AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN FIRST-LINE SUPERVISORS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THEIR CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements For the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in The Graduate School Of the Ohio State University

By

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* * * *

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the career development process of African-American women who are first-line supervisors. This study utilized interviews of twelve African-American women in supervisory management positions in the public sector. The questions focused on the participants' career paths, stages of career development, challenges and limitations, influences on their career development process, and their measures of success. The methodology used for the study was a phenomenological approach, which focuses on obtaining and classifying experiential data, and information obtained from the actual words of the participants that represent their thinking and experiences. Common themes were identified to establish a model of career development.

The findings of the study revealed that the African-American women's career paths were based on the unique opportunities provided to them by their organizations. They viewed success as their ability to provide excellent services to their customers and performing the best possible on their jobs. The women faced challenges at this level of management, but felt that racism was not a particular issue. Sexism and various personnel issues were perceived as greater challenges for them. The women believed that their perseverance to succeed, their faith, and their mentoring opportunities were important factors in their success. The results also showed that the career development
stages for African-American women can be depicted in a way that is unique from currently available career development models.
Dedicated to My Parents,
Oswald and Ena Cushnie
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The colored woman of today occupies, one may say, a unique position in this country. In a period of itself transitional and unsettled, her status seems one of the least ascertainable and definitive of all the forces, which make up our civilization. She is confronted by both a woman question and a race problem, and is as yet an unknown or unacknowledged factor in both (Cooper, 1892, p. 134).

The career development process of employees is important to the success of organizations (Hall, 1986). Career development ensures that the employees’ skills and abilities are competitive in today’s volatile business environment. Career development “allows and encourages employees to examine future career paths, and its programs help analyze their abilities and interests in order to better match their personal growth and development with the needs of the organization” (Gilley & Eggland, 1989, p. 48).

Therefore, the career development process implies that a series of jobs represent some progress such as advancing up the hierarchy, increased salary, recognition and respect, and having freedom to pursue selected interest (Gutek & Larwood, 1987).

An awareness of employees’ career development process can help organizations in such areas as job assignment, training, and compensation. An understanding of the career development process is important for managers and employees to discuss
performance issues and identify blocks to career development progress, and develop strategies for improvement (Thompson, Baker, & Smallwood, 1986). For the organization, a career development program provides a basis for the planning and development of individuals maximizing their full potential, thus creating opportunities to benefit from improved performance and satisfaction.

For many years researchers have formulated and discussed models of career development. These models were developed from a prescriptive emphasis, through stage models of career choice and career development to more specific explanations of factors involved in career development (Minor, 1992). Models of career development were generally characterized as having distinct stages. For example, Super (1957) proposed that people experience four distinct stages in their careers: exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline. Other models of career development followed the same premise utilizing stages. Piercy and Forbes (1991) formulated a six-stage model of explaining the career process. The stages are exploration, development, commitment, verification, payback, and payoff. These and other models of career development have served in the management literature to shed light on how careers evolved and what helps or hinders employees in getting ahead in organizations.

Implicitly, the models make the assumption that the career development process can be generalized across race and gender. Consequently, careers for women were described in ways that precluded women's careers and have failed to account for the experience of women (Schneer & Reitman, 1995). However, as changes in the social and legal environment led to the entrance of women in management, researchers began to
focus on whether men and women differ in their basic career process. Much of the research has documented the factors necessary to promote women into and through the ranks of management (Fagenson, 1995). Nevertheless research on the career development of women is still relatively new and most of it assumes a male norm of occupational choice and career development against which women are compared (Kosek & Kitch, 1994). Researchers suggest the understanding of women’s careers requires an acknowledgment that women have fundamentally different situations in developing careers than men (Powell, 1993; Rose & Larwood, 1988). Issues such as sex discrimination, structure of opportunities, equal opportunities, and family demands may have altered the process of women’s career development from that of men (Cox, White, & Cooper, 1992).

African-American women have always been an integral part of the American workforce (Woody, 1992). According to Woody (1992) African-American women comprised 50% of African-Americans employed in the 1980s and 12% of all working women. With the growth of the service industry in the 1980s came an influx of African-American women with a high concentration at lower status levels compared to white women. A report by the United States Department of Labor (1992) determined that African-American women’s labor force participation is expected to increase to 61.7% by the year 2000.

A study conducted by Maleveaux (1986) found that African-American women’s occupational patterns are similar to those of white women, their difference is in the proportional occupation representation. Maleveaux (1986) also found that there are
proportionately fewer African-American female managers than in any other race or
gender. Irons and Moore (1985) found that although there was a large number of
African-American women at the management level in banking they were concentrated in
low-level operational jobs.

Because much attention has been given to women in middle and senior ranks of
management, there is a plethora of information concerning their experiences, career
development strategies, barrier, and facilitators. Therefore people may think that a glass
ceiling does not exist for women at the first-line level, and occurs only at the highest level
of the organization. Swift (1993) showed that women in lower ranks of management are
promoted less frequently than women in higher levels of management, and that minority
women on average, have been promoted less often than non-minority women with
comparable qualifications.

Problem Statement

The career development process is critical to the success of organizations. The
implicit assumption is that career development models are generalized across gender and
race. Research shows women experience career development differently from men (Rose
& Larwood, 1988). Consequently, models of career development do not sufficiently
address the realities and process of women’s careers.

African-American women are becoming more prevalent in organizations, most
notably at the first-line supervisory levels (US Department of Labor, 1991). The increase
in the number of African-American women in managerial roles is often perceived as good
by presenting new opportunities and challenges (Cox & Blake, 1991). Research suggests
that a person engages in career development activities based on their experience. In particular, African-American women's career development process may differ from others and that race and gender may account for some of these differences (Diamond, 1987; Marshall, 1994; Betters-Reed & Moore, 1995).

There is very little known about the combined effects sexism and racism on career development, and the extent to which existing models accurately described the experiences of African-American women is still unclear (Richie, Fassinger, Linn, Johnson, Robinson, & Prosser, 1997). It has been duly noted that there is not a comprehensive model of career development of racial and ethnic minorities. There is even less attention devoted to models of career development of racial and ethnic minority women (Hackett & Byers, 1996). According to Cheatham (1990) theoretical models that do not respect the cultural distinctiveness of African-Americans, assume that white attitudes, values, and behaviors are representative of African-Americans in their career development.

The career development process can be fundamentally distinct for each employee. Because of their unique background and views, African-American women could be perceived to view their career development process differently than their white counterparts. More needs to be known about the career development process of African-American women who are first-line supervisors, because knowing this will help organizations and researchers develop appropriate theories, research, and interventions.
Purpose of Research

The purpose of this study is to describe the career development process of African-American women who are first-line supervisors. Specifically, the research questions are:

1. What is the nature of the career path that led to the current position?
2. What are the measures of success in African-American women’s careers?
3. What are the challenges and limitations to achievement?
4. What are the influences on the career development process?
5. What are the stages of career development used by African-American women?

Significance of the Problem

The position of African-American women in first-line managerial ranks constitutes a major human resource development problem that needs urgent attention. It is the intent of this research to address the nature of their career development process and to provide recommendations for the effective approaches for resolving the problem.

The problem emanating from the current situation is one that speaks to the underutilization of human resources. The failure to identify and understand the problems of African-American women in management is intimately connected to perpetuation of the myth that African-American women are innately incapable of playing useful roles in this arena. This kind of myth discourages the development of attitudinal aspiration among African-American women that might lead to their incorporation into the professional workforce in a substantial manner. Conversely, it is highly supportive of the
perpetuation of the “old boy’s” network, the contention that only males can excel in supervisory capacities.

This problem also highlights the structural barriers that impede the recruitment and development of African-American women into managerial ranks in substantial numbers. The critical objective then should be to provide information to the public of a kind that reeks against the notion that only men can be capable managers. There is also the need to illuminate ways in which the present barriers to career development can be overcome. This research will attempt to shed penetrating light on both of these problems.

The fact that there has not been adequate investigation of these issues in the past suggests the existence of a major human resource development problem. Here exists a critical need to expand the boundaries of our research orientation, our research models/theories, and our research foci. It is the intention of this dissertation to contribute to the present intellectual gap and to begin to connect the scholarship of the university with the primary needs of organizations seeking to eliminate obstacles to the performance and career progress of their employees.

From the organization’s perspective, this information is critical for at least two reasons. First, it would provide greater insights into the career development process of African-American women and their perceptions of the organization’s approaches to career development. Second, this information would help human resource development practitioners plan and implement more effective career development programs, which would benefit African-American women and other first-line supervisors.
Human resource development (HRD) practitioners need to reevaluate how their employees can achieve and maintain a competitive advantage (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 1994). The research will allow HRD practitioners to address the differences in how African-American women approach their career development. Thus, examining the career development experiences of African-American first-line supervisors would be an important contribution to the development of the theoretical base for career development. This research would advance career development theory by illuminating the career process undertaken by African-American women. Studies have shown that there are different models utilized by organizations to ensure that employees are getting relevant and sufficient information to succeed in management positions.

Definitions of Terms

First-line supervisor is the person at the “first level of management who has the responsibility for getting the “hands-on-the-work” employees to carry out the plans and policies of higher level management” (Bittle, 1985, p. 3). She is essentially in charge of those who have no managerial or supervisory authority, and is the link between them and higher levels of management.

Career development “is an ongoing process of planning and directed action toward personal work and life goals. Development means growth, continuous acquisition and application of one’s skills. Career development is the outcome of the individual’s career planning and the organization’s provision of support and opportunities, ideally a collaborative process” (Simonsen, 1997, p. 6).
Career path is a sequence of job positions involving similar types of work and skills that employees move through in the company (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart & Wright, 1994, p. 517).

Career stage is the distinct phases that individuals move through during the course of their careers. Each stage is characterized by developmental tasks, activities, and relationships. The individual’s current career stage influences her needs, attitudes and job behaviors (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 1994).

Organization of Study

This study contains six chapters. Chapters one through three encompass the statement of the problem, the literature review and the methodology. Chapter four provides an analysis of the data. This analysis includes the processing of the participants’ experiences, the presentation, the discussion and interpretation of the data. Chapter five presents a model of career development of African-American women. Chapter six contains the summary, implications, and recommendations for theory and practice.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is divided into four sections. Section one presents the review of the relevant literature relating to women in the workplace. Section two presents the review of the relevant literature to career development. Section three presents the review of the relevant literature to barriers experienced by women in the workplace. Section four presents the review of the relevant literature related to training.

Women in the Workplace

This section is divided into two parts. Part one presents the status of women in the workplace and has four components, the status of women in the workplace, women in management, education, and opportunities. Part two presents African-American women in the workplace and has three components, their status in the workplace, African-American women in management, and the effects of race and gender in the workplace.

