

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF TREATMENT DISCRIMINATION IN NCAA
DIVISION I MEN'S BASKETBALL COACHING

By

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To my mother and father for all of the opportunities they have created for me throughout
my life

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Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
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The purpose of this study was to explore the prominence of perceived treatment discrimination in NCAA Division I Men's Basketball by black coaches. Seven current and former head coaches were interviewed about whether or not this type of discrimination occurred in the collegiate coaching profession and how it manifested itself. The coaches did acknowledge the existence of treatment discrimination to varying degrees and also offered potential solutions to address the problem. The implications from the study contribute to a better understanding of the underrepresentation of NCAA Division I black coaches at the macro, meso, and micro levels.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Direction of the Study

Sport organizations likely have one of two cultures: one of similarity or one of diversity. (Cunningham & Sagas, 2007; see also: Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999) A culture of similarity is characterized by “rigidity, ethnocentrism, an intolerance of ambiguity, and the consideration that differences are deficits.” (p. 3020) A culture of diversity displays “a respect for differences, acceptance of conflict, tolerance of ambiguity, and a people-focused workplace.” (p. 3021)

Fink & Pastore (1999) claimed that “an organization that successfully manages diversity does not view employee differences as a burden; rather it views employee differences as an advantage.” (p. 313) The authors added that cultures of diversity improved employee satisfaction, expanded customer bases, and improved organizational productivity and creativity.

Though opinions of the benefits of diversity can vary, it is hard to argue the importance of understanding and investigating diversity in the intercollegiate sport context. College sports are highly visible, highly valued, and are “deeply inscribed in the culture of our nation.” (Branch, 2011) Further, being an extension of higher education, an athletic department is expected to represent the ideals and uphold the standards of their respective institution. It cannot be argued that one of the most sought after characteristics that an academic institution can strive for is diversity; and thus, it would be expected that the athletic department of that institution would strive for the same.

However, as one investigates the subject of diversity in intercollegiate athletics further, it can be seen that in many facets of college sport, diversity is significantly

lacking. According to Lapchick's (2012) Racial and Gender Report Card, there are numerous positions of employment in college sport that are dominated by white males. This is especially the case in positions that are considered to be highly influential and/or powerful within the confines of college sport, such as: conference commissioners, university presidents, athletic directors, associate and assistant athletic directors, and head coaches.

In terms of head coaches, no sport has a higher representation of black head coaches in Division I National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) college sports than in men's basketball. Specifically, 18.6% of all head coaches in the 2011-2012 season were black. (Lapchick, 2012) This percentage was drastically higher than the percentage of all Division I college head coaches that were black, which was 8.3%. This should come as no surprise, since men's basketball is also the sport that had the highest representation of black student-athletes (57.2%) in the 2011-2012 season. This is also an overrepresentation of blacks compared to the overall population of black male athletes in Division I athletics, which was 22%. (p.5)

Since the percentage of black head coaches and players are higher in men's basketball than in any other sport, one could perceive men's basketball to be the most diverse sport in the NCAA when it comes to the inclusion of blacks. But does the fact that it is the most diverse necessarily equate to it being "diverse enough?" The reality is that in the position of head coach, blacks are still greatly underrepresented; a fact that is particularly concerning since it is a dynamic that is occurring in the most diverse NCAA Division I sport.

While 18.6% of head coaches in men's basketball are black (according to data from 2011-2012), this happens to be the lowest recorded percentage since the 1995-1996 season. It is lower than the previous year, and down 6.6 percentage points from 2005-2006, when the percentage of black coaches in men's basketball was at an all-time high of 25.2%. According to Lapchick, (2012) "this is a major area of concern in the Racial and Gender Report Card." (p.6)

Cunningham & Sagas (2005) identified that the pool of available labor in men's basketball coaching (or the number of potential coaches), in this sport was approximately 48% black. According to more recent data from Lapchick's (2012) report, 39% of Division I men's basketball assistant coaches were black in 2011-2012. Also, according to data presented at the 2012 College Sport Research Institute conference, 40% of associate head coaches in men's basketball are black. (Daigneault, 2012) In other words, nearly half of the available labor pool is black and approximately 40% of assistant and associate coaches are black. Yet in men's basketball, only 18.6% of head coaches, the position that garners the most pay and enables the most power and influence, are black.

It is no secret that college head coaches, especially in men's basketball and football, have a lot of power and influence on their respective campuses, and in some cases, in society. The best barometer of this power and influence is pay. *Forbes* magazine printed an article about the top ten highest paid college basketball coaches in the country as of 2011. None of these coaches were black. (Van Riper, 2011)

However, the fact that whites dominate the echelon of highly compensated coaches, not only directly correlates to the underrepresentation of black head coaches

(that is, that none of the highest paid coaches are black), but correlates indirectly as well due to the importance of professional networks in the coaching ranks. One of the most powerful means of upward mobilization in the world of coaching is a strong network, and the strongest stakeholders within those networks are the most powerful and influential head coaches; most of whom are white. (Doyel, 2004; O'Neil, 2010a; O'Neil, 2010b)

For example, in three separate sports columns explaining the dynamics of coaching networks (commonly referred to as “coaching trees”), many powerful and influential men’s college coaches are identified as having “strong coaching trees.” In these three columns, 14 coaches are presented in this light, with some being mentioned across all three articles. Of these 14, none are black. (Doyel, 2004; O'Neil, 2010a; O'Neil, 2010b)

According to Cunningham & Sagas, (2005) it is to be expected that “a white head coach (i.e. the one in power) would be likely to choose a similar other (i.e. a white assistant coach).” This conclusion was drawn from Kanter’s (1977) homologous reproduction theory. To elaborate, the following quote was written by Lapchick: (1994; see also Sagas & Cunningham, 2004)

Most white coaches were raised with white values in a white culture. If white coaches accept stereotypical images of what black society is and what kind of people it produces, they may think that blacks are less motivated, less disciplined, less intelligent...and more physically gifted. (p. 9-10)

In other words, if the majority of NCAA Division I men’s basketball head coaches are white, the majority of the most influential coaches are white, and white coaches are

more likely to hire and promote other white coaches, this could have an effect on how black coaches are perceived and treated within the coaching ranks.

The significance of this study lies in the following: If diversity within an organization has benefits, and colleges and athletic departments strive to be diverse, one must question why there is an underrepresentation of blacks in positions of power in college athletics. Even in men's basketball, where there is the highest percentage of participants and coaches who are black, a clear gap exists when it comes to equal representation of white and black head coaches. Specific to this study, I investigated the extent to which treatment discrimination contributes to this underrepresentation of black head coaches in NCAA Division I men's basketball.

In doing so, I have attempted to answer the following research questions: (1) To what extent is treatment discrimination a contributing factor to the underrepresentation of black head coaches in Division I men's college basketball? (2) If treatment discrimination does exist in this context, in which way(s) does it manifest itself? (3) If treatment discrimination does exist in this context, what advice or strategies can the participants offer to reduce its prevalence?

Personal Statement

This study was a reflection of two areas that have been a part of my life for a significant amount of time: sport and race.

I grew up in sport-crazed Massachusetts, where the Red Sox, Celtics, Patriots, and Bruins are integrated in the fabric of the state's culture and residents. In my hometown of Leominster, high school football and baseball are synonymous with the city. I was raised in a family that held sports in high regard. My grandfather, father, and many of my uncles were high school and college athletes. On my mother's side of the

family, there was an equal passion for sports and its role in everyday life. As a result, I grew up playing youth sports, and eventually played three sports in high school. Since the start of college, I have spent nine total years involved in Division I NCAA men's basketball: four years as an undergraduate assistant at the University of Connecticut, three years as an assistant coach at the College of the Holy Cross, and two years as a graduate assistant coach at the University of Florida.

Though the subject of race has not been as prevalent an influence in my life as sport has, it has nonetheless been a factor at every stage. Throughout my childhood, my parents emphasized the importance of acceptance and respect towards people from all walks of life. As I grew up and was exposed to people whom were less accepting, I learned that a person's race, religion, or gender often factored in to how they were treated as individuals.

I attended a diverse high school and interacted with a multitude of people in all activities associated with the school: from classes, to sports, to social gatherings. Our high school principal would often reinforce the positive attributes of diversity by stating that, "diversity is our strength."

However, the most important event in my life as it pertains to race occurred in the first semester of my freshman year at the University of Connecticut. I entered the men's basketball player locker room for the first time, where eleven of the thirteen players on the team were black. Most, if not all, of the players were in the locker room after a team workout, and I can vividly remember how uncomfortable I was at that time. As a white male, I had always interacted comfortably with a diversity of people, but had never been put into an environment where I was in the racial minority. The circumstances caused

me to become sensitive to how I was talking, walking, and acting. It was at this point where I became consciously aware of my racial identity; and more importantly, from that point on, I became consciously aware of the racial identity of others, and how being in the racial minority in a specific environment could affect their thoughts and actions.

This experience served as a foundation of racial consciousness that continued when I was hired as a full-time assistant basketball coach at the College of the Holy Cross in 2007. In this position, I was able to interact with many other coaches while recruiting, scouting, and socializing prior to and after games. It is commonplace in college basketball that coaches interact and network with their counterparts. It was through these experiences that I became aware of the role that race played in the coaching profession.

During my time as an assistant coach, I made many observations about how race interacted with the coaching profession. Black coaches seemed to interact and network more with other black coaches than they did with their white counterparts. The same dynamic existed with white coaches. Also, as I learned the reputations that different coaches had developed, I learned that many black coaches had the reputation of being “recruiters,” whereas many white coaches had reputations of being more well-rounded, more organized, and were better with “X’s and O’s,” which is associated with basketball intellect. These reputations were not absolute, and were not necessarily assigned because of one’s race, but there was nonetheless a trend that seemed to exist.

Some white coaches made comments to me that had racial undertones to them. A few white assistants referred to the lack of intelligence and qualifications of some

black coaches, though not directly attributing those opinions to the coach's race. Another white coach talked of how much easier it is for black coaches to get hired and mobilize through the assistant coaching ranks because of the lack of quality candidates. Some white head coaches casually commented on the need to hire a "black guy" on their staff, insinuating that the hiring of a black assistant coach would be more of an act of tokenism and necessity, rather than viewing that person as a positive asset to the program.

At the end of my tenure at the College of the Holy Cross, I had the opportunity to interview for a head coaching position. It was then that I realized that recruiting was merely a small piece of a big puzzle when it came to preparing for and becoming a head coach. So many more skills were required to obtain a head-coaching job than an assistant coaching job. It was at this time that an important question came crystallized in my thinking: If black coaches are primarily assigned the responsibility of recruiting, or are hired in a token manner based on their race, what type of effect does this have on the underrepresentation of black head coaches in Division I NCAA men's basketball?

