the significant role appearance plays in their career. Your appearance can make or break you in the broadcast industry. The physical appearance of a broadcast journalist is the first thing the audience sees when viewing the news, opposed to other news platforms, where you hear the voice of the journalist on radio or you read the written work of the journalist in print media. This provides evidence that African American women struggle with the appearance of beauty and what society views as the standard for all women. Journalist also spoke on seeing a turn in the beauty ideals with some journalists starting to wear their natural hair, but there is still a strong debate on whether to wear your hair straight or curly. The majority of respondents referenced the need to straighten their hair, wear a wig, or a weave. It is evident that the beauty standards still pose a major problem in the world today. It appears African American female broadcast journalists are not allowed to be authentic and true to themselves.

When it came to racial mentoring, most journalists found that their colleagues approached them when dealing with topics surrounding the black community and their culture. Racial mentoring presented a double-edged sword because it gave African American women an opportunity to be included in the conversation, but it also was problematic because it places an additional burden on these women while only including them in the conversation when it's convenient for others. Women and minorities have been found to increase diversity in viewpoints (Meyers & Gayle, 2015). Journalists of color provide perspective and a voice to areas that might be lacking attention.

Regarding Research Question 2: As African American women, how has race and gender impacted their careers as broadcast journalists?

Some journalists expressed the advantages they received as an African American female broadcast journalist, while others shared their perspective on how their race and gender worked against them. Although doing well in their careers now, a small amount of journalists expressed how they perceived their race and gender to be the reason they did not receive a job or promotion. Race and gender were also looked at regarding work ethic. Journalists felt the need to work harder than their colleagues to be successful and obtain promotions.

Diversity is a key element missing from the newsroom. Diversifying the staff in the newsroom would help create a more inclusive culture for African American women and help diminish the barriers these women face. This is needed for both on-air talent and managerial positions. A more diverse work environment would most likely cut down on the constant overlooking of African American women. As far as appearance, employers need to be more open to natural beauty and recognize, every race is different, and no two

people are the same. Black women should not have to conform to the European beauty standards and have to wear wigs or weaves to be accepted. A more diverse managerial staff would hopefully recognize black hair is different but not unattractive.

Limitations

The study was limited to seven journalists in the state of Florida. Due to sample size, the results from the study cannot be generalized to all African American female broadcast journalists. By expanding the study and allowing the researcher to reach more journalists in different regions of the country, it would allow the researcher to have a better understanding of the overall lived experience of a vast number of African American women in broadcast journalism in the United States. The duration of the study is also limited, given that the research is a thesis study, the researcher had a limited amount of time to conduct the research.

Future Research

Future research should expand out of the state of Florida and look at the African American female experiences in different states across the United States, to determine the similarities and differences in experience among African American female broadcast journalists in different regions of the United States. The same study can be done on Black women in different countries, to see if journalists in American share the same experiences as journalists in other countries.

Although race and gender issues occurred throughout the career journeys of each journalist, the majority of encounters the journalists faced dealing with their race and gender seem to come from earlier points in their journalism career. In order to determine if this is true, a comparative study between African American female journalists in

different television markets and occupational levels of their career would help address this concern. Some journalists suggested there is a constant overlooking of African American female broadcast journalists when being considered for advancement in the workplace. Future research could focus on the career advancement of African American female broadcast journalists, to see if their race and gender is a significant factor contributing to the lack of promotions. Lastly, it was suggested by some journalists that African American men have an easier experience in broadcast journalism. To supplement the findings in this study, future research could dive into lived experiences of African American male broadcast journalists, to see if they share the same experiences as African American female broadcast journalists when it comes to the intersection of their race and gender.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Sample Characteristics Questionnaire

The questionnaire must be completed prior to the start of the interview.

1. What is your age? _____
2. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled in school, please indicate the highest level of degree you have received. *Please circle your answer.*

Less than a high school diploma

High school degree or equivalent (e.g. GED)

Some college, no degree

Associate degree (e.g. AA, AS)

Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, BS)

Master's degree (e.g. MA, MS, MEd)

Professional degree (e.g. MD, DDS, DVM)

Doctorate (e.g. PhD, EdD)

3. How many years of experience do you have in the field? _____
4. How many years have you been in your current positions? *If you have not been in your current position for at least a one year, then indicate how many months you have held this specific position.* _____

Appendix B: Consent Form

1) **Title of Research Study:** The Lived Experiences of African American Female Journalist

2) **Investigator(s):** Principal Student Investigator: Jacinda Jones
Principal Faculty Investigator: Stephan Charbonneau

3) **Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to examine the individual lived experiences of African American female journalist to create a better understanding of their daily experiences and challenges they encounter due to their race and gender. This research will expand the knowledge on the area of African American women in the workplace, more specifically to examine their interactions, relationships, and treatment within the journalism field.