Status of Women in the Workplace

The proportion of working women in the workplace has increased significantly in the past two decades (Anderson, 1988, Larwood & Wood, 1977; US Department of Labor, 1997). This increase is associated with women’s increasing educational attainment, increasing demand for services provided by traditionally female occupations, changes in family-life patterns and changing social norms (Mandelson, 1997). In 1992,
57.8% of the workforce was comprised of women. In 1990, more than 80% of women with four or more years of college were in the workforce. However, women are not equally represented in all segments of the workforce and dominate traditionally "female" occupations such as clerical and nursing (Fagenson & Jackson, 1993). According to the US Department of Labor (1992) women comprised 80% of administrative support workers, 99% of secretaries, 94.8% registered nurses, and 66.7% of all retail and sale workers.

Women comprised 44% of the workforce in managerial positions in 1996 (US Department of Labor, 1997). The supply of women qualified for management jobs has continued to increase as they accumulate work experience and complete management education programs. Townsend (1996) found women between the ages of 45 and 54 will comprised one-third of the US workforce between 1994 and 2005. She attributes this to the baby-boom generation entering this age range. Thus, the labor force participation rates among women 45 years and older will increase replacing a less career-oriented cohort of women (Towsend, 1996).

Some of the characteristics and attributes of women who have made it to top management were revealed in a study by Piercy and Forbes (1991). They found that women who were chief executives “tended to be located in the Northeast, were older, fairly well-educated, and were likely to head smaller firms in the wholesale and retail trades, manufacturing, and business firms” (p. 77). The authors also found that a very high percentage of the women in banking, insurance and financial services were in vice-presidential level positions. These women were distributed evenly throughout the United
States and were likely to represent a high percentage of the women executives in medium-sized firms.

Piercy and Forbes (1991) revealed that many female corporate officers were not likely to experience any further mobility. They were older and in dead-end positions, such as secretary or treasurer. Those women who had achieved chief executive status were also older and head of smaller firms. However, a significant number of highly educated younger women had reached the vice presidential positions in the larger firms and in the service-oriented firms. It is presumed that breakthroughs of women into major chief executive positions are likely to be made by the group of younger women. Piercy and Forbes (1991) thus predicted that one female chief executive of major firms would be a highly educated, younger woman, employed by one of the largest firms, in the service industry (banking, insurance, and financial services) in the Northeast region of the country.

**Women in Management**

Although a growing number of women are becoming managers, they are most likely to do so in areas traditionally employing females (Fagenson & Jackson, 1993). Women hold 75% of the managerial jobs in medicine and health; over 50% of the managerial jobs in finance and accounting; and over 60% of the managerial positions as personnel, training and labor specialists (US Department of Labor, 1997). In 1992, women represented 42% of the managerial labor force. However, 2.9% of the women are in senior executive positions (Fagenson, 1992). Women managers are heavily represented in services, public administration and finance industries, and are less
represented in manufacturing, construction and transportation industries (US Department of Labor, 1997).

**Education**

Women's strong participation in higher education is an important factor in their attainment of managerial positions. The number of women who have been granted college and professional degrees has been increasing at a steady pace (Fagenson & Jackson, 1993; Marshall & Paulin, 1987; Powell, 1993). There has also been an increase in the percentage of undergraduate degrees in business and management awarded to women from 8.7% in 1970 to 46.7% in 1991 (US Department of Education, 1991). Graduate degrees are also being awarded to women in increasing numbers including MBAs, in which women received 34% in 1991, up from 3.5% in 1970 (US Department of Education, 1990). The percentage of women receiving doctoral degrees has increased and is expected to continue increasing.

**Opportunities**

The opportunities given to women to advance in management positions is important. Those organizations that invest in promoting women equitably will be rewarded with increased productivity, improved employee attitudes, greater worker satisfaction, and greater loyalty among employees (Gilley & Eggland, 1989).

Lewis (1992) conducted a study, which compared the backgrounds, careers and potential of federal male and female managers. Lewis (1992) found that in the Federal government, the number of women holding white collar jobs tripled between 1979 and 1987 from 12,079 to 34,053. However, women represented 14% of the middle
management positions, compared to 46% of all federal white-collar middle management positions (Lewis, 1992). The women in middle management were concentrated in GM13 positions and were also less likely to hold supervisory or managerial authority.

Opportunities for women to enter the ranks of management are limited because of the continued perceptions that plague them essentially discouraging them from entering "male" occupations (Devanna, 1987). Devanna (1987) also contends that women are considered to be inferior, are expected to give family priority over career, thereby making managers biased against them in selection, promotion, and career development decisions. She continues by stating that "long lasting change must eventually confront and resolve the basic ways in which organizational men and women will progress, but will be limited because of such factors as family obligations" (p. 10). However, women in non-traditional managerial roles were more achieving and saw themselves as having characteristics more like managers and men, and saw no characteristics which conflicted with those of male managers (Moore & Rickel, 1980).

Lynn and Vaden (1979) found in their study that the general consensus was women are generally judged to be more conservative in changing jobs, mainly because they are more vulnerable to the vagaries of the employment market. The authors argue that most of the studies conducted on female workers were undertaken under circumstances of low mobility, low expectations and limited opportunity structures. Under these general conditions, women holding on to present positions may simply reflect the reality of their work situation. Lynn and Vaden (1979) found that the women in the study expressed greater willingness to seek their fortune elsewhere. Those who
have moved to the top of their organizations have developed a belief in themselves and their ability to achieve success in another job are prepared to consider other career alternatives.

Powell and Butterfield (1994) examined the promotion decisions for US federal senior executive service positions in a cabinet-level department. They found that the opportunity for women to be promoted were favorable. The authors concluded that federal government placed a high degree on procedural fairness in making promotion decisions for SES positions. Powell and Butterfield (1994) also argued that the federal government is interested in issues of equal employment opportunity.

Cannings (1988) conducted a study of 692 managers of which 256 were women in a Canadian corporation. The results showed that 80 percent of the women were likely as their male colleagues to be promoted in a given year with the firm. Cannings (1988) concluded that this disadvantage is primarily the result of gender. Ohlott, Ruderman, and McCauley (1994) examined the gender differences in managers' developmental job opportunities. They conducted a survey of 221 men and 226 women who participated in management development training run by a southeastern organization. The results suggested that men and women experience some similar and some different job challenges. Men experience some greater task-related developmental challenges, and women experience greater developmental challenges from obstacles encountered on the job. Ohlott, Ruderman, and McCauley (1994) suggest that women are not getting key assignments and responsibilities, but are getting stereotypical challenges based on their nurturing skills.
This part reviewed the literature of women in the workplace. Women are gaining more managerial positions, and their level of education is a contributing factor to this increase. The opportunities afforded women to enter into managerial positions are still limited and women are still experiencing barriers.

**African-American Women in the Workplace**

This part explores the status of African-American women in the workforce, in management and the effects of race and gender in the workplace.

**The Status of African-Women in the Workplace**

Little research exists on African-American women in general (Yoon, 1997). Thus, research on African-American women in the workplace is limited with regards to their status in management (Nkomo, 1988).

A study conducted by the US Merit Protection Board (1992) reported that women in general are experiencing difficulty advancing from first-line to senior non-supervisory positions, and from senior, non-supervisory positions into first-line supervisory jobs. The study also reported that minority women are promoted less often than non-minority women even when they have the same amount of formal education and experience as white women. Minority women hold the perception that they are less likely to receive the same level of respect as much as minority men (US Merit Board, 1992).

African-American women have been active participants in the workforce since their involuntary immigration. They have always had higher workforce participation rates than white women due mainly to economic necessity (Jones, 1986; Woody, 1992; Yoon, 1997). African-American women were never given the choice against employment and
have had to work along side the men, throughout their lives (Mullings, 1986).

Cunningham and Zalokar (1992) contend that occupational discrimination against
African-American women played a major role in limiting access to non-household
occupations, especially between 1940 and 1970.

In 1986, among women aged 20 years and older, the labor force participation for
African-American women was 58.9 %; for Hispanic women 51.7 %; and for white
women, 54.9% (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1987). Over 60% of all African-
American women were in the workforce by 1988 ( Woody, 1992), and their participation
grew from 1.89 million to 11.6 million between 1940 and 1990 (Yoon, 1997). Between
that 50-year period the participation rate of white women also increased and the gap
between African-American women and white women narrowed. In 1940, 37.3% of
African-American women over fourteen years of age were engaged in gainful
employment, while only 24.1% of white women were thus engaged (Yoon, 1997). By
1984 the participation rate of African-American women 20 years and older was 57.6 %
and 53.1 percent for white women (Maleveaux & Wallace, 1987). By 1993, African-
American women were less likely to participate in the workforce as white, 58.3% or
African-American women and 64.5% or white women (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1994).
Jones (1986) attributed the decrease in workforce participation to the inadequate
employment opportunities for African-American women.

Prior to the mid-1960s, African-American women were almost entirely excluded
from mainstream places of employment and were restricted to marginal part-time, and
irregular employment such as agriculture and domestic work (Woody, 1992; Yoon,
Within the 20 years after the passage and enforcement of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 guaranteeing equal employment opportunity, African-American women entered mainstream work in unprecedented numbers. They entered more skilled and better paying white-collar jobs (Woody, 1992). According to Yoon (1997), “57.4% of all African-American women were working in private household service in the 1930s. In 1960, the proportion dropped to 39.3% and by 1990, only 0.3% were employed in those occupations” (p. 36).

The rapid improvement in job opportunity within the 1970s and 1980s, especially within the service industry helped established African-American women in entry-level and low-skilled categories (Jones, 1996). Individual achievement in education that accompanied the growth in job opportunity also helped. The majority of jobs opened to African-American women were limited in mobility, earnings, and benefits. According to Yoon (1997), African-American women gained “access to clerical and professional positions only when the jobs became deskillled and routinized, so that whites shift to better opportunities, leaving space for African-American women at the bottom” (p. 37).

Reskin and Roos (1990) noted the limited extent that African-American women entered male occupations had been confined to the least attractive specialties.

**African-American Women in Management**

African-American women are still struggling to gain management positions. In 1992, a breakdown of female managers showed that 12% of managers were white women; 7.2% were African-Americans; and 7.7% were Hispanic (Fagenson, 1993).
African-American women are inclined to be more represented at the entry levels, and less represented the higher one goes in management (Betters-Reed & Moore, 1995).

Because race has always been assumed subordinate to gender, African-American women have remained invisible in the management literature (Nkomo, 1988). Nkomo (1988) asserts that studies incorrectly assume that conclusions drawn from samples of white females or African-American males would be generalized to African-American women. King (1988) contends that studies of gender segregation either assumed that all women are alike or considered only the experiences of the dominant group, white women. Likewise, studies of racial segregation have either subsumed the experiences of African-American women under those of African-American men or simply ignored African-American’s unique experiences (Sokoloff, 1992; Nkomo, 1988).