It was at the University of Florida that I decided to tackle this issue in a research setting to find out if my perceptions of treatment discrimination in coaching were consistent with the perceptions of black coaches who have or have had Division I NCAA coaching positions. Though a personal bias clearly existed on my behalf, I attempted to remain as objective as possible in my research, interviews, and data analysis.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Discrimination

It was argued by Bopp (2008) that the existence of a society would be impossible without discrimination, since “social groups survive through membership, consequently discriminating against non-members.” (p. 5) It is from this membership and non-membership, rather than from inherited inequalities, that discrimination comes to fruition. (Banton, 1992; Bopp, 2008)

Pincus (1996) labeled membership and non-membership groups “dominant” and “minority” groups. Dominant groups refer to those that have most of the power in society. Minority groups refer to groups that lack power. Within this context, minority groups do not refer to groups that are lower in numbers. Fink, Pastore, & Riemer (2001) classified the “typical” dominant group in society as “white, Protestant, able-bodied, heterosexual males.” (p. 13)

One of the challenges in studying this subject is pinpointing an accurate definition of what qualifies as discrimination, as the term tends to be quite ambiguous. (Bopp, 2008) Banton’s (1992) widely referenced definition of discrimination states that it “occurs when a person is treated differently because he or she is assigned to a category.” (p. 73) Common category assignments that are often linked with discrimination are gender, race, age, ethnicity, religion, and sexuality; among others. It is also worth adding that the term typically is used to describe *negative* treatment, rather than all differential treatment.

Though objectives of discrimination vary, and are often unclear, Banton (1992) suggested that common reasons for unequal treatment of a minority group derive from

exclusion, stratification, and on an individual basis. According to the author, exclusion is most often associated with territorial claims. Stratification is defined as the objective where members of the dominant group seek to keep those of the minority group in a “subordinate or exploited status.” (p. 77) Whereas individual discrimination aims to create a situation in which members of the minority group are less privileged than the dominant group.

Pincus (1996) qualified discrimination as when a dominant group has a “differential or harmful effect” on a minority group and identified three forms of discrimination: (1) individual, (2) institutional, and (3) structural. (p. 186) Individual discrimination occurs when a member of a dominant group intends to have a differential or harmful effect on a member of a minority group. Institutional discrimination occurs when the policies of an institution and behaviors of the people running the institution have a differential or harmful effect on a member of a minority group. Structural discrimination refers to when the policies of an institution are non-discriminatory in terms of their intentions, but do have the same differential or harmful effect on the minority group.

Discrimination, especially in the workplace setting, can be broken down into two simple categories: access and treatment. (Ilgen & Youtz, 1986; Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990) For the purposes of this study, those categories will be the construct of interest; and more specifically, the research itself will aim to explore treatment discrimination.

Treatment Discrimination

Ilgen & Youtz (1986) described two types of discrimination (with respect to minorities) that may occur in organizations: access and treatment. Access

discrimination refers to “limitations unrelated to actual or potential performance which face minority group members at the time the job is filled.” (p. 307) Whereas treatment discrimination occurs once an individual already occupies a position within an organization. (p. 308)

Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley (1990) asserted that treatment discrimination “occurs when subgroup members receive fewer rewards, resources, or opportunities on the job than they legitimately deserve on the basis of job-related criteria.” (p. 64-65) Potential causes of such differential treatment could be rater biases, lost opportunities, self-limiting behavior, or some combination of the three. (Ilgen & Youtz, 1986)

Rater biases could be intentional or unintentional tendencies by a manager that rate minority group members lower for reasons other than job performance. (Ilgen & Youtz, 1986) Rater biases could derive from (but are not limited to) previously held stereotypes or attribution effects; that is, “good performance for minorities might be attributed to external factors” such as luck. (p. 313)

While rater biases attribute differential treatment of minorities to the perceptions of a rater, lost opportunities and self-limiting behaviors could result in actual performance discrepancies between majority and minority group members. (Ilgen & Youtz, 1986) As a result of one’s minority status, opportunities may be lost that are available to members of a dominant group. These lost opportunities may include a lack of mentoring, sponsorship, and positive role models, or the assignment of routine tasks. (Greenhaus et al., 1990) The absence of such opportunities can have negative effects on job performance.

An end result of such effects is that minority group members could display self-limiting behavior; thus believing that they really are less competent than members of the majority group. (Ilgen & Youtz, 1986) This belief can have negative consequences on minority employees' motivation, abilities, or both. According to Ilgen & Youtz, (1986) "(minority employees) may be forced to choose lower status job and work assignments because of lower qualifications, or they may voluntarily choose these assignments due to an expectation of failure." (p. 327) The authors also claim that such behavior is also the most severe "because its effect on minorities would be most difficult to remove." (p. 326)

Greenhaus et al. (1990) designed a study to "examine relationships among race, organizational experiences, job performance evaluations, and career outcomes." (p. 79) The investigation found that blacks "received less favorable assessments of promotability from their supervisors, were more likely to have plateaued in their careers, and were more dissatisfied with their careers than whites." (p. 79) As a result, the authors concluded that blacks could have been subjected to treatment discrimination in that they "may be excluded from opportunities for power and integration within organizations and that such exclusion may be detrimental to their job performance." (p. 80)

Morrison & Von Glinow (1990) described how the differential treatment of women and minorities could create a "glass ceiling" that these employees are forced to confront in management settings. The authors describe this concept as "a barrier so subtle that it is transparent, yet so strong that it prevents women and minorities from moving up in the management hierarchy." (p. 200)

The authors go on to describe three possible categories of theories as to why this differential treatment exists. The first assumes that specific differences in women and minorities create deficiencies in these groups that may lead to unequal treatment in management. The second holds the majority population responsible for these inequities; suggesting that this population aims to promote the status quo to secure their position of power. Finally, the third identifies the “structural, systematic discrimination” that exists in the broader societal environment as the “root cause of differential treatment.” (p. 201)

While the term “glass ceiling” was typically studied in terms of racial and gender gaps in pay, Maume (1999) applied the concept to the area of managerial promotions. The author suggested that black women and men are often channeled into “racialized” jobs, “reserving the more visible and revenue-producing jobs for whites.” (p. 489) The results of this particular study indicated that black men received fewer and waited longer for managerial promotions than their white counterparts. Though this phenomenon was not specific to intercollegiate athletics in this particular study, it is relevant since the acquisition of a head-coaching job would qualify as a managerial promotion in the context of the coaching ranks.

The Underrepresentation of Black Coaches

Previous research has examined the underrepresentation of African Americans in coaching positions. Anderson (1993) performed a study of Division I-A football coaches and found that blacks were underrepresented in the most visible, prestigious positions and that “athletic departments still perpetuate racial discrimination through the structural patterns of position relationships.” (p. 65-66) From this study, the author concluded that while blacks have been given opportunities on the playing field, the same opportunity in “a position of dominance, remains constricted.” (p. 65-66) He also

suggested that some potential consequences of this discrimination are “career advancement, upward mobility, and career aspirations“ (p. 65-66) of black coaches in intercollegiate athletics.

Cunningham (2004) found that “African-American student-athletes view coaching as a profession in which they perceive less opportunity than do their white counterparts.” (p. 66) That is, black student-athletes view the coaching profession as one where there is a perceived glass ceiling, which could potentially dissuade those individuals from pursuing that career path as a result of the possible discrimination they would have to face.

Cunningham, Bruening, & Straub (2006) confirmed that this was also the case with assistant coaches in NCAA football and men’s basketball. The results of their study supported the notion that Black coaches would view discrimination as a barrier to obtaining a head coaching position. Further, these authors discovered two equally important concepts: first, that black basketball coaches “did not have greater occupational turnover intentions than their white counterparts” (though football coaches did); and second, that “African Americans did not differ from whites in their desire to become a head coach or their intentions to apply for such a position within the next 3 years.” (p. 410-411)

Conclusions reached by these authors clearly aim toward the need for future research on discrimination in men’s basketball coaching. Black student-athletes anticipate that discrimination is present in the coaching profession, and black assistant men’s basketball coaches perceive discrimination as a barrier to obtaining head

coaching jobs; clearly indicating that there is a degree to which discrimination is perceived by potential or current men's basketball coaches.

However, if it can be assumed that black men's basketball coaches do not intend to leave the profession at any higher rate than white coaches, and do desire head coaching positions as much as white coaches, then there must be another explanation (such as discrimination) as to why these coaches are underrepresented in the men's basketball head coaching ranks.

One alternative hypothesis presented to explain this underrepresentation has been from the perspective of human and social capital. One could argue that black coaches do not reach the same levels of success as their white counterparts because they "possess less human capital (e.g. experience, training, education) or social capital (e.g. weaker or smaller peer networks)." (Sagas & Cunningham, 2005; p. 775)

However, in a study of 328 NCAA Division I-A assistant football coaches by Sagas & Cunningham (2005), the researchers had two very compelling findings. Firstly, results showed that there were meaningful racial differences in the "career satisfaction of coaches, number of promotions received, and organizational proximity to the head coach position among coaches." Secondly, results demonstrated that these differences "could not be explained by racial differences in human and social capital, thereby providing support for the discrimination hypothesis." (p. 773)

Further, it was concluded that the combination of a lower promotion rate, with the "lower proximity level achieved by black coaches," could greatly influence the career satisfaction of these coaches. (Sagas & Cunningham, 2005) The authors linked this conclusion to Kanter's (1977) work with gender, indicating that "individuals who have

few opportunities for advancement will lower expectations, experience greater dissatisfaction, and ultimately leave a given organization or profession.” (Sagas & Cunningham, 2005; p. 790)

Kelly’s (2009) doctoral dissertation investigated the perspectives of black male coaches towards their underrepresentation in Division I athletics. The study’s research method was descriptive-qualitative and utilized face-to-face semi-structured interviews and e-mail follow-ups.

More specifically, Kelly (2009) sought to answer three research questions: (1) do black male assistant coaches feel underrepresented in Division I athletics? (2) What perspectives do black males have regarding their underrepresentation as coaches at the Division I level? And (3) what strategies are identified and considered that will help increase the number of black males in Division I coaching positions?