4) **Procedures:** If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

- Fill out a brief questionnaire
- Participate in an in-depth interview for about an hour
- The research will be conducted in a conference room or neutral meeting location

5) **Risks:**

- The study involves minimum risk. The study is anonymous and focuses on professional issues and not personal issues. A possible risk that may occur during interview process is the emotional affect some of the questions surrounding the topic of career, may have on the journalist.

6) **Benefits:**

- This study will expand the knowledge and literature on African American female experiences in the workplace, specially focusing on expanding the limited voice of African American female journalist. Currently the literature on this specific study of African American female journalist is little to none.

7) **Confidentiality/ Data Collection & Storage:**

- Only the researcher will have access to the data obtained in the study. An audio recording device will be used to gather the sound from each individual interview on. While the recording device is running, the researcher will also take handwritten notes. The data obtained will be electronically transcribed following each interview. The study will completely anonymous and each participant will be given an identity through code (e.g. Journalist A, Journalist B, and etc.). The research will be stored on a password protected computer. The research will be stored permanently, in order to keep track of all the data obtained about the research process.
- Any information collected about you will be kept confidential and secure and only the people working with or overseeing the study will see your data, unless required by law. The data will be kept on a password protected computer. Sometimes researchers need to share information that may identify you and your research records with people that work for the University, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), Research Integrity staff, regulators or the study sponsor. These people are responsible for making sure the research is done safely and properly. If this does happen, we will take precautions to protect the information you have provided. We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not let anyone know your name/identity unless you give us permission.

8) Contact Information:

- If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research, you should contact the researcher Jacinda Jones at jacindajones2017@fau.edu. You may also contact the faculty advisor Dr. Stephen Charbonneau at scharbo1@fau.edu or (561) 297-3856. In the event of a research related injury or side effects, please contact the researcher and/or faculty advisor.

9) Consent Statement:

*I have read or had read to me the information describing this study. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I am 18 years of age or older and freely consent to participate. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. I have received a copy of this consent form.

I agree ____ I do not agree ____ be audiotaped.

Printed Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name of Investigator: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your career journey. Where did you start and how did you get to where you are now?
2. Do you feel race has played a significant role in any aspect of your journey?
 - a. If so, how? (Has it this changed since the start of your journalism career?)
3. Do you ever feel you are given certain assignments or interviews because of your race and/or gender?
4. Do you feel you are treated fairly and given the same respect as a white female colleague or white male colleague?
5. Do you feel you are treated fairly and given the same respect as other colleagues in general?
 - a. Does this limit your experience as journalist?
6. Have you experienced discrimination in the workplace? Would you mind sharing a time when some form of discrimination really impacted the way you saw yourself in your career or at the organization?
7. Do you ever feel the need or find yourself altering your language, tone, or appearance to satisfy the standards of others while at work? Why do you feel the need to do this?
8. Do you feel your race and/or gender has hinder your advancement in the workplace? Please explain.
9. As a person who holds a dual status in society due to their race and gender (one being a minority, an African American and two being a female) Have the organizations you've worked for offered internal/external training opportunities, mentoring programs, or identity network groups for you personally?
 - a. How has this impacted your career path and advancement within the organizations?
10. Do you think your organization has provided you the right tools to thrive? If so, what were the tools, and if not, what could have been done to help you?
11. What do you think the root cause behind the discrimination you receive in the workplace?

Appendix D: Institutional Review Board (IRB) Issued Letter



Institutional Review Board
Division of Research
777 Glades Rd.
Boca Raton, FL 33431
Tel: 561.297.1383
fau.edu/researchintegrity@fau.edu

Charles Dukes, Ed.D., Chair

DATE: December 20, 2018

TO: Stephen Charbonneau
FROM: Florida Atlantic University Social, Behavioral and Educational Research IRB

IRBNET ID #: 1350815-1
PROTOCOL TITLE: [1350815-1] The Lived Experience of African American Female Journalist .

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF NOT RESEARCH
EFFECTIVE DATE: December 20, 2018

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research study. The Florida Atlantic University Social, Behavioral and Educational Research IRB has determined this project does not meet the definition of human subjects research according to federal regulations. Therefore, it is not under the purview of the IRB.

We will keep a copy of this correspondence on file in our office.

If you have any questions or comments about this correspondence, please contact Danae Montgomery at:

Institutional Review Board
Research Integrity/Division of Research
Florida Atlantic University
Boca Raton, FL 33431
Phone: 561.297.1383
researchintegrity@fau.edu

* Please include your protocol number and title in all correspondence with this office.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations,
and a copy is retained within our records.

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