DiTomaso and Smith (1996) postulate that before the 1960s, race and gender made it almost impossible for white women and minorities to obtain managerial jobs segregated jobs. They contend that the level of segregation changed after 1962 with the pressure of the Civil Rights movement and the passage of the legislation of the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. DiTomaso and Smith (1996) state:

During this same period there was rapid growth in the kinds of occupations from which blacks had been excluded, including professional and technical (33 percent), clerical (30%), service (20 percent), operative (20 percent), and craft jobs (15 percent). There were slower increases as well in other types of jobs including managerial (9 percent), nonfarm laborer (5 percent) and sales (4 percent) (p. 89).
African-American women began making progress in professional and managerial jobs after the passage of the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. The number of minorities in managerial jobs increased 100% between 1975 and 1993 (DiTomaso & Smith, 1996). According to Yoon (1997), African-American women in managerial positions rose from 4.9% in 1940 to 25.1% in 1990. Most of these positions were found in the public sector (US Department of Labor, 1991). Yoon (1997) reported 35.5% of African-American female managers are in the public sector while 14.5% are white female managers.

According to the US Department of Labor Statistics (1989), African-American women represented 2.9% of all employed managers, which is an increase from 2.7% in 1987. The US Department of Labor (1997) reported that 10% of employed African-American women were in administrative, executive, and managerial jobs. The largest number of African-American women managers are found in the service industry, finance, insurance and real estate, and of this the largest number is in transportation and public utilities, and in retail trade (US Department of Labor, 1989).

McRae and Carter (1992) provide descriptive occupational information of African-Americans in management. They found black managers were employed in a diverse business and industries, with banking being the most open to them. Many of the managers had college degrees and the majority held MBAs. A large percentage held positions in finance, general management, accounting, and personnel. Male managers had higher salaries than female managers. Female managers were over-represented in personnel and underrepresented in areas such as finance.
Page (1994) examined the status of African-Americans in the federal government. He concluded that African-Americans have made progress in gaining employment within the federal executive branch agencies at all levels, but they have not had equal career opportunities. African-Americans are still concentrated in the lower salary grades, with nearly 29% of African-Americans at or below GS-4, and 52% at or below GS-8 as of 1991. He notes that these statistics has remained unchanged since 1979.

The Effect of Race and Gender on African-American Women in the Workplace

Research on the experiences of African-American women in management has tended to focus on the nature of the effects of race and gender (Almquist, 1975; Burlew & Johnson, 1992; Evans & Herr, 1994). Such studies have concluded that race and gender have an interactive and cumulative effect. However, these studies disagree as to whether the effect is negative or positive.

Epstein (1973) and Fulbright (1985) argue that the effects of race and gender create a bonus status for the African-American woman in the workplace. This bonus status has resulted in faster and higher advancement for African-American women than other minority groups including African-American males (Epstein, 1973). Bell, Denton and Nkomo (1993) argue that the bonus status is a result of “affirmative actions policies that are propelling African-American women ahead of other groups because they can be counted as double minorities” (p. 18). This assumption is invalid because it is impossible to count African-American women twice on the EEO report, and its real basis is the fear of reverse discrimination (Bell, Denton and Nkomo, 1993)
Epstein (1973) first described the bonus effect of the double advantage. She utilized a sample of 31 highly educated, successful African-American women in male-dominated professions. She concluded that the effect of being black and female for some women does not result in negative consequences, but “formed a positive matrix for a meaningful career” (p. 913). She also concluded that:

1. Focusing on one of the negatively valued statuses canceled the negative effect of the other...

2. Two statuses in combination create a new status...which may have no established “price” because it is unique. In this situation, the person has a better bargaining position in setting his or her own worth. This pattern may also place the person in the role of a “stranger,” outside the normal exchange system and be able to exact a higher then usual price.

3. Because the “stranger” is outside the normal opportunity structure, he or she can choose...an alternative lifestyle. This choice was made by many black women forced to enter the occupational world because of economic need, and, in turn, it created selective barriers which insulated the women from diversions from occupational success and from ghetto culture, thus strengthening ambition and motivation (p. 914).

This argument made by Epstein’s (1973) been refuted (Beale, 1970; Simms & Maleveaux, 1986; Sokoloff, 1992;). But this myth of the double advantage still remains (Bell, Denton & Nkomo, 1992; Sanchez-Hules, 1997). Sokoloff (1992) contends that the proponents of the double advantage distort data to create the myth of African-American
women’s more advantaged position in the workplace. Almquist (1979) research supports this:

Like white women, black women are underrepresented in the high-paying professions and overrepresented in the low-paying professions. Women are 46% of the total black professions, yet they are only 7% of the engineers, 14% of the attorneys, 24% of the physicians and dentists, and 25% of the life and physical scientists. On the other hand, women are 79% of the black librarians, 97% of the nurses, and 78% of the non-college teachers” (pp. 60-61).

Sokoloff (1992) contends that a number of inaccurate assumptions are embedded in the myth that African-American women have a double advantage in the workplace. These assumptions include:

African-American women experience less discrimination than black men, that black women benefit professionally due to an educational advantage over black men, that black women are somehow better prepared to cope with white male employers and white-controlled bureaucracies, that black women derive unusual motivational strength and ambition from their dual status, and that black women have an easier time finding jobs than black men do (p. 21).

A contrasting portrayal of African-American women in the workplace is that of the “double whammy” (Beale, 1970). It has been noted that in the US, women’s sex status and African-Americans racial status have prevented them from attaining prestigious and rewarding jobs, because “society did not value them as being high in either capacity or potential” (Epstein, 1973). African-American women because of their
two negative statuses are therefore located at the bottom of the ladder. In the elite professions, African-Americans and women have been considered inappropriate and undervalued, and as a result they have constituted only a tiny portion of the prestigious professions (Epstein, 1973). Women typically rank lower than men at every class level and African-Americans are most typically at the bottom of the occupational pyramid. Gilkes (1982) argues that the additional burden of the negative images and stereotypes have added to the complexities of their black professional identities. “The strain of the “double whammy” has led to a variety of perspectives and responses to the racial and/or sexual dilemmas African-American face in the world of work” (Gilkes, 1982, p. 291).

Almquist (1975) purported in her study that racism and sexism pervade the culture of the US which inadvertently create an unusually disadvantaged status for African-American women. She found that African-American women are disadvantaged in three important ways in the labor force: “Their unemployment rates are extremely high, they have difficulty in obtaining high level jobs, and they experience a great deal of wage discrimination” (p. 141). She concluded that in employment and earnings, sex discrimination surpasses racial discrimination.

King (1988) postulated that although multiple forms of discriminations define the African-American women’s status, class inequality compounds the oppression of racism and sexism. She argued that these three are interdependent, control systems. She posited an interactive model where “the relative significance of race, sex, or class in determining the conditions of African American women’s lives is neither fixed nor absolute, but, rather, is dependent on the socio-historical context and the social phenomenon under
consideration” (p. 49). King (1998) further argues that in some cases, race may be the
most significant factor predicting black woman’s status. Gender or class may prevail
suggesting that on certain dimensions black women’s managerial experience may more
closely resemble those of black men or white women, or their experiences may be unique.

Fulbright (1985) conducted a study on 25 middle- and senior-level black female
managers and the barriers to occupational mobility. She concluded black female
managers lacked early exposure to the general business environments and lacked
Corporate sponsors. Their mobility was not any faster than their white or male
counterparts. Fulbright (1985) contends that the African-American women’s dual status
tended to make them vulnerable not only to the kinds of structural factors that can
potentially effect the mobility of any worker, but also to limits imposed by racism and
sexism. Irons and Moore (1985) surveyed African-American in the banking industry, and
found that there was greater growth in the number of African-American women at the
management level compared with black men. However, African-American women were
concentrated in low-level operations jobs, small branch management, and staff functions,
and not in the more prestigious commercial lending or investment functions of banks.

Sanchez-Hules (1997) argued that African-American women are made to feel that
they are somehow responsible for the fact that more African-American men and more
white women have not been hired because of the myth of the bonus status. What has been
missing from the dialogue on African-American women and work is their voices which
indicate that they are not advantaged and that they are struggling with racism, sexism and
other oppression with other minority groups. Sanchez-Hules (1997) contends that “the
major advantage that African-Americans enjoy by virtue of their dual status of being black and female is a sharper and clear perspective on who is in power in the workforce and who is not” (p. 575). The reality of the African-American women’s experiences in the workforce is that they continue to work in low-paying, gender-stratified jobs.

Although some progress has been made in increasing African-American women’s participation into the higher paid professional job areas, the vast majority of these women occupy unenviable job positions (Sanchez-Hules, 1997). With equal education and occupational status, African-American women’s wages have been lower than white men’s and white women’s. Sanchez-Hules (1997) further argues that:

…The myth of Black women’s advantage mask and perpetuates a host of often inaccurate stereotypes and makes it convenient for society to avoid dealing with Black women as unique individuals within a diverse group but who share historical and social psychological experiences. Too frequently stereotypes rather than facts have been allowed to remain unchallenged for Black women and empirical investigations have validated those characteristics they may share with other groups while distorting rather than reinforcing Black women for the unique characteristics that have allowed them to survive” (p. 577).

These two contrasting views of the impact of race and gender are contradictory to each other and present an interesting dilemma for those interested in understanding the dynamics of race and sex (Nkomo, 1988). (Nkomo, 1988) contends:
On one hand, African-American women are often viewed by researchers as victims of a negative double jeopardy. Yet this view is tempered by the reality that African-American women have survived in spite of the odds against them. Throughout history black women have demonstrated an enormous reservoir of strength, self-reliance, resourcefulness, and creativity. On the other hand, the double advantage paints a picture of easy access to jobs, wealth, and prosperity. Neither of these views is a wholly accurate description of the contemporary experience of black women managers (p. 216).

The status of African-American women in the workplace shows that they are working in low paying jobs with few advancing to managerial positions. When compared with other groups, African-American women are at the lower end of the continuum. The ensuing section will explore career development models and theories.

Career Development

This section is divided into four parts. Part one presents a brief history of career development. Part two presents several theories of career development. Part three presents theories of women’s career development. Part four presents theories of African-American women’s career development.

History of Career Development

Career development programs help prepare employees for a variety of jobs and increase their ability to move into supervisory positions. The career development practices of organizations assist in the retention of women with the skills and abilities so that they can advance through the organization. It is reported that women will occupy
over 50% of the workforce in the 21st century (Fraser, 1992). This section presents the
general theories of career development, theories of career development related to women,
and theories of career development associated with African-Americans.