From Kelly’s (2009) analysis, three themes emerged. The study found that black male assistant coaches *do* feel underrepresented in Division I athletics, and that the overriding theme to justifying this feeling was described by the researcher as “how things are,” or, their perceptions of “the status quo and how things are in the coaching profession.” (p. 77) “Disadvantaged” was the theme used to describe the perspectives of these coaches regarding their underrepresentation. This theme referred to “the lack of opportunities and chances black coaches are experiencing in comparison to their white counterparts.” (p. 70) Finally, the study concluded that a “networking” theme, or “the strategies and resources available to black coaches,” (p. 70) best described the coaches’ perspectives of how to go about increasing the number of black males in Division I coaching positions.

It is also worth noting that while it was not a primary theme identified by the author, the coaches in Kelly's (2009) study described how to accept and benefit from their perceived circumstances. That is, the coaches explained how to utilize their disadvantage, the status quo itself, and their respective networks to navigate the coaching ranks. Thus, it can be assumed that while these black coaches might have found strategies to maximize their potential in the current environment, they also view the status quo as one that's treatment is discriminatory in nature.

Cunningham (2010) introduced a multilevel model in which he identified factors at the macro-level, meso-level, and micro level to further explain the underrepresentation of black coaches.

Factors at the macro-level included "those elements external to the specific athletic department but which still exert considerable influence on that entity." (Cunningham, 2010) These factors include institutionalized practices, political climate, and stakeholder expectations. Institutional racism could qualify as an institutionalized practice in that "racist ideologies that promote whites as smarter, more ethical, and better leaders than their black counterparts are continually perpetuated in sport." (p. 397; see also Coakley, 2009) The political climate also has the potential to influence the representation of minorities in and out of sport through the prevailing stances on labor, education, and individual rights. Finally, the "unique perceptions, desires, and needs" of a stakeholder group, which could be alumni, boosters, students, athletes, fans, etc., can also influence the representation of minorities at the macro-level. (Cunningham, 2010)

Meso-level factors were identified by Cunningham (2010) as those "operating in the organization, (as well as) the ways in which decisions, structures, and processes at

that level (contribute to) the underrepresentation of African-American coaches.” These factors include prejudice, discrimination, leadership stereotypes, and organizational cultures. The author drew on social psychology and sociological literature to distinguish prejudice from discrimination: “prejudice is a psychological term focusing on people’s attitudes and beliefs while discrimination has sociological foundations and is concerned with people’s behaviors.” (p. 399; see also Abercrombie et al., 2000) The author went on to allude to leadership stereotypes (as they relate to race) and an organization’s culture (as it relates to diversity) as other meso-level factors.

Cunningham had previously collaborated on a study examining whether sport-related stereotypes “influenced promotability ratings of applicants differing by race and qualification levels.” (Sartore & Cunningham, 2006) The results of that study indicated that indeed, sport-related stereotypes did influence the white raters in their assessment of the qualifications of black coaches. This was an especially significant finding, since the overwhelming majority of power-yielding personnel in college athletics are white.

Finally, Cunningham (2010) described the influence of micro-level factors (that is, a focus on the coaches themselves) on the underrepresentation of black coaches. These factors could include black coaches’ head coaching expectations (whether they think they can/will be head coaches), head coaching intentions (whether they desire to be head coaches), or turnover intentions (whether they intend on leaving the profession altogether).

Discrimination in Men’s Basketball Coaching

To date, three studies have specifically targeted the issue of discrimination in NCAA coaching using samples of Division I men’s basketball coaches.

Cunningham, Sagas, & Ashley (2001) examined the commitment and turnover intentions among NCAA Division I assistant basketball coaches. The researchers found that while black coaches were “more socialized to the coaching profession” (p. 142-143) than their white counterparts, they also envisioned themselves leaving the profession sooner, and at a greater rate. From these results, the authors concluded that black coaches either “do not view coaching as a principal vocational interest” (p. 143) and/or have experienced (or anticipate experiencing) discrimination in the profession.

Sagas & Cunningham (2004) conducted a study to examine the prevalence of treatment discrimination in college coaching and its “impact on the career success of assistant basketball coaches.” (p. 76) The authors focused their analysis on the extent to which race contributed to the formation of ingroup and outgroup memberships, (Ilgen & Youtz, 1986) which could result in treatment discrimination. (Sagas & Cunningham, 2004) The authors asserted that treatment discrimination may “limit the mobility and success of racial minority coaches and also contribute to their absence from leadership positions.” (p. 78) In addition, they suggested that institutional racism; that is, the “unintended consequence of (the prevailing structural system) is likely generating a lack of opportunity for blacks in leadership positions” as well. (p. 77; see also Abercrombie, Hill, & Turner, 2000)

Though the data from their study could not conclude that ingroups and outgroups were a “function of a coach’s race,” and thus could not affirm the presence of treatment discrimination, Sagas & Cunningham (2004) did recommend that future research be conducted to “explore other potential sources and types of treatment discrimination.” (p. 84) Further, it cannot be concluded that treatment discrimination does not exist in the

Division I men's college basketball profession solely based on the fact that race was not identified as a determinant of ingroup and outgroup membership in this particular study.

Cunningham & Sagas (2005) used a similar sample of men's basketball coaches to investigate "the representation of racial minorities in intercollegiate coaching positions." (p. 148) The authors focused primarily on access discrimination, claiming that the subject was "particularly salient in the context of higher education." (p. 149) From a theoretical standpoint, the study's framework relied on prior research of homologous reproduction, self-categorization, and access discrimination. Homologous reproduction refers to Kanter's (1977) theory that "persons most similar to managers in terms of social and physical characteristics are most likely to be promoted." (Cunningham & Sagas, 2005; p. 151) Self-categorization is a person's need to "classify themselves and others into social categories" in order to maintain a high level of self-esteem. (p. 151; see also Turner et al., 1987)

The results of Cunningham & Sagas' (2005) study supported hypotheses associated with both the homologous reproduction theory (Kanter, 1977) and self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987) in that "attitudes and behaviors toward ingroup members are likely to be more positive than those directed toward outgroup members." (Cunningham & Sagas, 2005; p. 157) Further, the authors also found that "the proportion of black assistant coaches is nearly half that of the potential pool of black coaches among the staffs with white head coaches," (p. 157) and thus concluded that access discrimination was present in order to explain this phenomenon.

Though this study could justify the underrepresentation of black assistant coaches on staffs with a white head coach, it did not directly address the

underrepresentation of black head coaches in collegiate men's basketball. It could be implied that because of the underrepresentation of black assistant coaches on white head coaches' staffs, combined with the fact that the overwhelming majority of current head coaches are white, that this trend limits the available labor pool of potential black head coaches. However, this particular dynamic cannot explain the persisting gap between the percentage of black assistant coaches and the percentage of black head coaches.

It should be further noted that all of these studies were quantitative research projects that surveyed three separate sample pools of Division I assistant men's basketball coaches. (Cunningham et al., 2001; Sagas & Cunningham, 2004; Cunningham & Sagas, 2005) Thus, a qualitative study of discrimination, featuring interviews of Division I head men's basketball coaches, could fill a gap in the current literature as it relates to discrimination in men's basketball coaching.

Focus of the Study

The focus of this study was to explore three questions: (1) To what extent is treatment discrimination a contributing factor to the underrepresentation of black head coaches in Division I men's college basketball? (2) If treatment discrimination does exist in this context, in which way(s) does it manifest itself? (3) If treatment discrimination does exist in this context, what advice or strategies can the participants offer to reduce its prevalence?

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was, first and foremost, to explore the extent to which treatment discrimination is a contributing factor to the underrepresentation of black head coaches in Division I men's basketball. If treatment discrimination was perceived to exist, two other questions emerged as well: (1) in which ways does it manifest itself, and (2) what advice or strategies might the participants offer to reduce its prevalence?

This chapter includes explanations of (a) participants and sampling, (b) research design, (c) phenomenology, (d) development of interview questions, (e) data analysis, and (f) trustworthiness.

Participants and Sampling

Criterion sampling was used for this study. (Patton, 1990; Kelly, 2009) The sample used for this study fit the following three criteria: (a) male, (b) black, and (c) are a current or former Division I men's basketball head coach. A list of fifteen coaches that fit the criteria was generated, and seven coaches were willing and available to participate in the study.

The aforementioned criteria were chosen for specific reasons. Black male coaches were chosen because if treatment discrimination does contribute to the underrepresentation of black head coaches, one would assume that those coaches would be more likely to recognize or perceive it than their white counterparts. Head coaches (rather than assistant coaches) were chosen because it can be assumed that they have more experience in the coaching ranks; including having pursued and obtained head coaching positions. Also, if treatment discrimination is perceived to exist,

it could manifest itself once a person has obtained a head coaching position as well as prior to that point in time. If that were the case, an interview of a current assistant coach that has never been a head coach would not be able to capture that dynamic. Table 3-1 illustrates the makeup of the seven participants, including the pseudonym assigned to each participant. Details beyond each coach’s position and age were withheld due to the visible and recognizable nature of NCAA Division I men’s basketball coaches in the interest of protection the anonymity of their participation.

Table 3-1. Description of Participants

Pseudonym	Position	Age
Bill	Former Head Coach	Over 45
Danny	Former Head Coach	Over 45
Dennis	Former Head Coach	Over 45
Jerry	Former Head Coach	Over 45
Kevin	Current Head Coach	Under 45
Larry	Current Head Coach	Under 45
Robert	Current Head Coach	Under 45

Saturation was reached after the sixth interview. While each participant offered unique and insightful stories and perspectives, there were similar trends as it related to treatment discrimination that were consistent across each of the interviews. Because the purpose of the study was to investigate treatment discrimination specifically, I chose to end the interview stage of my research and move along to the next step in the process.

Limitations did exist regarding the participants and sample. First, I knew some of the participants personally, and they were aware of my area of research and perspective on the subject. Second, most participants were a part of a similar “coaching circle” (or network), and thus could have shared similar thoughts and sentiments towards the subjects being discussed. To reduce the impact of these limitations, coaches from a diversity of coaching backgrounds were incorporated into the study, and coaches that I did not know personally made up the majority of the interview subjects.

Research Design

According to Edwards & Skinner, (2009) “in sport management research, using more than one method to study the same phenomenon has the potential to strengthen the validity of the results.” (p. 7) To date, no published research project has done a qualitative study of discrimination in NCAA Division I men’s basketball coaching. Nor has any research on discrimination in intercollegiate athletics used current and former head coaches as the participants in the study; regardless of sport. As a result, this study is capable of bringing forth fresh perspectives on the subject of discrimination in sport.