Sonnensfeld and Kotter (1982) traced the history of career development and
presented a conceptual framework that is characterized by four major stages. The
structure approach focused on the relationship between social status as indicated by
parental occupation, education, and wealth and career attainments. The second stage,
personality trait approach, attempted to identify relationships between static personality
traits and occupations. In the third stage, career stages approach, career theory research
conceptualized careers moving through stages. The fourth stage of career development
theory was the life cycle approach. This stage focuses on developmental patterns in the
role of people’s lives as a way of understanding career development. The
conceptualization stage has given birth to a four-stage model which relates to the career
stages—apprenticeship, colleague, mentor, and sponsor and how they relate to different
tasks, relationships, and psychological adjustments (Marlow, Marlow, & Arnold, 1995).
Sonnensfeld and Kotter (1982) concluded, career development theory has become more
varied and complex along the dimensions of time and across life space. Career outcomes
are considered to be the result of interactions among occupational, personal, and family
factors.

Career Development Theories

This part is divided into three components. The first component presents
examples of life-cycle models. The second component presents examples of
organization-based models. The third component discusses the directional pattern model of career development.

Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, and Wright (1994) pointed out that the literature consists of several different career development models, but there is no agreement which model is best. Three types of models are discussed:

1. The life-cycle models which suggest that employees face certain developmental tasks over the course of their careers where they moved through distinct life or career stages.

2. The organization-based models also suggest that careers proceed through a series of stages, but these models suggest that career development involve employees learning to perform certain activities. Each stage involves changes in activities and relationships with peers and managers.

3. A third kind of model, the directional pattern model describes how employees view their careers. It suggests that employees make decisions about how quickly they want to progress through the career stages and at what point they want to return to an earlier career stage (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, and Wright, 1994, p. 505).

Life-cycle Models

Super (1957) model of career development is conceptualized upon the framework of life stages and is based upon the assumption that vocational tasks reflect larger tasks. Super (1957) uses self-concept where as an individual matures,
there are self-tests which influences career and educational decisions. He portrays career development proceeding through five life stages:

1. The growth stage (birth-14 years). This stage reflects a period where the individual begins to form through identifying with key figures in the family and school. With increased participation in social activities, the individual develops interests and capacities.

2. The exploration stage (15-24 years) is characterized by the emergence of self-concept through the process of experimentation and testing. The individual attempts new ideas of self on the environment, keeping the factors of the self-concept that bring satisfaction and rejecting the ones that do not bring satisfaction.

3. The establishment stage (25-44 years) is characterized the individual finding an appropriate field and stabilizing her career. There may be some changes early in the period, which causes the individual to realize that she has found her life work, or before it becomes clear that life work is a succession of unrelated jobs.

4. The maintenance stage (45-60 years) is characterized with the individual is holding on to a place already made in the world of work. Little experimentation is done and one tries to hold on to what one has.

5. The decline stage (65 years and on) is characterized by the individual slowing down the pace and moving out of her career. More emphasis is spent on leisure and self-realization.
A second life-cycle model for careers is one that is developed by Miller and Form (1951). They viewed careers as periods of social adjustments of the culture of the work environment. Miller and Form (1951) posit that these periods of social adjustments begin at birth and end with death. The periods are discussed:

1. The preparatory work period is characterized by the individual socializing at home and school into the work patterns of society.

2. The initial period is characterized by the individual’s initiation into the work world through part-time jobs.

3. The individual getting her first full-time job and progressing to more permanent work characterizes the trial period.

4. The individual securing a period of job permanence characterizes the stable work period.

5. The retirement period is where the individual is retired from work.

Miller and Form (1951) explains that not everyone experience these stages successfully whereby achieving stability and security. According to Miller and Form (1951) the individuals who successfully proceed through these stages have a stable career pattern. The individuals who do not proceed through these stages successfully have an unstable career pattern. These individuals never become established in one area, but constantly moving from stable to trial jobs. There are other individuals who follow a multiple-trial pattern where they attain stability but, but move from one trial job to the next.
The reason that individuals have different experiences within these stages is their social class. According to Miller and Form (1951), membership in an assigned social class is the main predictor of occupational attainment. The state that occupational attainment is dependent upon, father’s occupation; worker’s intelligence; father’s income and education; accessible financial aid and influential contacts; and social and economic conditions in the society.

Organizational-based Models

Dalton, Thompson, and Price (1977) defined four stages of career development from an individual perspective rather than an organizational perspective. They interviewed several hundred professionally trained employees over a period of three years. The model described how each one of the four successive stages, apprentice, colleague, mentor, and sponsor involves different tasks, different types of relationships, and different psychological adjustments. In the apprentice stage, the individual begins his/her career. Everyone must move out of this stage to attain career satisfaction. The second stage suggests that the individual has developed his/her reputation and can work independently. Some individuals in this stage never need to move beyond this level, thriving on independent work. Individuals who move on to stage three take on increased responsibility for influencing, guiding, directing and developing people. Some individuals make it to stage four, where they have some influence in defining the direction of the organization. Stage four means the individual has some control over the outcomes of his/her work. Employees at stage four of their careers become impatient or critical of the organization if they are not the organizational track.
Schein (1978) designed a structural model to show the aspects of the organization that involve the movement of people through it. Schein (1978) explains that traditional personnel functions such as job analysis and personnel appraisal should be meet the present and future employee demands of the organization along with the development needs of the each employee. He suggests that individuals develop career anchors. He observed a small sample of business school alumni and concluded that from the early stages of a career individuals obtain skills, and knowledge that shape their occupational self-concept. Schein (1978) explains that career anchors consist of individuals' self-perceived talents and abilities; motives and needs; and attitudes and values. Career anchors become more stable as individuals acquire more experience and feedback from their work.

Schein (1978) identified five career anchors. The first is technical/functional competence where career emphasis is on using ones expertise. The second is autonomy/independence where the career development emphasis in on freedom from organizational rules and control of content or process of individual's work. The third is managerial competence where the individual focuses on accomplishing tasks through others. Security/stability focuses on the organization’s loyalty, job tenure and financial security. Service/dedication focuses on the individual making a significant contribution in an area she values. Creativity and entrepreneurship emphasizes innovation and the creation of something new. Pure challenge is stressing problem solving and winning, and life integration emphasizes the individual balancing all aspects of her life.
Schein (1978) contends that many individuals have reached some of each of these career anchors, but the primary anchor is the one that gets chose if a choice is forced. He explains that if an individual recognizes her career anchor then decisions on making and planning for her career is facilitated.

Directional Pattern Models

An empirical study of career paths of top managers in large industrial firms revealed uniform patterns of career development with six stages (Piercy & Forbes, 1991). These are exploration, development, commitment, verification, payback, and payoff. Exploration is where one enters the organization uncommitted; development is where experiences are broadened and employees receive breadth and visibility through assignments. Phase three is the commitment where the manager identifies and becomes committed to a particular organization. The verification phase is where managerial leadership capabilities are established. Payback is when the managers are prepared for promotion to CEO positions and the final stage is payoff, where on the average the position of CEO was attained by age 50.

Driver (1982) describes four career concepts that underlie an individual’s thinking about her career and these concepts are built into occupations or organizations. The transitory career concept is where no fixed job or career is permanently chosen. The individual moves from one job to the next in no set pattern. The concept mostly applies to semi-skilled workers.

In the steady-state career concept the individual selects a job or career area early in her life and remains in that area for most of her life. This stage is mostly identified
with professionals such as physicians or skilled trade workers, such as barbers and plumbers. Driver (1982) noted that due to changes in society, professional and trades workers have been compelled to seek other career concepts. The linear career concept is when the individual chooses a field early in her life and plan for career advancement is developed and executed. This career concept is found among corporate managers. In the spiral career concept the individual develops in a specified field or career for a period of time. She then moves up into a related or a new area on a cyclic basis. This career concept is mostly related to consultants or writers.

The life-cycle, organizational-based and directional models were consciously or unconsciously based on men’s career development, with those of women treated as special cases to which models should be carefully applied. The following section discusses theories based on women’s career development.

Women’s Career Development

This section consists of three components. The first component discusses sociopsychological theories. The second component discusses the individual differences models. The third component discusses the social cognitive theories.

Until recently career development referred only to men and descriptions and theories focused on them. Although there have been attempts to work out a theory of career development applicable to both men and women, it has been concluded that women’s careers are more complex than men’s with some similarities and differences (Powell & Maniero, 1993). Fitzgerald, Fassinger, and Betz (1995) noted that although there are some similarities between the sexes in their career development, there are
enough differences between the sexes to warrant attempts to develop distinctive theories for each. Gutek and Larwood (1987) agree and argue for a different career development theory than males because their career are also important and they face different sets of opportunities and problems than men. Gutek and Larwood (1987) contend that women face more constraints in the workplace, especially gender stereotypes in hiring and promotion, and family life issues.

Women are socialized to place their primary energy into nurturing roles (Kosek & Kitch, 1994). Powell and Maniero (1993) observed that questions about the applicability of models that have concentrated only on men have been raised by those authors who proposed that women’s lives present unique challenges and stresses not accounted for in most of the career development literature. Marlow, Marlow, and Arnold (1995) concluded in their research that women perceive their career advancement differently from men’s based on the women’s different perception of the criteria needed for career advancement. Equal development programs for men and women are not necessarily the same. They argued that for development programs to be effective, women’s career development programs cannot be mere copies of men’s programs, but should be designed initially with women’s needs in focus.

**Theories of Women’s Career Development**

Theorists have taken two approaches to the study of women’s career development (Powell, 1993). They have specifically attempted to redress the historical emphasis on men in commonly accepted developmental models or they have attempted to develop unique theories that focus on women’s development exclusively (Powell, 1993).
Fitzgerald, Fassinger, and Betz (1995) identified three frameworks of women's career development. They are sociopsychological theories, individual difference models, and social cognitive theories.

**Sociopsychological Theories**

Sociopsychological theories identify the ways in which theorists attempt to integrate both individual and environmental influences on career behavior. Astin's (1984) sociopsychological model of career choice and work behavior, and Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise are discussed.

**Astin's (1984) Sociopsychological Model of Career Choice.** Astin (1984) proposed a sociopsychological model, which was designed to incorporate four major constructs: motivation, expectations, gender role socialization, and the structure of opportunity. She proposes that an individual's work behavior is motivated by the need for survival, pleasure, and contribution and career choices are grounded in expectations concerning the accessibility of alternative types of work and their relative ability to satisfy these three needs. She also posits that such expectations are based partly on early socialization experience and partly on the perceived structures of opportunity.

Attempting to account for the dramatic change in women's occupational aspirations, Astin (1984) suggests that changes in the structure of opportunity have led to corresponding changes in perceptions of occupational accessibility and thus to parallel shifts in career choice. Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) criticized this approach for the lack of effort to operationalize constructs and for its weak ties to the empirical literature.
Gottfredson’s theory of Circumscription and Comprise. Gottfredson (1981) formulated a model of vocational development with emphasis on the process of circumscription of career-choice alternatives and compromise between preferences and employment realities. The main point of both of these processes is the perceptions of job-self compatibility along three important dimensions, occupational gender-type, prestige, and field of work. According to Gottfredson (1981) gender type influences choice because through circumscription, the US society works to limit an individual’s options to a reduced range of career alternatives that is gender appropriate. When the range is set, the occupations that fall outside of it are determined as unusual circumstances.

Gottfredson’s (1981) view proposes important restrictive effects of occupational gender stereotyping on woman’s aspirations. She contends that when compromises between preferences and employment realities are made, individuals will more likely choose the gender-appropriateness dimension over sacrifice field of work.

Individual Differences Models

The individual differences model highlights the uniqueness of the individual and their differences in socialization and development as well as their interests and abilities. The individual differences models have attempted to produce models of career development that attempt to incorporate the unique issues and concerns of women. Farmer’s (1985) model of career motivation in women and men, and Betz-Fitzgerald-Fassinger (1987) model of career-choice realism in high-ability women are discussed.

characteristics (academic self-esteem, independence, values, attributions), and environmental variables (parental and teacher support) that predict career and achievement motivation. She used results from path analyses using data from both men and women as well as from large representative samples of White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian ninth- and twelfth-grade students. The results suggested that background factors are the strongest predictors of aspirations, whereas personal variables were the major predictors of mastering strivings. Career motivation was strongly predicted by personal variables, with background and environmental variables adding some predictive power to the model.

Betz-Fitzgerald-Fassinger (1987) model of career-choice realism in high-ability women. The Betz-Fitgerald-Fassinger model of career choice is another individual differences model (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987). This model proposed that experiences with work and academic success, positive role model influences, and perceived encouragement influence a woman’s attitude toward self and gender roles; work attitudes in turn influence her life-style preference, and ultimately her career choice. Betz, Fitzgerald and Fassinger (1987) focused on successful college women, for whom individual differences may be assumed to play the most vital role and environmental restraints to be minimal. This model is concerned with the underutilization of gifted and talented women and focused on realism of career choice as a major outcome variable, which is, the extent to which a career choice is congruent with the abilities and interests of the individual.
Social Cognitive Frameworks

Social cognitive frameworks "encompass psychosocial phenomena, such as motivational and self-regulatory mechanism, in a model of triadic reciprocality in which environment, person factors (such as cognition), and behavior mutually influence on another in ongoing interaction" (Fitzgerald, Fassinger, & Betz. 1995, p. 94). Hackett and Betz’s (1981) application of self-efficacy theory to women’s career behavior is discussed.

Hackett and Betz’s (1981) application of self-efficacy theory to women’s career behavior. Hackett and Betz (1981) proposed a social learning perspective on women’s career development. Their self-efficacy theory was based on Bandura’s (1977) social learning theory. The model postulates that largely as a result of socialization experiences, women lack strong expectations of personal efficacy in relationship to many career-related behaviors, and thus, fail to fully realize their capabilities and talents in career pursuits. Self-efficacy is defined:

Expectations or beliefs that concerning one’s ability to successfully perform a given behavior. Efficacy expectations are postulated to determine whether or not behavior will be initiated, how much effort will be expended, and how long behaviors will be sustained in the face of obstacles and aversive experiences. Hence, efficacy expectations are postulated to influenced choice, performance, and persistence in career-related domains (Fitzgerald, Fassinger, & Betz, 1995, p. 94).
Hackett and Betz (1981) contend that low expectations of self-efficacy relevant to different career areas, particularly the male-dominated ones, are a main mediator of gender differences in vocational choice and later vocational behavior. Their results showed that background experiences of men and women are different in relations to sources of efficacy information they provide for later career options. The male socialization provides efficacy information for a much broader variety of career options.

The goal of an effective career development program is to create opportunities for employees and organizations to benefit from improved performance and satisfaction. More organizations are recognizing the need for career development programs that train employee to set career goals, train managers as referral agents, and establish mentoring programs. These programs may take the forms of career resource centers, career workshops, career counseling, or a combination of all three.

Theories on African-American Women’s Career Development

This part is divided into two five components. The first component discusses the essentiality of career development models for African-American women. The second component discusses the social cognitive theory of career development for African-American women. The third component discusses the model for highly achieving women. The fourth component presents the Cheatham’s Africentricity-based model. The fifth component discusses the Dicken’s and Dicken’s model of career development.

The Need for Career Development for African-American Women

The field of career development has paid scant attention to the experiences of African-American women. There is very little known about the combined effects of
sexism and racism on career development. The extent to which existing theories and models accurately describe the experiences of African-American women is still unclear (Richie, Fassinger, Linn, Johnson, Robinson, & Prosser, 1997). There is very little known about the experiences of professional women because much of the extant research has been conducted with college students (Richie, Fassinger, Linn, Johnson, Robinson, & Prosser, 1997).

Smith (1981) postulated:

Factors including the high unemployment rates of African-American female adolescents, the rising rates of illegitimate births, the early assumptions of adult responsibilities, the different routes by which young black females attain womanhood status, and the cultural prescriptions and expectations regarding work for black women all seem to indicate that the psychological factors affecting career development of black adolescents may be quite different from those of either black males, white males, or white females (p. 29).

Griffin (1987) asserts that African-American women are subjected to restricted opportunity. Poor African-American women are not guaranteed entry into the workplace and all African-Americans if given entry, advancement and financial reward are not guaranteed. The opportunity structure, differential for all, is qualitatively still more different for African-Americans. The rationale for African-American’s career development was developed by examining issues of African-American identity within the context of minority status and through examination of the environment that provides restricted opportunities for African-Americans and other minorities. Griffin (1987)
agreed with the US Office of Education's study of 1973 in issuing intervention for Black career development, which is, to expand career education for Blacks and opportunities for minorities.

Smith (1981) conducted a detailed literature review on the career development of African-American female adolescents and young college women by bringing together the different strands of research conducted on the group. She concluded that researchers have tended to investigate the significance of situational variables (culture, economic, and psychosocial factors) in mainly abstract terms. The concept of stages of psychological and career development, vocational maturity, career aspirations, interests, choices, and sex-role stereotypes have been useful in analyzing the career behavior of young African-American females, but have not shed light on why they have a difficult time in the labor force.


It has been duly noted that a comprehensive model of career development of racial and ethnic minorities has not been developed. Less attention has been devoted to models of the career development of racial and ethnic minority women (Hackett and Byers, 1996). In an attempt to delineated some of the specific implications of social cognitive theory to the career development of African-American women, Hackett and Byars (1996) posit that African-American women may need assistance in coping with realistic negative outcome expectations. A strong efficacy for coping with obstacles and barriers can result in successful performance.
They presented four sources of efficacy information: performance accomplishments, vicarious learning, physiological arousal, and verbal persuasion. These contextual and learning experiences were presented to elucidate how African-American women careers differ from those of their white counterparts. Successful performance accomplishments are usually the most powerful source of information for self-efficacy judgments, but there may be circumstances when the other three sources have stronger influences on career efficacy beliefs. Vicarious learning experiences and verbal encouragement are likely to promote stronger efficacy, while inhibiting anxiety, negative emotional arousal, and verbal discouragement can serve to erode efficacy estimates.

All four sources of information generally interact complexly and reciprocally over time with academic and career self-efficacy. Enhanced, realistic confidence in one’s ability serves to facilitate initiating and successfully performing work- and career-related endeavors. Strong career self-efficacy expectations also produce positive outcome expectations and facilitative performance attributions, increase interest in areas in which one feels efficacious, and promote persistence in the face of obstacles and setback (Hackett & Byars, 1996).

Theoretical Model of Highy Achieving African-American and White Women’s Career Development

Richie, Fassinger, Linn, Johnson, Robinson and Proser (1997) presented a model of career development for African-American and white women. They used a sample of 18 prominent, highly achieving African-American and white women and constructed a theoretical model in order to represent the ways in which the women described their
personal and professional lives. The theoretical model included five major components: a core story consisting of participant’s work behavior and attitudes, which is enacted within socio-cultural personal background, and current contextual conditions and leads to particular careers and actions and consequences, which in turn, cycles back to exert influence on the contextual conditions, thus creating a dynamic, constant and evolving person-environment interaction.

Cheatham’s Africentricity-Based Model

Cheatham (1990) argues that individual behavior is organized with respect to values, attitudes, and beliefs of a reference group, specifically a cultural reference group. He conceptualizes the career development of African-Americans within a complementary framework termed Africentrism. He proposes a heuristic model for understanding the origins of culturally relevant values some African-Americans hold toward work and careers. This model argues for a shift from the universal to emic or cultural specific perspective that tempers universality in favor of concepts that respect and incorporate the values and truths of each of its co-culture. The model represents a petition for investing the Eurocentric with the Africentric social order to obtain a respectful portrait of the African-American employee and potentially more useful career development interventions.

Dickens and Dickens Model of Black Career Development

Dickens and Dickens (1991) argue that African-American career development has four stages: entry, adjusting, planned growth, and success. Entry is the beginning of the black individual’s relationship with the organization and is characterized by a feeling of
false security in which anger is contained and issues of race are ignored in an effort not to disrupt the status quo. The individual assumes that rewards are allocated based upon merit and is unaware of the politics.

The adjusting phase is first seen as a period of dissatisfaction marked by low self-confidence seen by inequities between African-Americans and whites. The adjusting phase is then followed by a period of frustration where the individual’s rage and anger cannot be contained. Thus, the behavior is seen as uncooperative and little personal or professional growth is achieved. In the third phase, planned growth, the individual learns to manage her rage. The individual performs in a manner that is consistent with corporate norms, but maintains her uniqueness and sense of self.

The fourth stage, success, is when the individual has integrated the learning of the previous phases. She accepts the burdens of being a manager, is aware of her own blackness and its impact on an organization and various situations, needs fewer strokes from others, is results oriented, and has a high sense of confidence. The individual continues to refine her interpersonal and task-related skills. Dickens and Dickens (1991) contend the individual’s personality determines the amount of time spent in each stage; and the stages are repeatable with promotion or change in organizations.

This section discussed the issues in career development, the traditional models, models for women and models for African-Americans. The following section discusses the literature to the barriers and facilitators to the career development of women and African-American women.
Barriers to the Career Development of Women

This section is divided into three parts. Part one presents the internal factors that affect the career development of women. Part two presents the external factors that affect the career development of women. Part three presents the factors that affect the career development of African-American women.