Black males that are current or former head coaches at the NCAA Division I level in men’s basketball were interviewed in this study. According to Charmaz, (2003) “interviewing is a flexible, emergent technique; ideas and issues emerge during the interview, and the interviewer can immediately pursue those leads.” (p. 312) These interviews were semi-structured and exploratory in nature, and thus allowed the participants to dictate the direction of the research, rather than the creating and testing hypotheses. Further, assuming I created an environment of openness and honesty, the participants could have possibly described dynamics that may not have been otherwise

known, thought of, or previously researched. The seven interviews ranged from 20 to 68 minutes in length.

Because the participants described past experiences they have had in their coaching lives, the data gathered relied on their “retrospective recall.” General management researchers have often criticized this approach, questioning the accuracy of the data. “Inaccurate recall in retrospective reporting can result from inappropriate rationalizations, oversimplifications, faulty post hoc attributions and simple lapses of memory.” (Cardinal, Glick, & Miller, 1997; p. 189; see also: Golden, 1992; Huber & Power, 1985; Jackson & Wolfe, 1987) Further, participants could also attempt to “present a socially desirable image of themselves or their firms.” (p. 189)

However, Miller et al. (1997) reassessed the methodology and deemed it “adequately reliable and valid.” (p. 190) These authors suggested methods for improving the validity of this type of data collection. First, researchers should diversify their sources of participants so that no one account carries too much weight in the process of recalling an event. Second, researchers should allude to facts or specifics when asking interview questions, rather than asking ambiguous or open-ended questions that could lead to less accurate responses. Third, researchers should not ask questions about events too far removed from the time of the interview. Finally, researchers should encourage their participants to provide accurate information. All suggestions by these authors as it related to retrospective recall were utilized in this particular study.

Phenomenology

According to Patton, (2002) “a phenomenological study is one that focuses on descriptions of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they

experience.” (p. 107) Also according to this author, there are two implications of a phenomenological study. First, this type of study seeks to understand a person or persons’ experience and how they perceive the world. Second, phenomenology requires that the researcher gain an understanding of a given phenomenon (in this case, treatment discrimination) as close to another person’s experiences as possible.

According to Patton, (2002) the best way for a researcher to gain this level of understanding is through in-depth interviews and/or participant observation. For the purpose of this study, in-depth interviews were conducted. Participant observation would not have been as practical in this particular case, since it can be assumed that if treatment discrimination were to be occurring, that phenomenon would occur over a long period of time and would not be easily captured in short stints of observation. Nonetheless, these interviews sought to capture if and how black coaches experienced treatment discrimination in NCAA Division I men’s basketball—“how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others.” (p. 104)

Phenomenology was the chosen focus for this study for three reasons. First, the study was specifically investigating treatment discrimination (a phenomenon) in NCAA Division I men’s basketball. Second, the study was to be exploratory in nature, and phenomenology allowed me to capture the existence or non-existence of the given phenomenon through semi-structured interviews. Finally, phenomenology seeks to explore “how human beings make sense of experience and transform experience into consciousness, both individually and as shared meaning.” (Patton, 2002; p. 104) Thus, individual experiences of the interviewees could identify trends and commonalities that

can be generalized into a shared understanding of treatment discrimination in NCAA Division I men's basketball coaching.

Development of Interview Questions

Each interview was broken up into five sections: (1) Introduction, (2) Introductory Questions, (3) Framing of Treatment Discrimination, (4) Treatment Discrimination Questions, and (5) Closing Questions. It should also be known that while this format initially was what guided each interview, it was subject to change based on the relevance of feedback in each interview.

The interview started with a brief introduction thanking the interviewee for his participation and assuring the anonymity of the interview. Introductory questions followed. The purpose of these questions was to set the appropriate stage for the interview, and more importantly, to create a trusting, open environment for the interviewee.

From there, I framed treatment discrimination so that the interviewee had an understanding of the term and its implications. Choosing whether or not to frame treatment discrimination was a difficult decision, but ultimately, it proved to allow for responses that were more focused around the intended subject.

For the purpose of this study, types of treatment discrimination were broken up into four categories: fewer rewards, fewer resources, fewer responsibilities, and fewer opportunities. (Greenhaus et al., 1990) While this was the initial intent, other themes did emerge from the data and are outlined in the data and results section.

The majority of the interview focused around treatment discrimination and if/how the interviewee has experienced it. Each interviewee was asked specifically about each stage in their coaching career, and whether they perceived there to be fewer rewards,

resources, responsibilities, or opportunities at that particular stage. It seemed as if each interviewee tended to focus on a specific period of time where the he perceived the most treatment discrimination to have occurred, so each stage of the participant's career was not investigated with the same depth. It was my intention to allow each participant to guide the direction of the interview based on his responses.

After the participant was asked about his career experiences, he was asked a few questions that are more broad and reflective in nature. These questions attempted to get the participant to synthesize his perspectives and experiences. This was also the portion of the interview that the participant had the opportunity to offer advice or suggestions to reduce the prevalence of treatment discrimination in the men's basketball coaching ranks (if in fact he perceived it to exist). This aspect of the interview seemed to be the most engaging to the majority of the interviewees. They were as passionate about envisioning a solution as they were in identifying the problem.

Data Analysis

Recordings were transcribed at the conclusion of each interview, and I kept detailed, reflective notes after each individual session. According to Edwards and Skinner, (2009) all new pieces of data that are collected are to be compared with all previous data. It is through this process that theoretical concepts emerged. Analyzing the data occurred in repeated stages: (1) coding, (2) memoing, and (3) a re-evaluation of the interview structure/questions.

Open coding, which puts data into as many categories as possible, was used in the analysis process. (Edwards & Skinner, 2009; see also, Glazer, 1978) While other types of coding were considered, I felt as if this strategy was best for a qualitative study

that was to be exploratory in nature. Open coding allowed for a great deal of flexibility, which was essential in a study that could return such a broad range of results.

Once an interview was coded, I wrote memos as a reflective practice that connects the data to theory. "The analysis, through the use of memos can be justified because it is grounded in the data." (Edwards & Skinner, 2009; p. 341) Memos, according to Glaser, (1978) are ideas that may strike the researcher in the coding process that can connect those concepts to theory.

Following the process of memoing, I reflected upon the study as it moved forward. It was at this point that I made adjustments to the interview structure and/or questions as I saw fit. Only few adjustments were made to the structure of each interview, but the biggest adjustment was spending less time talking about the coach's path to becoming a head coach and more time focusing specifically on the research subject. The first interview, as a result, was the longest in duration because much of the beginning of the interview was spent discussing the coach's path rather than investigating treatment discrimination. The goal of each of the interviews was to set a stage for open and honest dialogue, and then directly address the research subject shortly thereafter.

The process of interviewing, coding, memoing, and reflection of the interview structure was repeated until the data was "saturated." According to Edwards and Skinner, (2009) theoretical saturation is reached when: (1) "no new or relevant data seem to emerge regarding a category," (2) a category reaches a satisfactory level of depth and development, and (3) "the relationships among categories are well established and validated." (p. 341; see also Strauss & Corbin, 1998)

Trustworthiness

During and after the coding process, I consulted with two outside experts to analyze the data that I gathered. Much of the results of this qualitative study relied on my personal analysis and interpretations. Including outside perspectives in this process brought fresh perspectives of people who are familiar with the project and have conducted similar research in the past. Further, this strategy checked and balanced my personal biases that exist on the subject of treatment discrimination in coaching.

CHAPTER 4 DATA AND RESULTS

Seven qualitative interviews were conducted with current or former NCAA Division I head coaches who are black. Descriptions of each coach's career path and personal information are general in nature to protect the anonymity of the coaches' identities. Pseudonyms were used for all names of the participants.

Description of Coaches

The seven coaches all came from different backgrounds and took unique career paths to their head coaching jobs and/or current positions. Five of the seven coaches were from the east coast, one was from the west coast, and one was from the Midwest. All seven played basketball in high school and college. Three coaches were 45 years old or younger, and four coaches were 45 years old or older.

All seven coaches entered the coaching profession in entry-level positions, such as administrative assistants or assistant coaches. The coaches each spent a minimum of ten years in such positions, and their head coaching experience ranged from one year to ten years as Division I head coaches. Three coaches held Division I head coaching positions, and four coaches held Division I assistant coaching positions at the time of their interviews.

Emerging Themes

Results from the interview process are presented in detail and include various direct quotes from the coaches to support each theme. Themes were organized into three general categories: (1) treatment discrimination, (2) access discrimination, and (3) institutional discrimination. Each category included multiple themes that specifically addressed the nature of discrimination that was perceived. Treatment and access

discrimination were a natural fit for categories because nearly all types of discriminatory behavior described by the participants fit into one of those two categories. A third category, institutional discrimination, which viewed discrimination more broadly, was added due to the prevalence with which it was directly addressed in the responses of the participants.

An additional category was addressed at the end of the interview and asked the participants to offer potential solutions to the issue of underrepresentation in men's basketball coaching; and advice they would give to younger black coaches to help them deal with the various dynamics that may exist as obstacles to their success. This category is entitled, (4) Solutions and advice.

Treatment Discrimination

The most prevalent data that emerged from this study fell into the category of treatment discrimination, which was to be expected because of the focus of the study. Questions to each participant focused on this specific topic and answers reflected this line of questioning. Participants were asked specifically if they had received fewer rewards, resources, or opportunities based on their race. (Greenhaus et al., 1990) Seven themes emerged within this category: (1) Recruiting, (2) Inner City Expert, (3) X's and O's, (4) Benefit of the Doubt, (5) Quotas, (6) Media, and (7) Resources.

Recruiting

The responsibilities delegated to the men's basketball coaching staff at the NCAA Division I level are many and are diverse. A coaching staff must focus on areas such as game preparation, practice planning, player development, communication with members of the campus community, alumni relations, administrative responsibilities, recruiting, fundraising, opponent scouting, film study and handling of the media, to

name a few. In order for a person to be an effective head coach, they must be skilled with the versatility to be adequate in all areas of the program necessary for team success.

Participants in the study perceived there to be racial discrimination in how those responsibilities are delegated to black coaches; especially when they are assistants. Though the extent to which this discrimination was described varied from coach to coach, all seven participants acknowledged an imbalance in the delegation of those tasks. An assistant coach receiving less exposure to one or more of those areas can have a profound effect on that person's ability to exhibit readiness for head coaching positions and/or that person's ability to effectively carry out the given task(s) when promoted to a head coaching position.