The desired outcome of career development is promotion. The factors that facilitate or hinder career development are those that impact on promotion decisions. Researchers have identified factors that facilitate and hinder the career development of women, and proposed that the factors can be categorized as organizational, interpersonal, individual, and personal (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989; Powell & Maniero, 1993). There are situation and person-based factors of gender such as internal traits, organization factors such as structural opportunity, and institutional system factors such as practices and beliefs (Fagenson, 1990). Structural factors are at societal level, the organizational work environment, home roles, and early socialization (Tharenou, 1990).

**Internal Factors**

This part has four components. The first component reviews the career paths of women in the workplace. The second component reviews the sexuality and sex roles. The third component discusses family and home issues. The fourth component discusses skills and self-confidence.

Internal factors can have a considerable effect on the career development of women. Internal factors may include personal factors such as skills and experience,
work-family issues, and the career paths they choose. These factors are discussed in the following sections.

Career paths

Career paths have been suggested to be particularly important to the career development and success of employees (Cox & Harquail, 1991). Line positions have been shown to have faster promotions and salary increases than staff job assignments, also a multiple-employer career path can lead to higher salaries and faster promotions than a single employer (Larwood & Gattiker, 1987). Also, more diversified career paths fostering relevant experience tend to lead to faster promotions (Kanter, 1977).

Henning & Jardim (1977) concluded that women in general have been employed less frequently than men have in line positions have and tend to have single-employer careers. Cox and Harquail (1991) tested hypotheses about the relations between gender, career paths, and career success in a sample of 502 MBAs, 125 females and 377 males. They found that women in managerial careers did not differ from men on total promotions and career satisfaction but did experience lower salary increases, fewer management promotions, and lower hierarchical levels compared to men with similar characteristics.

Schneer and Reitman (1995) examined the career paths of men and women MBAs and found that fewer women than men remained in full-time positions through mid-career. For he MBAs who were employed full-time through mid-career, the women were found to earn less income, worked fewer hours, and achieved lower levels of management. However they generally more satisfied with their career then males.
Gender has an impact on career paths and women are not fully rewarded for their contributions by the organizations. Women take more of a holistic approach to their lives than men, with images of balance between work and relationships affecting their career decisions and choices. Because the structure of opportunity does not facilitate women's achieving the balance they seek, many are required to make trade-offs between their spouses' needs, family demands, and their own work motivation (Powell & Maniero, 1993).

**Sexuality/Sex roles**

Fateri & Kleiner (1992) argue that the lack of success of women in the workplace is attributed to their sex-role orientation. Sex role orientation is the behavior that society considers appropriate for each sex. Studies suggest that a good manager is masculine. Women are to be masculine at work but should show their femininity in other areas of life (Fateri & Kleiner, 1992, Larwood, Gutek, & Gattiker, 1984). Nieva and Gutek (1981) contend that if women wanted to have the approval of people they had to be warm and expressive. If women wanted to succeed professionally, they had to be assertive, competitive, and firm. Weak and expressive if they wanted to succeed professionally.

Powell (1982) contends that for a woman to be successful as a manager, she must be identified with masculine traits because sex-role identity is more important than the gender of managers.

Camden and Witt (1983) examined whether women who manage in the feminine style may be better managers than men who manage in the typical masculine style. They surveyed 211 employees from three organizations and concluded that workers managed
by women in feminine style were more productive than workers who were managed by men conforming to stereotypical roles. Pike (1985) found that androgynous managers were rated as more effective leaders than non-androgynous managers were. Pike (1985) suggests that managers with the most openness were significantly more effective leaders than managers who were not so. He also suggests that more equal valuing of the feminine/expressive behaviors and the masculine/instrumental behaviors led to greater leadership.

Hoffman and Hurst (1990) conducted a study on 70 females and 42 males on the perception of gender stereotypes. The subjects read descriptions of members of two fictional categories, one having 80% “city workers” and 20% “child raisers,” the other with the percentages reversed. They later made personality ratings of each category and of the category subgroups occupy each role. The subjects formed role-based category stereotypes that affected their ratings when the targets’ roles were specified. Stronger stereotypes arose when the categories were biologically defined or when the subjects attempted to explain the category-role correlation. The basic effect was replicated using roles that are not differentially linked to familiar human groups. The findings are interpreted as showing that stereotypes can arise solely in response to sexual division of labor and serve to rationalize this division by attributing to the sexes intrinsic personality differences.

Garland and Price (1977) conducted a study on 123 male subjects. The subjects read descriptions of a successful or unsuccessful female manager and then made causal attributions for her success or failure. The results show causal interpretations of a female
manager’s success are strongly related to an individual’s attitude toward women in management. Garland and Price (1977) suggest that internal attitudes such as ability and hard work for success were associated with more positive attitudes toward women in management. External attributions such as good luck and easy job were associated with more negative attitudes toward women in management.

Sex-role spillover refers to the carryover of gender-based roles into the workplace and is exacerbated by having a highly skewed ratio of the men at work (Gutek & Cohen, 1987). The patriarchal relationship is reproduced in the workplace creating numerous situations where “women are expected to service the needs of men within the organization such as fetching coffee” (Mills, 1997, p. 324). Mills (1997) investigated the implication for sexual behavior. She found that the fallout of sex role spillover is more visible negative for women than men. Women who work in traditional job and who work a great deal with men face the problem of being seen by men as sex objects. Women in nontraditional jobs face the problems of being visible role deviants and attract sexual overtures.

**Family/Home Issues**

Women who seek to combine a career and a family may encounter a number of problems and conflicts. Ragins and Sundstrom (1989) argued that a spouse and children interrupt women’s work experience and thus reduce their promotion to leadership positions in the organization. Therefore, managerial women are more likely to be unmarried and childless (Tharenou & Conroy, 1988). Sacrifice, tradeoff, and compromise are factors in the life of managerial women. Women may therefore opt to forego having
children and remain unmarried (Tharenou & Conroy, 1994). Women are likely to move from full-time to part-time work because of family commitments (Felmlee, 1984) and women may leave the workforce due to the home and family demands (Rosin & Korabik, 1990). The increased career interruptions and family/home demands may result in unfavorable perceptions by bosses where they are perceived to be less committed to their jobs (Schwartz, 1989; Hamilton, 1993).

Schwartz (1989) examines the issue of professional women and men and their differences regarding commitment, turnover, promotability, and career interruptions. The conclusion is that because many of the gender differences relate to maternity rather than socialization issues, two separate and unequal tracks should be created within organizations. These tracks, labeled “career primary” and “career-and-family” are designed to give women with families the opportunity to maintain their career positions but less-than-equal footing with positions of men. The career-and-family track labeled the “mommy track,” is suggested to be part time, possibly job-shared, and with fewer benefits and financial and promotional opportunities. Schwartz (1989) maintains that these two tracks are essential because the “career primary” woman needs opportunities to perform like men without the stigma of being associated with other, potentially mothering women who cast negative aspersions on all women within the organization.

The “mommy track” has generated controversial responses. Castro (1989) and Hall (1989) contend that Schwartz’s views support prejudices of male managers that women are not committed to careers. Russell (1995) argues that:
Women fear that male managers will have a ready excuse for denying them promotions, will treat them as second class citizens, and will continue to believe that it is a bad investment in grooming mothers for management jobs...

Opponents also argue that “mommy track” perpetuates the existing masculine culture where women are required “fit in” rather than forcing the organizational culture to change… The “mommy track” continues to place the burden of childcare on the women, than on both parents, and assumes that women in senior management do not want to have children. Women should make their own choices regarding what career tracks they want to be on…A women should not be forced to make a decision early in her career and have to stay on one track during her entire career (p. 296).

Skills and Self-Confidence

Self-confidence is defined as “an individual’s anticipation of successful mastery of challenges of overcoming obstacles (Rosenberg, 1979, p. 82). Self-confidence is an important attribute for leadership and management and is posed to enhance managerial advancement (Tharenou, Latimer, & Conroy, 1994). Research on self-confidence suggests that women have lower self-confidence than men (Nieva & Gutek, 1981). However, some studies have shown that high self-confidence exists among top-level female executives and those advancing in organizations (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). Women in gender-atypical jobs have higher self-confidence than other working women (Lemaku, 1983). Low self-confidence among women may be reflective of attributions regarding success and failure. Women may be less likely than men to expect successful
outcomes even when their performance is superior. When they are successful, they may attribute their success to temporary or external causes, such as luck, rather than to lasting or internal causes, such as ability. Ragins and Sundstrom (1989) argued that as a result women's external attributions and low expectancies for success may not only lead to low self-confidence, but also to a lower probability of successful performance. Unsuccessful performance may in turn reinforce external attributions, low self-confidence, and low expectations for future success. Differences between men and women on self-confidence may vary with the situation. Self-confidence among women has been found to be partially based upon comparisons of their own abilities with that of others (Lenny, Gold, & Browning, 1983). Self-confidence may be associated with seeking power and women may hesitate to seek or use power.

Women managers often do not manage their career goals as men. Women tend to have ambiguous career goals, and a tendency to suppress their ambitions and goals (Walsh & Osipow, 1994).

**External Factors**

This part is divided four components. The first component discusses stereotypes and perceptions. The second component reviews performance appraisal and promotion. The third component reviews mentoring. The fourth component reviews networks.

Women managers may encounter a number of external factors that affect their career development. Davidson and Cooper (1988) argued that pressure encountered by
women appear to be more external than internal. External factors include stereotypes, discrimination, mentors and networks, social isolation.

Stereotypes and Perceptions

Stereotypes are characteristics imputed to the members of identifiable groups (Davidson & Cooper, 1988). Female stereotypes tend to include such traits as gentleness, submission, dependency, and nurturance. In contrast, male stereotypes include traits such as forcefulness, dominance, independence, ambition, and competitiveness (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). Research has demonstrated that women and men managers have similar values, traits, motivations, leadership styles, and skills, and that women perform better than or equal to men (Fagenson & Jackson, 1993; Brenner; Tomkiewicz, & Schein, 1989). Jacklin and Maccoby (1975) found no sex differences in achievement motivation, risk-taking, or task-persistence, and concluded that women were not psychologically handicapped for management, but were hindered by discriminatory personnel policies. Morrison, White, and Van Velsor (1987) found that male and female managers of comparable positions were similar in terms of personality, intelligence, leading, influencing, and motivating others, analyzing problems, task-orientation, and verbal skills. Rosen, Templeton, and Kichline (1981) found that 68 female and 53 male MBA graduates had similar career motivations including a sense of achievement, challenge, money, and independence. Yet, despite these overwhelming similarities, men and women managers are perceived to be different (Powell, 1993; Heilman, Bock, Simon, & Martell, 1989).
Stereotypically masculine traits have been found to be more socially acceptable than feminine ones (Henning & Jardin, 1977). Researchers have found that women are perceived by others to be unsuited for managerial jobs (Henning & Jardin, 1977). Management has never been considered to be a female occupation because they are perceived to be less competent, too emotional or sentimental, and less objective than men (Schein, 1973, 1975).