The area of recruiting seemed to be the most prevalent task delegated to black coaches when they were assistants; and often the solitary nature that this task was assigned could have indirectly inhibited the assistant coaches' ability to grow and develop in other areas of their profession; thus leaving them underprepared in those other areas which are necessary to obtaining head coaching positions and sustaining success as head coaches.

Two coaches, Dennis and Bill, both of whom have spent over twenty years in the coaching profession, described this dynamic in the past tense, suggesting that the stigma of black coaches being hired to recruit players exclusively was a thing of the past. Dennis said, "black coaches back in the day were perceived as being seen as the recruiter." Bill, describing when he was younger, stated that "there was a treatment or a stigma attached to black assistant coaches because they were looked at in a box to

recruit the players, particularly inner city players, and you take care of them. You don't really coach, you don't really know how to coach.”

Other participants identified recruiting as a skill currently synonymous with the black assistant coach. Kevin, who is currently an NCAA Division I head coach, best sums up this notion:

I think in general there is an assumption that the black assistant that you bring in particularly (for a white head coach) is going to get players. And his primary responsibility will be recruiting and has to be recruiting. That is not always the case but I think that in a lot of places and situations that is the case.

Former NCAA Division I head coach, and current assistant coach, Danny, also asserts that most black coaches are hired on the strength of their recruiting “with the hope that they have the whole package.” He adds that, “if there’s going to be something in the package missing, it ain’t going to be recruiting.” Current NCAA Division I head coach, Robert adds: “(the black assistant) just takes care of recruiting” and is encouraged not to worry about anything else.

Inner City Expert

Given that the majority of NCAA Division I men’s basketball players are black; it is also widely assumed that the majority of these players grow up and come from urban environments. Whether or not this is truly the case does not change the fact that this perception exists. As a result, black coaches, specifically assistant coaches, tend to take on informal roles as “inner city experts” within their basketball staffs. This notion also emerged from interviews with multiple participants in the study.

Jerry, a former NCAA Division I head coach and current assistant coach, described a dynamic that existed at a Midwestern school he previously worked at where a white assistant coach was more likely to recruit a “country boy” and he was more

likely to recruit “inner city” players. He added that a head coach might feel that “there’s a particular person that can identify with a kid a little bit better.” Danny also described a similar set of circumstances:

“In general, you’re not going to have any staff that’s just got all white guys going in trying to recruit black kids. So, a lot of guys are getting these opportunities because every staff requires that... there’s no rule, but an unwritten rule is that if you’re going to have a staff trying to recruit kids from (the inner city) then you better have somebody on the staff that looks like them; that they can relate to.”

Kevin, who focused heavily on perception in his answers to many of the interview questions, also addressed the issue of black coaches recruiting black players. He said, “there’s an assumption and there is probably some truth to it that who can relate and communicate with black kids? Well a black guy. As opposed to a white guy.” He then connected this statement back to the perception that there’s a “notion that this black guy is kind of in the slot on your staff; he’s kind of the recruiter.”

Jerry also added that this type of perception could lead to expectations that are associated with the hiring of a black assistant coach: “There are probably different expectations from (being a black assistant coach); no matter what. In terms of going into the inner cities, in terms of dealing with some (grassroots coaches) and that stuff in hopes that those people feel a little more comfortable with you.”

X’s and O’s

To this point, the focus has primarily been on the *additional* responsibilities that are often assigned to black assistant coaches, potentially because of their race. However, being assigned the (important) responsibilities of recruiting and being an

“inner city expert” could also leave black assistant coaches void of other tasks and responsibilities that potentially lead to opportunities, rewards, resources, and eventually, the necessary groundwork to become a head coach.

One area that seemed to be a focal point of the participants’ when speaking about responsibilities *not* assigned to black assistant coaches because of their race was “X’s and O’s.”

“X and O” competency could broadly be described as basketball intellect. More specifically, tasks that could fall in the category of “X’s and O’s” are game preparation, practice planning, player development, opponent scouting, and film study to name some. Needless to say, it can be assumed that such skills are highly valued by sport administrators trying to select a head coach to hire and translate directly to the success of a head coach once he has been hired. If these skills were underdeveloped in black assistant coaches as a result of their race, it would have hugely negative implications on their professional development and could help to explain the underrepresentation of black coaches in men’s basketball at the NCAA Division I level.

Kevin recognizes the association between black coaches being strong recruiters (and thus, weaker “X and O” coaches) as a bias. He stated that this bias towards black assistant and head coaches is a result of one’s view that “their makeup is as recruiters and motivators...as intense guys. And the white coaches are strategists, tacticians, and X and O guys. Grinders. They outwork people. And I think that bias is really prevalent in our business.”

Jerry echoed this sentiment by saying that, “I still think there’s a lot of stereotypes where I think people will automatically think because I’m hired (I’m a recruiter); I’m not a

coach, probably not doing much X-ing and O-ing at all; talking basketball.” Later in his interview, after describing some of the other obstacles associated with getting hired as a head coach, he added, “then you take into account that there’s a perception that African Americans are not good at X and O’s.”

Robert and Larry, both of whom spent over ten years as assistant coaches before landing head coaching opportunities felt the impact of this perceived stereotype at a personal level. Robert felt as if he gets “pigeon-holed as a black coach, a lot in the instance of being the recruiter, you know, a guy that can go get players, or a guy that can relate to the players, but not being able to be a guy who can like, do the X’s and O’s.” Larry described a similar anecdote: “I can’t say that I always felt that people viewed me as... hey, that guy is going to be a great head coach one day; wow, that guy, he’s very professional, he’s a really good coach. I think they saw (me) as, you know, energetic, motivated, but not looking at the substance.”

If the perception that black coaches are capable recruiters and/or “inner city experts,” but are less capable of the “X’s and O’s” than their white peers, does in fact exist, that would certainly qualify as discrimination. If in fact this discrimination exists based on the responsibilities assigned to black assistant coaches, it would help to clarify the underrepresentation of black head coaches at the NCAA Division I level. It would also have huge implications on the following sub-themes of treatment discrimination: fewer opportunities, fewer rewards, and fewer resources.

Benefit of the Doubt

When analyzing the underrepresentation of black NCAA Division I men’s basketball head coaches, one must evaluate the opportunities that this category of

coaches has access to. After all, in management and business, the opportunity to be hired and the opportunity to grow and develop in your profession have huge implications on an individual's success. The participants in the study did perceive there to be fewer opportunities for assistant and head coaches that are black.

Multiple coaches asserted that in various circumstances throughout their careers, they were not given the same "benefit of the doubt" as their white peers when it came to competency in their jobs as coaches. "Benefit of the doubt," though tough to measure, can be seen as an opportunity for a given coach; and thus, lack thereof can be seen as an obstacle.

Jerry, who seemingly had the strongest feelings associated with this notion, stated, "a white person, at times, and it's not always this way, does not have to totally prove himself. If you're black, you have to totally prove yourself. Totally prove yourself from being a good person, having the Lord in your life, treating people the right way, being articulate, dressing the right way, winning games, strategizing..."

Jerry then recounted stories he had heard about "white coaches just ripping players; personal attacks" involving statements that he would not say to "(his) worst enemy." He then hypothesized what would or could happen to a black coach if he conducted himself in a similar manner or used similar language; insinuating that he would not be judged on the same set of criteria as a white coach.

Bill echoed this sentiment, stating that one "can attribute that to a mindset and that mindset is that treatment, what you're talking about where you're not getting the same benefit of the doubt, you're not going to get the same set of circumstances because of your color."

Danny offered a potential reason for this type of treatment: “I do think that guys who do get the opportunity are up against the perception that they’re still players, or they still have a player’s mentality... and they don’t get it, so to speak; can’t see the whole picture.”

Robert detailed a specific instance, from his time as an assistant coach, when he felt as if a lack of the benefit of the doubt was evident. In college, he had majored in mathematics and was thus highly qualified to deal with numbers. He stated that, “I dealt (with budget issues) a lot. And so we were going through the budget (as a staff), and it was almost like a surprise (to the other staff members). You know what I mean? (laughs) The fact that I was, you know, doing that and I was qualified to do so.”

Larry recounted a similar situation when he was an assistant coach after he left a sport administrator a voicemail. The sport administrator “told (Larry’s head coach) that he thought I had to become a little more professional because my language was a little ‘streety’. And I think I said something like, ‘how are you doing my man?’” Obviously, in reference to this story, treatment discrimination can extend beyond the basketball staff and reach other areas of the athletic department or with other stakeholders; as Larry also described:

“There have been times where, you know, you walk into a room, you’re around alums, and people just are not comfortable necessarily talking to you. You get that. It’s just so many things because it’s a white environment; everywhere you go it’s a white environment. You might be the only African American in the room.”

Quotas

A possible way to explain this type of treatment may lie in the circumstances under which a black assistant coach is hired. A common topic mentioned amongst many of the interview participants was the theme of “quotas.” Though it is not formally required that basketball staffs have non-white representation, it is clearly an emphasis, as over 95% of all staffs in NCAA Division I men’s basketball have at least one non-white coaching member. Kevin described this in a most simple manner: “I think there’s been a pressure and an emphasis that there has to be black representation on the staff.”

If indeed informal quotas do exist, and black assistant coaches are hired under these circumstances, the practice of hiring a person simply to fulfill a quota could lead to fewer future opportunities when compared to coaches who are hired on the merit of their qualifications.

Multiple other participants addressed the issue of quotas during the course of their interviews. Robert believes that, “every, you know, white coach that gets the job feels like it’s a necessity to have a black assistant coach. I don’t know if it’s more so like they want to hire that person, or they feel like it’s a necessity.”

According to Bill, “the numbers may not be in (a black assistant coach’s) favor, so you need to be mindful of that and understand that sometimes someone may make a decision that may not be based on who you are, or your preparation, or those things, (but your hiring) may be to satisfy a quota or something like that.”

Kevin asserted that had he not been black, he would not have been hired as an assistant coach because of these informal quotas: “There’s been at least one job that I have gotten that there is no way I would’ve gotten the job if I was white and there’s no

way I would've gotten the job if they didn't need a black guy. If he had a black guy on staff there's no way I would've gotten the job."

Jerry tackled the issue in a direct manner as well: "getting in this business from a general standpoint, we all know that when we get a job, we are the black assistant. There's no way of getting around it." He later continued on the subject by stating that white head coaches believe that they "need a minority guy on my staff just to kind of keep the rainbow right."

Jerry expanded on the issue of quotas by expressing his belief that quotas create a great deal of competition, and even in-fighting amongst black coaches. He said that black assistants will act as if, "I'm trying to get your spot. There's only one spot. I'm going to get your spot." He also added that he felt as if white coaches do a better job of "looking out for one another" within the profession.

Not only did participants of the study acknowledge the existence of quotas, but they also offered opinions of what those quotas could mean for black assistant coaches. Most coaches acknowledged that there were positive outcomes from these informal quotas; especially when speaking about the opportunities that they may present.

Danny, in particular, focused on positive outcomes: "once in the door, the opportunity exists to prove your worth." He later added, "I'll take the job, but (I am) not just going there to recruit. I'm going to work my ass off recruiting, but I'm going to be a head coach one day. You know, that was my mindset."

Jerry, though focusing on the downside of quotas, also added that, "The bottom line is: get your foot in the door. Once you get your foot in the door you've got to make it happen; especially for a minority to get your foot in the door, it's really hard."

Kevin also summed up the positive outcomes of quotas:

Let's say a black guy is hired as a recruiter and that's kind of the niche that that head coach sees you in as you're hired. I think in most situations, you can earn your way into more responsibility and you can earn your way out of that role or that title or that assumption. And I think that's good. I think that happened for me in a specific situation I was in. I was probably hired as a guy... hey you just get some players. Don't worry, we'll do the coaching... but I think I kind of, in time, I worked my way into having more responsibility.

Black assistant coaches not receiving the same “benefit of the doubt” as their white peers clearly presents a lack of opportunity in regards to their treatment in the profession. Whether or not this derives from an unspoken quota was not a direct result of the study. However, it is clear that these quotas are weighted into the discussion of treatment discrimination, be it a negative or a positive. In the cases when these quotas are negative, they can leave black assistant coaches with fewer opportunities than a white assistant coach who was hired on merit. If in fact this dynamic exists in some situations, it may also contribute to the explanation of the underrepresentation of black head coaches in NCAA Division I men's basketball.

Media

Multiple participants made reference to the role that the media plays in regards to differential treatment between black and white coaches. Dennis stated very clearly that he believes that “(the members of the media) shape the perception.”

Athletic and university administrators are under much scrutiny when making major coaching hires at the NCAA Division I level. Often times, the perception of the hire is of great importance, especially with the various stakeholders of these highly visible, highly profitable sports. Thus, the role of media in helping to shape perception becomes an advantage for some coaches and a disadvantage for others. Some

participants in the study made reference to the media while describing perceived discriminatory behavior.

Kevin believes that, “there’s a definite bias on the part of the media more than anybody (else).” He continued that the media “like to simplify things” and put people into “boxes.”

He went on to explain a specific situation that involved the media’s portrayal of him. A member of the media was describing the coach from the opposing team, who was white, by saying that he is “unbelievable at preparing his team when he has four or more days to prepare.” He contrasted that statement by stating that, “(The media) never say that about black coaches, you know, they just don’t. They say the (black coach) is a great motivator, or (the black coach) is fiery, intense.”

Other coaches made similar contrasts. Jerry compared two famous head coaches (one being black, one being white) whose teams used very similar strategies and contrasted the way in which the media portrayed each coach. He said the media called the strategy “park ball or rat race ball with (the famous black coach), and (the famous white coach) was doing the exact same thing with (his team). They were doing the same thing.”

Larry stated that, “on TV, for whatever reason, you don’t really hear there are a lot of great African-American coaches out there. You don’t hear that. I didn’t hear that with (famous black head coach), ya know. It’s just not something that people really talk about.

Dennis made reference to a situation when, “if (the black coach) is a winning black coach, (the media says) that he gets good athletes.” He concluded that, “it’s so

blatant.” He also believes that whom major networks choose to be analysts on their shows can shape the perception of black and white coaches. He explained an instance during the NCAA men’s basketball tournament when he was watching a major network’s coverage and three white coaches were breaking down film and serving as experts. He said, “it was almost like, you mean to tell me you couldn’t find one or two black coaches to be on that panel talking X’s and O’s and talking basketball and breaking down film and stuff like that?”

If in fact portrayal of coaches in the media can have a real impact on the conscious and subconscious perceptions of coaches, and if in fact those perceptions are biased in favor of white coaches, then it is probable that treatment discrimination exists. The positive portrayal of a coach in the media is in fact a reward if it can lead to future opportunities for that coach. Thus, if black coaches were portrayed in a less positive way via the media, they would be receiving fewer rewards than their white peers.

Resources

When asked if they received fewer rewards because they were black coaches, participants did not perceive there to be as much discrimination as some of the other categories. However, in the cases that it was addressed, the participants viewed it as a theme that emerged *while or after* they were head coaches. This is unique in that much of what was stated about the subject of treatment discrimination was set during earlier points in the careers of black coaches; specifically, when they were assistant coaches.

Dennis, a former head coach, focused on the circumstances under which black coaches *have* been hired. He believes that, “rarely does a black coach get a real good job. You know, ‘we’ll take a chance on a black coach when the situation is really bad.’”

He then went on to name three examples of black coaches who took over programs who were under turmoil and lacked previous success at the time they were hired.

Jerry, who is also a former head coach who was fired from his previous head-coaching job, stated that, “right now, they pay the staff (at his previous school) twice as much as I paid my assistants. And (the current head coach) is making twice as much as what I made.

Though these opinions were isolated, they still present interesting perspectives that contribute to the larger conversation about treatment discrimination in NCAA Division I men’s basketball coaching. If black coaches are more likely to be considered for jobs that involve programs whose current organizational culture is not conducive to success, that would inherently give them fewer resources for future success. If black coaches are given less money, in particular for their program (or in Jerry’s case, his staff), then that too would give them fewer resources for success. Under circumstances in which black head coaches are given fewer resources to run their respective programs because of their race, treatment discrimination exists.

Access Discrimination

Though the purpose of this study was to specifically explore the category of treatment discrimination in NCAA Division I men’s basketball coaching, the participants also brought aspects of access discrimination to light. Specifically, the participants focused on race as a level of comfort (homologous reproduction theory) and chances of getting re-hired after losing one’s job.

Comfort

Bill, who rather than focusing on his individual experiences, answered the interview questions from a bigger picture lens, stated the following:

The other part which I focus in a little bit more is race as a level of comfort. We all grow up in our households, and the majority of people, their households, in a society, most importantly around family, friends, other people that you're comfortable with and that, in a lot of cases, is people that look like you. So when it comes to a hiring practice, particularly when you have the responsibility of hiring someone to care for a program, a team a this, or that, most people hire on comfort. And the people they're most comfortable with a lot of times are people who look like them.

Bill, and other participants in the study that focused on the theme of "comfort," clearly aligns with Kanter's (1977) homologous reproduction theory. Put simply, Dennis added, "I think for the most part, people are comfortable hiring people they are comfortable with." In some way, shape, or form, every participant in the study acknowledged comfort as a factor in hiring practices for coaching positions.

Kevin stated that, "if you had more black (athletic directors), if you had more black presidents (of colleges and universities), you'd have more black coaches. There's no doubt about it." Meanwhile, Robert tied the issue of comfort to geography. He changed assistant coaching jobs at one point in his career because he felt as if "people are just a lot more open in the south (than they are in the Midwest) to having African-American head coaches." He attributed this to the "demographic makeup of the south compared to the Midwest."

However, the participants did not only acknowledge comfort as a factor among those making hiring decisions, they also addressed the relationship between "comfort" and the stakeholders of the college or university's basketball program. For example, Larry made the statement that, "you're in a meeting, you're an African American, and there are six white alums... I can't tell you that they're all accepting of... they're all accepting of who you are."

Bill stated that, “decision making, recruiting, everything else that goes into the public: the media, the athletic director, the whole university feeling comfortable, if you will, with who’s leading their program.” Larry added that, “the powers that be are trying to project the image for their basketball program and they’re thinking, ‘hey, if this guy, when he’s out in the community, how is he going to be perceived? What are alums going to think when he goes to the podium, how is he going to be able to raise money? I believe a lot of the administration are looking at those things as much as they are looking at whether he can win or lose basketball games.”

Kevin, taking it a step further, also highlighted that the race of the previous coach has something to do with the willingness of an athletic program to hire a black coach. He said, “I think particularly when the last coach was black and he was not successful and he was fired, there is a definite discrimination against potential replacements that are black.”

Re-hiring

In addition to Kevin’s previous quote, two coaches, Dennis and Jerry, also addressed the potential importance of whether or not a black coach has been fired, and the negative impact that may have on his ability to be hired again.

Dennis stated that if you “go back three or four years, the African-American coaches that have been fired” have not been re-hired for a different job. He then contrasted that there are more white coaches that have been re-hired under the same circumstances. He also brought up an example of a white coach that had been given a second opportunity despite previous behavior that is clearly not conducive to the culture in higher education. He then added, “I can’t imagine how a black coach would ever recover from something like that.”

Jerry also stated that, “there’s a lot of guys that I know that were head coaches (and got fired) that come back as assistants that have never been back” to head coaching positions.

It is important to highlight that though a coach being fired in his past could be seen as a negative characteristic of his resume, regardless of race, both of these coaches that addressed the theme did so while contrasting black coaches to white coaches from similar circumstances.

Though the study did not intend to investigate access discrimination, one can clearly see the relevance of the theme to building a greater understanding of the underrepresentation of black head coaches at the NCAA Division I level. Further, mentions of access discrimination provide greater context for understanding previous data that related directly to treatment discrimination.

Institutional Discrimination

According to Cunningham, (2010) institutionalized practices are a macro-level explanation for the under-representation of black head coaches. He stated that, “activities become institutionalized when, as a result of habit, history, and tradition, they become standardized and unquestionably accepted as the way things are done.” (p. 3; see also, Scott, 2001) Discrimination of this kind was expressed by some participants, and thus it was fitting to include this category in the results of the study.

Microcosm of Society

Much in the way that addressing access discrimination can provide further context to the study of treatment discrimination in NCAA Division I men’s basketball

coaching, another theme serves the same purpose. It has been titled “microcosm of society,” which is based on the following quote from Bill:

Being a microcosm of the society we live in, the world we live in, and as you take the numbers in coaching, whether its collegiate basketball or whatever sport, those numbers can be looked at in (a lot of different ways).” He later added that the underrepresentation of black coaches in men’s basketball is “part of a broader topic of race in this country and obviously (the researcher) is focusing on it as it relates (to coaching), which is great; but I can’t talk about one without talking about the other.