Ragins & Sundstrom (1989) contended that gender-based stereotypes associated power with men but not with women. Therefore, women seeking management positions face the possibility that stereotypes might diminish perceptions of their positions because of the distorted perceptions of women.

Sex-role stereotypes imply that power is stereotypically male, thus a good woman manager is a contradiction in terms (Putnam & Heinen, 1976). Incompatibility between the female stereotype and power in an organization may result in role conflict for women. If a female manager displays the culturally defined traits of a woman, she is rejected as an unacceptable manager. If she acts according to the male defined role of a leader, she is condemned as being unfeminine (Putnam & Heinen, 1976).

Ragins and Sundstrom (1989) maintained that stereotypes held by subordinates may be problematic for female managers. Mayes (1979) found that subordinates’ reactions to female supervisors have found subordinates’ resistance, fear of losing control, and even feelings of sexual inadequacy. Cohen, Bunker, and Burton (1978) found female leaders who displayed behaviors incongruent with sex-role stereotypes received lower evaluations from male subordinates than did women who displayed
traditional sex role behaviors. Welsh (1979) found that in comparison with women, men endorsed a more conservative and stereotypic role for female managers. Pleck (1976) found that men who were threatened by women’s competence and placed in competitive positions with women elevated their performance and avoided future task interactions with female partners. Fagenson (1990) reported that the perception of masculine attributes were found to be related to an individual’s level in the organizational power hierarchy where upper level men and women reported possessing more masculine characteristics than did individuals at lower levels.

Sex stereotypes present a barrier to women managers and have had negative consequences for women in terms of hiring and promotion practices and in biased treatment on the job. Women are placed in different career paths than men because they are denied access to line positions in management and are segregated in lower-level jobs (Larwood, Gutek, & Gattiker, 1984). Prevalent beliefs about the level of women’s career commitment may undermine their effectiveness in organizations concerning role status incongruence, role conflict, career immobility, power differences, differences in training and development, feedback differences, and job segregation (Gregory, 1990).

**Performance Appraisal and Promotion**

Performance appraisal is a very complex process and it involves an analysis of what employees are supposed to do; the gathering of information about the employee on the job; an evaluation of judgment of an employee with respect to what was expected; and a decision about how to use such information in other management decisions (Chen and DiTomasco, 1996). Performance appraisal, thus, involves both pre- and post-appraisal
activities, because choices have to be made about how the appraisal is structured and how
the information is to be used, in addition to whatever choices are made about the
appraisal itself. The process utilized measurement standards of traits or characteristics,
such as loyalty or enthusiasm, and not of behavior. In addition, individual employees are
often evaluated formally or informally, in comparison to other employees (Chen &
DiTomasco, 1996).

Research has shown that individuals are first categorized on the bases of social
grouping such as race and gender (Chen & DiTomasco, 1996). These categorizations
carry with them stereotypical characteristics. Chen and DiTamasco (1996) posit:

The categories and associated stereotypes then become expectations and
frameworks, which orient those people who are conscious of gender, race, or age
role expectations to attend to, or even actively seek for, confirming information
and to ignore disconfirming information about women, and racial and age groups.
The use of implicit frameworks about group differences would then be used
automatically and unconsciously, unless the evaluator made a conscious effort to
modify or change them (pp. 231-232).

Performance appraisal systems generally aid administrative decisions regarding
salary and promotion and provide guidance for decisions about careers (Ragins &
Sundstrom, 1989). These functions are clearly instrumental in promotions and in the
development of careers within organizations. Research has shown that women tend to
receive lower and negative evaluations on their performance than men even though their
respective performances are identical (Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992; Jacobson &
Koch, 1977; Rosen & Jerdee, 1974). Nieva and Gutek (1981) in their literature review found that performance evaluations tended to be biased towards men. The studies demonstrated that women were ranked lower than equally qualified males, and males were more likely to be hired and receive higher salaries than females. Landau (1995) examined the relationship of race and gender to managers’ ratings of promotion potential for a sample of 1268 managerial and professional employees and found that females were rated lower than males.

In contrast to studies showing evaluation bias favoring males, a number of studies have shown that women receive more favorable performance evaluations compared to men. One study found that employees tended to rate the performance of male leaders as being worse than that of female leaders, even though the actual performance of both sexes was equal (Jacobson & Effertz, 1974). Abramson, Goledberg, Greenberg, and Abramson (1977) also found that women were rated more favorably than men. Wood (1976) studied 100 male and female managers and found that male managers tended to rate their female peers very highly in decision-making competence, and their ability to control their emotions. Additionally, women have being credited with bringing a different perspective to business problems. They have also been credited with offering valuable insight into marketing and sales problems dealing with female customers, and with weakening intense feelings of competition between male managers.

Studies have also found no differences in the evaluation of male and female managers. Frank and Drucker (1977) found no differences in ratings of males and females on sensitivity, organization, planning, and written communication. Taylor and
Deaux (1973) found no sex differences in ratings of ability, motivation, and overall task performance, using an extensive case study of male and female human resource managers, and Dipoye and Wiley (1977) found no differences in the evaluation of males and females.

According to Ragins and Sundstrom (1989), the inconsistency of performance evaluations show a number of factors relevant to promotion. Sackett, DuBois, and Noe (1991) examined the male-female differences in performance ratings in 486 work groups across a wide variety of jobs and organization. They found that women received lower ratings when the proportion of women in the group was less than 20%. When women make up more than 50% of the group, they were rated more highly than men. Pulakos, Oppler, White and Borman (1989) investigated the effects of race and gender on performance ratings. They found that systematic bias as function of rater or ratee gender and race was no important in influencing the ratings.

Women may receive less favorable performance evaluations when they attempt male-typed jobs, thus violating sex-roles. Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky (1992) reviewed the research on the evaluation of women who occupy leadership roles. They found that women were devalued relative to their male counterparts when leadership was carried out in stereotypically masculine styles, particularly when this style was autocratic or directive. In addition, the devaluation of women was greater when the leaders occupied male-dominated roles and when the evaluators were men. Landy and Farr (1980) concluded that women tend to receive less favorable evaluations than males in male-typed jobs. Beutell (1986) found that raters valued stereotypically masculine over
stereotypically feminine modes of behavior, especially for female high performers. This suggests that a high-performing woman who acts in a feminine manner receives low ratings.

Nieva and Gutek (1981) contend that the inconsistent findings on evaluation of performance may also be a tendency to reward women for mediocrity. They concluded that competent men receive better ratings than equally competent women, but incompetent men receive lower ratings than equally incompetent women. Ragins and Sundstrom (1989) argued that “women with the best records of performance are less likely to be promoted than those with mediocre records” (p. 60). Consequently, the pool of qualified women candidates for promotion would decrease at each level in the hierarchy, and eventually the qualified women would be replaced by better qualified men. Cannings and Montmarquette (1991) in their study of 800 middle managers determined that the tendency for women to rely more on formal bidding for promotion to secure offer of promotion deprives them of managerial momentum. Underlying the greater success for men is their use of informal networks, which is less meritocratic than bringing one’s desire for promotion to the attention of supervisors. This also appears to offset performance evaluations that are on the average lower than those of women. Cannings and Montmarquette (1991) define managerial momentum as the reciprocal interactions among performance, ambition, and rewards that provide women with sustained career progress within the organization.

Harlan and Weiss (1982) in their study of two large companies and 100 managers found that in comparison to men, women were less likely to receive important feedback,
formal job objectives, and incentives to improve. Therefore, female managers may also receive less useful evaluations from their supervisors. Supervisors also expected lower professional commitment from women than from men.

The research suggests that evaluation of performance is conducted on different criteria for women than for men. Ragins and Sundstrom (1989) state, “women may receive lower ratings particularly in the case in which raters have to draw inferences or rate women performing male-typed jobs. Lower ratings may in turn prevent women from being promoted to leadership positions” (p. 60).

Mentoring

Some evidence suggests successful managers tend to have someone in the organization who acts as a mentor. Some research found that managers ranked having a sponsor as an important factor in their career advancement. It has been suggested that one of the barriers faced by women managers is that they have difficulty finding a mentor, and in most cases if women were to have mentors, they were male.

Hunsaker & Hunsaker (1991) consider mentoring to be a critical aspect of the career development and advancement of men and women in organizations. Mentoring is defined as the “a one-to-one interactive process of guided developmental learning based on the premise that the participants will have reasonably frequent contact and sufficient interactive time together” (Cohen & Galbraith, 1995, p. 5). Mentors provide a blend of assistance to promote the development of mentees or protégés (Ragins, 1989). Mentors establish a collaborative and evolving relationship with mentees for the purpose of enabling them “to take appropriate risks, deal better with stress and uncertainty, develop
more self-confidence, make more informed decisions, and attain immediate and future objectives" (Cohen & Gailbraith, 1995, p. 6). Russel (1994) asserts:

Mentors assist protégés in career development by sponsoring employees for promotions, helping them learn the ropes and prepare for advancement, offer challenging assignments to develop them, providing exposure and visibility for mentees, coaching them and giving feedback, serving as role models to mentees, and protecting them from damaging experiences (p.283).

Dreher and Ash (1990) studied 147 women and 173 men business school graduates to determine whether mentoring is differentially associated with career outcomes for men and women. They found that individuals experiencing extensive mentoring practices reported receiving more promotions, had higher salaries, and were more satisfied with their pay and benefits than individuals experiencing less extensive mentoring relationships. Hening and Jardin (1976) reported that top level female executives believe that mentoring is a key ingredient for advancement. Most mentoring relationships are informal, although Klauss (1981) noted that formal mentoring programs, which match mentors with proteges, are becoming more popular in organizations.

Mentoring provides benefits to the organization. Halcomb (1980) and Terrell and Hassell (1994) conducted studies show that mentoring in a variety of settings improves recruitment efforts, hastens the induction process, improves staffing plans, increases organizational communication, increases productivity and cost effectiveness, and enhances the delivery of products and services. Clutterbuck and Devine (1985) also
suggested that mentoring assists in the stabilization of corporate cultures and in leadership development.

Women need mentors to understand the realities of male-dominated business culture as well as to be identified for promotion. However, according to most reports, women are less likely to develop these relationships than men are (Roche, 1979). Women are less likely to be mentors since there are very few women in higher-level positions in organizations (Russell, 1994). Also, because women are often excluded from informal networks, they are less likely to be chosen as protégés. They have less access to mentors and more difficulty finding a mentor (Burke, 1992). Epstein (1970) posits that men are less interested in selecting women as protégés because they are perceived to be less capable of fulfilling the duties of a protégé.