Kevin provided a more historical context, stating that, “there’s a long legacy in this country of racial discrimination...segregation, slavery...and people act like that was a long, long time ago and it’s over and it’s the twenty-first century, and that those things do not... that the legacy does not exist today, and (if those people believe) it doesn’t affect people’s mindsets today, then they’re out of their mind.” Danny, who also addressed the issue from a historical perspective, offered, “I think there was a time where there was a perception that black people weren’t capable of leading.”

Larry spoke more specifically about the stereotypes that exist as a result of racial discrimination being a microcosm of society: “We all have our stereotypes. We all have things about us that probably aren’t positive things. I’m sure the things that (discriminatory people) have thought about us that probably aren’t true when it comes down to African Americans.”

Though these statements do not relate directly to the narrower theme of treatment discrimination, they do, however, further contribute to the broader study of underrepresentation of black coaches in NCAA Division I men’s basketball.

Solutions and Advice

The nature of this study dealt with many of the problems that exist for black coaches in the current landscape of NCAA Division I men’s basketball, and the

participants eloquently outlined and described the various problems that may exist. However, because these coaches are qualified to identify the current problems, it can also be assumed that they are qualified to identify potential solutions. Additionally, given their vast experience in the coaching profession, they are also highly qualified to give sound advice to future generations of coaches that are black and are motivated to achieve high levels of success in the coaching profession.

Though asking each participant to offer solutions and/or advice yielded a multitude of creative and tangible ideas, five specific sub-themes emerged from the data: (1) questioning the current hiring practices, (2) educating people on the biases that may exist, (3) investing in the next generation of coaches, (4) networking, and (5) development.

Questioning Current Hiring Practices

Though questioning current hiring practices addresses access discrimination more than treatment discrimination, it was nonetheless a popular theme when the conversation about solutions came about. Dennis stated this notion bluntly: “the only way this thing is going to change, in terms of this type of hiring, is to question these schools on their hiring practices.” Kevin agreed, saying that, “there has to be pressure... there has to be a protocol system put into place (asking if schools) are looking at African-American candidates as strongly as (they) should.”

Robert was more specific in his suggestion to reform the hiring process, referencing the National Football League’s “Rooney Rule.” He believes that in doing so, more black coaches would gain exposure to head coaching opportunities. He specifically referenced “black assistants who end up being impressive in that interview

process.” He added, “maybe they don’t get that job, but maybe that AD passes on the name the next time around.”

Education

On the contrary, Bill and Danny view the issue as one that surrounds the issue of education. Bill believes that continuing the conversation (about race in coaching) “would bring about education” and would add to the comfort level that he referenced throughout his interview. He added, “I think being educated about (the issue), understanding each other a whole lot more, having constant conversation and communication about (the issue) is critically important. It brings about an open-mindedness that I think has a lot to do with progression.”

Danny also referenced education, stating, “anytime there’s an education that people are more aware of all the issues, and all the matters and know each other better, and know the dynamics better, then there’s a better chance that you come closer to a resolution.”

Investing in the Next Generation of Coaches

Finally, Jerry and Robert suggested that investments be made in the next generation of black coaches. Jerry said, “I think the solution is we need to do more with our young coaches... getting them to understand that these are the things that you need to do to be successful.” Robert added that he would like to see “African-American guys involved at a lower level right away as Graduate Assistants or Director of Basketball Operations.” Both positions Robert referenced are entry-level positions in the coaching profession.

Along the same lines as Jerry and Robert's suggestion to invest in the next generation of black coaches, the interview also asked coaches to offer advice to younger black coaches who are interested in pursuing coaching as a profession. Two clear sub-themes emerged from this line of questioning: networking and development.

Networking

Dennis said of networking, "I would try to get to know as many head coaches as you can. Black, white, blue, green; work camps, because this business is all about relationships. And if you don't have relationships with head coaches, you are going to have a tough time getting into this business. That's the number one thing you have to do."

Danny believes that it's important for black coaches to network, specifically with white coaches: "For black guys, I always say, get to know white guys. Don't just go out and hang out with the brothers and use that time just to hang out with the guys who you like on the road (recruiting)."

Bill looked at networking in a more holistic manner, urging young coaches to, "know a lot of people and a lot of different backgrounds. Not just race. Know the janitors, know the president, know the CEO, and try to look at people in different ways and see their strengths, weaknesses; and in turn, have people look at you in a multitude of ways."

Development

Development was also a major sub-theme within the theme of "advice." Speaking generally, Kevin suggests that young black coaches "understand that they are working

against the odds and they have to really be intelligent and thoughtful in their approach towards obtaining a head coaching job.”

Larry, Danny, and Robert spoke more specifically, urging young black coaches to become “complete” coaches in terms of the responsibilities that they are capable of taking on. Larry said, “take pride in the basketball part of (coaching).” He later added, “how can (young coaches) get (players) better? Go to clinics, go watch other teams practice, talk to other guys when you’re on the road, sit down with older African-American (coaches), sit down with anyone that you have respect for in this profession and learn from them.

Danny believes that once in a job, it is important for a coach to “try to get involved early in your career with every aspect of the program. Try to learn scheduling, try to find out what a budget looks like... travel, strength and conditioning, academic support... all of the basketball responsibilities: recruiting, scouting, player development...”

Robert warns, “don’t become pigeon-holed. Don’t let yourself be thought of as just a guy who recruits or is a liaison with the players. Make sure you become a total coach because more often than not, you’re not going to get a great first job as a head coach.” As a result, “you can’t just rely on recruiting. You better be able to make it up in X’s and O’s and organization. So make sure you become a well-rounded coach and a person who is able to do not just one thing, which is recruit.”

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into the perspectives of current or former NCAA Division I men's basketball coaches that are black. More specifically, the issue of treatment discrimination in the coaching realm was the primary focus of the interviews with the seven participants; namely due to the fact that very little published research had been done on this subject within the context of NCAA Division I men's basketball.

In this chapter, I framed the findings and implications of the following research questions: (1) To what extent is treatment discrimination a contributing factor to the underrepresentation of black head coaches in Division I men's college basketball? (2) If treatment discrimination does exist in this context, in which way(s) does it manifest itself? (3) If treatment discrimination does exist in this context, what advice or strategies can the participants offer to reduce its prevalence?

Following a discussion of each research question, I described the significance of the study; as well as its limitations to address its shortcomings. Finally, I offered future research paths that could be taken as a result of this study.

Research Question I: The Extent of Treatment Discrimination

Discussion

The concept of treatment discrimination was explained to each participant in the study, and then each participant was asked directly if they felt as if treatment discrimination existed in NCAA Division I men's basketball coaching. All seven participants acknowledged the existence of treatment discrimination in general terms. Six of the seven participants (excluding Bill) perceived that in at least one instance that

they were treated unfairly as a result of their race. Bill neither confirmed nor denied that he had personally experienced treatment discrimination, but chose to answer the questions from a more “big picture” point of view.

The extent to which treatment discrimination was perceived varied from participant to participant. Larry, Kevin, Robert, Danny, and Jerry all identified strongly with the notion that treatment discrimination occurs regularly in collegiate basketball coaching. Dennis focused far more on access discrimination and Bill focused on a more societal and cultural viewpoint.

It is also worth noting that the majority of instances of treatment discrimination that were discussed in the interviews seemingly occurred during the phase of the coaches career *prior to* becoming head coaches. This serves as strong evidence that treatment discrimination could be a powerful factor contributing towards the underrepresentation of black head coaches in NCAA Division I men’s basketball.

Implications

If indeed treatment discrimination exists as a contributing factor towards the underrepresentation of black coaches, the implications are vast. Solutions that have been offered to raise the number of black coaching hires have predominantly aimed at possible access discrimination.

For example, Robert suggested in his interview that a version of the National Football League’s “Rooney Rule” could be a potential solution. However, this policy would not address the treatment that is seemingly occurring while black coaches are occupying assistant or head coaching jobs.

If in fact treatment discrimination exists to the extent that the participants have suggested, it also makes it difficult to measure or quantify this type of treatment. Hiring

patterns are easily quantified by measuring the percentages of black and white coaching hires in NCAA Division I men's basketball, as highlighted by Cunningham & Sagas (2005) in their analysis of access discrimination in intercollegiate athletics. However, treatment is a far more subjective and abstract topic that is elusive when it comes to quantitative measurement. To monitor the prevalence of treatment discrimination on men's basketball coaching staffs would be very difficult.

Finally, if pressure exists to hire more black head coaches to NCAA Division I programs, but treatment discrimination persists at the assistant coaching level, it is possible that black coaches will enter their head coaching opportunities *less prepared* than their white counterparts as a result of previous treatment. Ilgen & Youtz (1986) identified this dynamic as a lost opportunities effect. That is, because of lost opportunities, members of a category assignment, in this case black coaches, would not be as qualified or prepared for potential rewards or promotions. If this were the case, black coaches would be poised to have less success than their white peers, thus seemingly reinforcing the stereotype that black coaches are not fit to lead an NCAA Division I men's basketball program.

Research Question II: How Treatment Discrimination Manifests Itself

Discussion

Each participant was specifically asked if they have received fewer opportunities, rewards, or resources as a result of their race. Two conclusions can be reached. Firstly, all three categories emerged from the data in some way shape or form; confirming that all three forms of treatment discrimination are perceived by at least two black coaches. Second, how treatment discrimination manifests itself must be observed in a unique, case-by-case basis.

The most prominent themes that emerged from this study were that black assistant coaches primarily serve as “recruiters” and “inner city experts” on their coaching staffs, denying them access to other job responsibilities that further prepare them for a head-coaching job.

Such a phenomenon could be considered “racial tasking,” which was a form of discrimination identified by Bopp & Sagas (2013) in their study of positional segregation in college football. The researchers argued that black players are “stacked” in certain positions based on their race, and that those decisions could lead to fewer opportunities both during a player’s career and in his pursuit of coaching positions. Based on this study, one could argue that black assistant coaches being delegated to roles of the “recruiter” or “inner city expert” in men’s basketball could be a form of racial tasking or occupational segregation.

In addition to the themes of “recruiting” and “inner city expert,” many other themes emerged as ways treatment discrimination may manifest itself within an NCAA Division I men’s basketball program. It was evident that aside from responsibilities assigned to black coaches because of their race, there are also a number of responsibilities *not* delegated to black coaches: being responsible for “X’s and O’s,” receiving the benefit of the doubt, garnering equal media attention, and receiving equal resources during and after being head coaches.

Many participants also referenced quotas, which, though they do not officially exist in NCAA Division I men’s basketball coaching, are believed to be informally implemented. Black coaches being hired to fill a quota, or being perceived as a token hire, can greatly impact the future opportunities that they receive while occupying their

job. In contrast, it is assumed that most white coaches are hired based on merit and qualifications.

Few coaches also referenced unequal treatment by members of the media and a difference in resources once they were in a job, or after they left a job. Neither of these themes were prominent across all seven coaches, but both contribute to a more complete picture of how treatment discrimination may manifest itself in NCAA Division I men's basketball coaching.

Implications

The implications drawn from the data in response to research question two is critically important in gaining a greater understanding of how treatment discrimination can contribute to the underrepresentation of black head coaches in NCAA Division I basketball.

Black coaches, prior to pursuing head coaching jobs, given fewer responsibilities than white coaches in similar positions, can have great implications on their ability to obtain head coaching positions and/or succeed in those coaching positions.

Specialization in recruiting and becoming "inner city experts" does not qualify one to be a head coach; which requires a far more holistic set of skills. Being pigeon-holed into these types of occupational niches, though valuable to a basketball program, do not suffice as proper preparation to run one's own basketball program.

Further, gaining the reputation as not being an "X and O" coach can greatly hinder one's chances to acquire head coaching positions and/or succeed in those positions. While recruiting players is important, it is often a responsibility delegated to the assistant coaches on a men's basketball coaching staff. Whereas, being responsible for "X's and O's" is a characteristic far more recognizable in successful head coaches.

Thus, if black coaches are perceived as strong recruiters, but weak “X and O” coaches, it could be assumed that they are far more qualified to be assistant coaches than head coaches.

Black coaches receiving less access to a “benefit of the doubt” as a result of their race can also have negative implications on their respective careers. Often times, in entry level and mid-level positions (such as an assistant coach in men’s basketball), mistakes and failures tend to occur as a necessary aspect of the developmental process. If, in the light of these failures, “rater biases” (Ilgen & Youtz, 1986) give white coaches the benefit of the doubt, and do not give black coaches the same opportunity, it could have a huge impact on the potential development of that coach as he further progresses in the process of his own occupational growth.

Further, a black coach being a token hire to fulfill an informal quota can impact his own self-confidence as well as the confidence others have in him. Being hired because you add a certain amount of value to an organization is, in and of itself, an opportunity, and can have a strong effect on how one is treated. This practice could be considered structural discrimination (Pincus, 1996) in that the intentions of these unspoken quotas could be good, but that they may have discriminatory effects on black assistant coaches.

Media attention plays a large role in the perception of coaches, and thus can have a real impact on the mindset of the stakeholders of a given institution. If black coaches are portrayed as less qualified in the media, it could have a detrimental impact on reversing the underrepresentation of black head coaches in NCAA Division I basketball.

Along similar lines, if an institution gives fewer resources to a black head coach as a result of his race, which could include the circumstances under which a program is taken over; or the amount of monetary resources awarded to a program under the head coach's leadership, that too could negatively impact a black head coach's ability to reach his potential in a given job.

Research Question III: Solutions and Advice

Discussion

At the conclusion of each interview, each participant was asked two separate questions in an effort to progress the literature forward towards a solution to the existence of treatment discrimination in NCAA Division I men's basketball coaching. First, each participant was asked to provide potential solutions to the problem. Next, each participant was asked what advice he would provide to younger black coaches that may be in or have intentions to enter the coaching profession.

Participants offered three solutions to the prevalence of treatment discrimination in collegiate basketball coaching. First, though it addresses access discrimination more directly, three participants wanted to see further pressure applied to decision makers in the hiring process to interview and hire more black head-coaching candidates. Second, Bill and Danny both suggested that promoting the education of biases that may exist would have a positive impact on the lessening of treatment discrimination and the increase of black head coaching representation. Third, Jerry and Robert suggested that investing in development of the next generation of black coaches would make a positive impact on the future of black coaches in the men's basketball coaching profession.

Two themes emerged from the question of advice that the participants would give to the next generation of black coaches. First, participants suggest that an emphasis on

networking would help to invest in the careers of young coaches. Second, participants urged young black coaches to take pride in their own professional development.

Implications

The fact that commonalities exist among the participants in the three proposed solutions and the two pieces of advice that emerged from the data would imply that all suggestions for improvement of the status quo are worthy of consideration.

Pressure to interview and hire quality black coaching candidates would certainly bring exposure to the issue of the underrepresentation of black head coaches in NCAA Division I men's basketball. In addition to hiring pressure, educating all parties involved in the realities and manifestation of discrimination, specifically the next generation of black coaches, would be beneficial in progressing the issue forward.

Additionally, a combination of adept networking and sound professional development would allow for a younger generation of black coaches to combat future treatment discrimination that could take place, and position them for future head coaching opportunities.

However, prior research would suggest that young black coaches would face obstacles in forming elaborate networks that would lead to an increase in head coaching opportunities. According to Ibarra (1993), one's network is critical for job effectiveness, career advancement, friendship, and social support, but the researcher cautions that, limited network access "produces multiple disadvantages," (p. 56) which could lead to "glass ceiling effects." If black coaches are less likely to network with white coaches, and white coaches possess the majority of influence and power, this could be a major disadvantage for black coaches whom are trying to mobilize up the coaching ranks.

Significance, Limitations, and Future Research

Significance

In Cunningham's (2010) article, the researcher evaluated the underrepresentation of Black coaches at the macro, meso, and micro levels. I believe that this study is a significant contribution to the literature at every level brought forth by Cunningham.

At the macro-level, the underrepresentation of black head coaches in NCAA Division I men's basketball is consistent with the underrepresentation of blacks in leadership positions in athletic departments, at colleges and universities, and in society as a whole. Because the available labor pool of black men's basketball coaches is clearly higher than most leadership positions, but yet an underrepresentation persists, one could conclude that this dynamic is a microcosm of larger institutional and societal factors that trickle down into the NCAA Division I men's basketball coaching ranks. Because of the amount of money that can be made as an NCAA Division I head coach, this dynamic has real socioeconomic implications for black coaches that strive to compete for the same wealth, influence, and power that their white counterparts currently hold in the present status quo.

At the meso-level, the study provides insight to the perceived prejudice and discrimination felt by black coaches. Cunningham stated that meso-level research focuses on "factors operating in the organization," (p.5) and the results of the study could provide insight as to how discrimination may be occurring at that level. Specifically, treatment discrimination, which has received less attention than access and institutional discrimination in published research, is highlighted in this particular study. Evidence of this type of discrimination can help employers and employees, alike, to

understand how their “decisions, structures, and processes” (p. 5) could be perpetuating this dynamic, both at the conscious and subconscious level. Factoring treatment discrimination into the larger picture of discrimination helps to broaden one’s perspective of this highly complex concept.

Finally, this study’s significance is most impactful at the micro-level, which focuses on “the coaches themselves.” (Cunningham, 2010, p. 7) It is significant in two respects. First, it is a collection of honest insights by high profile NCAA Division I men’s basketball coaches. Because of the sensitive nature of race in society and in sport, these coaches often do not feel comfortable commenting publicly about prejudice or discrimination in fear of the potential harm such an action could cause. Thus the voices of these coaches are often suppressed, which takes away from the open and honest dialogue needed to navigate this issue. Further, coaches of this profile and stature have not been included in previous published research, yet their insights clearly add value to this conversation.

Secondly, this study could potentially bring clarity and structure to a dynamic that many people have felt, but have not been able to describe. On a number of occasions within my interviews with the participants, I described the concept of treatment discrimination and it immediately resonated with a participant because they had experienced it so many times prior. A clear, structured understanding of what treatment discrimination is and how it could impact the performance of the employee could benefit that employee’s ability to navigate the various circumstances that could exist within their organizational culture.

It is my aspiration that this research has tangible and practical implications on the treatment of black coaches. The idea behind this research was born in my actual experience as a coach in the profession, and that is ultimately where I would want this research to be felt. The game of basketball and my various positions within it has introduced me to numerous intelligent, talented, and impressive coaches; and it is my hope that all of them are evaluated and treated on the merit of their character and competence rather than their race.

Limitations

Several limitations could have had an impact on the accuracy and depth of this particular study.

First, all seven participants were black males who currently held or have held head coaching positions. Therefore, the perspectives of the participants evolved from a highly narrow sample that excluded both a white coach's point of view, and that of a black coach who *has not* obtained a head coaching position.

Second, treatment discrimination was defined at the beginning of each interview in an effort to narrow the focus of the interview around the specific subject of the study. However, it could be argued that the participants were primed prior to their data was collected, and thus could have given somewhat tainted answers when pose with questions involving treatment discrimination.

Third, four of the seven interviews were phone interviews. Because of budgetary restrictions and convenience, not all participants could be interviewed face-to-face. As a result, body language could not be factored into the data in over half of the interviews. It

was also my opinion that participants who were interviewed face-to-face were more forthcoming and comfortable while giving their answers to the interview questions.

Fourth, I (the interviewer) am white. Thus, in a study about racial discrimination, the race of the interviewer may have had an impact on the answers offered by the participants.

Fifth, all participants held coaching positions at the time of their interview, and the subject of racial discrimination is not commonly explored in the world of NCAA Division I men's basketball coaching. As a result, the sensitivity of the issue could have caused the participants to hold back their true opinions or feelings because of the potential lack of comfort the issue could have brought about in them.

Sixth, I have spent ten years in NCAA Division I men's basketball in some capacity. As a result, experiences and opinions, though valuable to this study, could be perceived as biased, both in the interviewing process or the reporting of the data. Furthermore, my racial identity could have also led to biases in the interviewing or reporting on a subconscious level.

Future Research

Three directions for future research emerged from the completion of this study. First, the same study of treatment discrimination could be applied to a different sample of participants. Particularly, the perspective of both white coaches and black assistant coaches who have not obtained head coaching positions would add positive value to the literature. Black assistant coaches who have not obtained head coaching positions could have a more keen understanding of the obstacles that black coaches face in the hiring process, as opposed to coaches who have been hired as head coaches.

Second, two participants in the study referenced re-hiring as an issue that contributes to the underrepresentation of black head coaches in NCAA Division I men's basketball. They suggested that black coaches were less likely to be hired for a head coaching position after being relieved from a previous job than their white peers. A quantitative study of this claim would bring forth greater understanding of the obstacles black coaches may face in the pursuit of head coaching positions.

Finally, a study of the perceptions of various stakeholders would also broaden the perspective of this particular study. Perceptions of the media, athletic administrators, institutional presidents, fans, alumni, boosters, and students could help to shape an understanding of the general perceptions of black coaches that exist and could potentially qualify as obstacles to those coaches obtaining head coaching positions in NCAA Division I men's basketball.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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