Women may fail to recognize the importance of gaining a sponsor and naively assume that competence is the only requirement needed to get ahead in the organization. Hennig and Jardin (1977) found that the managers in their study assume that their superior competence and technical ability are the true determinants of advancement, and will be noticed and rewarded for excellent performance by their superiors. They wait to be chosen, relying on beliefs about the effectiveness of the formal structure and the way things ought to be. Schreiber (1979) found that the biggest worry of women entering technical jobs is whether they would be able to do the job. Their male counterparts, in contrast, are concerned with informal ties of loyalty and dependence, which can make the critical difference in employees' life and movement at work. Reich (1986) in a study of 131 female executives, reported that mentors are not necessary for advancement. She
contends that mentors can actually hurt a career and that invitations to mentor may be
disguised sexual advances.

Most effective managers believe that mentors are critical for success (Hunsaker, 1992). More women than men who advance to senior management report having mentors. Phillips (1978) found two-thirds of over 300 top women executives had at least one mentor, and the majority had two or more mentors. Women managers may need mentors even more than men because of the discrimination and work-related obstacles they encounter (Kanter, 1977). Graddick (1984) in a survey of 287 advancing female managers, found 43% considered mentoring as being responsible for their advancement. Top-level female executives reported mentoring as a key ingredient for advancement. Male mentors tend to hold more critical and centralized positions in organizations, which give them access to valuable information concerning job openings, pending projects, and managerial decisions (Barnier, 1982). Therefore, a male mentor may have a wider power base, may help to set realistic goals, may provide greater visibility to important organizational members and may have access to more valuable resources than a female mentor (White, Cox, & Cooper, 1992).

Potential male mentors may be reluctant to select female mentees because of concerns about issues of intimacy and sexual attraction (Burke, 1992; Powell, 1993). Clawson and Kram (1984) postulate that male-female mentoring relationships may involve tension and anxiety. Identifying a comfortable level of intimacy is often problematic, and such relationships can remain superficial with their full developmental potential untapped. The mere rumor of sexual involvement can damage the careers of
both individuals. As a result, some male executives prefer to groom and promote other men to leadership positions (Burke, 1990, 1992). They may also prefer to mentor people who are similar to themselves. These difficulties in establishing and carrying out cross-gender mentoring relationships present a major barrier to women’s career success (Clawson & Kram, 1984).

Another difficulty with male-female mentoring relationships is that women managers reasoned that even with supportive male mentors, men can never fully understand or empathize with the constraints facing women in a male-dominated environments (Russell, 1994). Male mentors may have difficulty advising their female mentees on dealing with tokenism or isolation from their peers, or giving them guidance on work-family issues (Russell, 1994). Male mentors may find it difficult to fulfill all of their female mentees’ needs.

Mentoring relationships between women have been less studied because, until recently, there has been a paucity of upper-level women available to serve as mentors to younger, up-and-coming women (Powell, 1993). Tokenism arguments have been advanced to explain why such women have not reached out to younger women. Laws (1975) explains that often the woman possess the characteristics culturally associated with the dominant male group, and these characteristics bring her to the attention of the mentor. She is brought into the male network, where she is provided attention, rewards, and credentials that are not available to other women. Kanter (1977) reported that people in token positions enjoy their unique positions and view others around them as potential threat to their achievements. Upper-level women may cherish the sense of importance
their unique status brings and be reluctant to mentor younger women (Powell, 1993). Rich (1979) posits that the cost of this special treatment is usually an increased distance from the wider female condition and an increased identification with the dominant male group, and she is willing to pay this price.

Women who recognize the need of mentors may have difficulty obtaining one. Ragins and Sundstrom (1989) contend that they may have not the knowledge, skills, or strategies necessary to obtain a mentor. While males may feel more comfortable and familiar with assuming an assertive role in initiating a mentoring relationship, females may be uncomfortable and relatively inexperienced in assertive roles.

Networks

A network is a collection of people who regularly exchange information, support, and favors within and across the organization’s boundaries (Kanter, 1977). Networks can be a source of power by disseminating information, support, and favors within and across the organization’s boundaries (Kanter, 1977; Pfeffer, 1981). Russell (1994) states, “networks involve linkages and communication between people at vertical and lateral levels” (p. 287). Networking is conducted through grapevines, conferences, workshops, phone calls, parties, mutual friends, and sharing books, newsletters, and articles (Rizzo, Mendez, & Brosnan, 1990). Kaplan (1984) posits that most successful managers use networks so they can trade information, technical expertise, and advice, as well as garner support.

According to Ragins and Sundstrom (1989) two types of information are available in networks. One, information about job openings may be acquired through networks.
“This information may increase access to powerful positions in organizations. Second, information needed to perform job functions may be obtained. One way information may occur is through informal training for individuals entering a position, for example, coworkers showing new employees ‘the ropes’” (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989, p. 67). Networks may also serve as informal forums for discussing problems and making decisions. Networks may therefore be used for informal participation in decisions. Furthermore, by socializing with individuals and providing for their acceptance and support, networks may provide opportunities to develop personal base of power (Kanter, 1977).

Brass (1985) studied 76 male and 64 female employees and their supervisors in one organization and found that organizational influence and promotions were associated with critical positions in the organization’s networks. Networks were divided by gender; women had their own networks, and men had their own networks (Brass, 1985). Men and women were equally skilled at building organizational networks, but men were more skilled at developing outside contacts and interacting with the organization’s dominant coalition. He found one exception in mixed gender work groups. The women in those groups received higher influence ratings and were more involved with male networks, the organization’s dominant coalition, and outside networks.

Hendrick (1981) contends that women managers have traditionally been denied access to the important informal networks and interactions in organizations. Rosen, Templeton, and Kichline (1981) found that more than 60% of female managers said their male colleagues from informal social networks had excluded them.
Exclusion of women from informal networks may occur for various reasons. Women may be excluded because they were not considered viable candidates for promotions and equal status in the organization (Russell, 1994). Also they may have been excluded because men were uncomfortable communicating with women or wanted to maintain their dominance over women (Kanter, 1977). In addition, the token status of women managers has served to exclude them from important informal networks (Terborg, 1977). According to Rizzo & Mendez, (1991) white males may be assumed to have the requisite characteristics to be part of the managerial circle, while women and minorities may not be considered acceptable. Therefore women may have to pass certain tests concerning behavior, attitudes, and values before they can be considered acceptable to the group. Women may be viewed as disruptive intruders in all-male groups and excluded for that reason (Kanter, 1977). Epstein (1975) contends that women may also be excluded because men feel uncomfortable in dealing with them in informal settings, such as bars or gymnasiums.

Women may choose not to be included in informal networks. Donnel and Hall (1980) studied of 442 pairs of male and female managers, and found that women were less willing than their male counterparts to share relevant information with colleagues. Shockley and Staley (1980) found that 67\% of the female managers reported that their primary source of information was superiors and subordinates. Pazy (1987) found that when compared to men, women reported less use of informal mechanisms to advance their careers. Harlan and Weiss (1982 found no differences between males and females using informal networks. The women in the sample reported that they had to try harder to
become a part of the network, while the men reported that they gained membership more easily.

**Barriers Affecting the Career Development of African-American Women**

This part has four components. The first component discusses the stereotyping of African-Americans. The second component reviews racism and sexism. The third component reviews lack of mentors. The fourth discusses performance evaluations.

The factors described above also affect the career development of African-American women. However, their double jeopardy status has them placed in a unique position. There is a paucity of research that addresses the factors that affect the career development of African-American women managers, in fact, there is very little research on racial minorities in management (Cox & Nkomo, 1990). Burlew and Johnson (1992) reported that African-American women were more likely to report factors affecting their career development as marriage, gender and racial discrimination, limited opportunities to develop political clout, and colleagues’ doubt about their competence.

**Stereotyping**

McRae (1994) notes that there are no studies on sex stereotyping among African-American men and women. However, there are data suggesting that African-American women endure the consequences of negative sex stereotyping. Maleveaux (1986) pointed out that although African-American women’s occupational patterns are more similar to white women, they differ in proportional occupational representations. She not only found African-American women are more highly concentrated in traditional female-type jobs, but also found that there are proportionally fewer African-American
female managers than in any other race-sex group. McRae (1994) using a sample of 64 men and 67 women examined the influence of sex role stereotypes on the hiring decisions of Black managers. She found that Black managers seemed to make a concerted effort to assign Black men to more powerfully stereotyped male positions, while women were rated more favorably for the female-sex typed job. However, sex stereotyping was more pronounced for the female-sex-stereotyped job than for male-sex-stereotyped jobs. The findings here suggest that African-American male and female managers tend not to make firm hiring decisions on the basis of the sex of the applicant. Their stereotypic beliefs seem to be more pronounced in certain aspects of the job, such as potential to work effectively with others, potential to complete tasks, and do technical work.

Stereotyping and discrimination against African-American men and women have historically relegated them to an inferior job status (Maleveaux & Wallance, 1987). For example, there are some similarities in the content of racist and sexist stereotypes. African-American men and women are both viewed as intellectually inferior, incapable of being outstanding persons, emotional, immature, dependent, and sexually threatening (Smith & Stewart, 1982). Both groups have been victims of institutional sexism and racism. Researchers have also pointed the major differences between the stereotypes of African-American and white women (Cox & Nkoms, 1990; Fagenson, 1990). Black women are often stereotyped as strong and powerful while white women are viewed as weak, warm tender and docile (Nkomo, 1988). Dumas (1980) observes that the black woman leader is often torn between the expectations and demands born of her mythical
image and those that are inherent in her official status and tasks in the formal organization.

Stereotypes of African-Americans lead to more complex forms of discrimination, ranging from "benign neglect" to sanctioned segregation and destructive violence and repression (Smith & Stewart, 1983). Evans and Herr (1991) contend that racism and sexism are similar processes that operate independently but produce an additive effect. African-American women when subjected to these processes placed them in occupational double jeopardy (Beal, 1970; Epstein, 1973). It is the additive effect of racism and sexism that is likely to place many African-American women at a career developmental (Evans & Herr, 1991). Farmer's (1985) research has shown that African-American women have high career aspirations. Tehan, (1974) has shown that African-American women have low career aspirations. However, there is general agreement that African-Americans have low expectations of fulfilling their goals. This may be attributed to her perception of opportunity structure. The African-American woman's perception of the opportunity structure in a career field is influenced by both her race and sex (Smith, 1981). Slaney (1980) reported that African-American women do not differ from any other group in terms of assurances with which they make decisions about career goals. They differ, however, in their perception of disruptive factors that interfere with the accomplishments of these goals. Slaney also found that other groups were concerned about certain aspects of entry difficulty. African-American women were more concerned about disruptive issues that were financial, school related, personal, and those that were unpredictable or chance related.
Racism and Sexism

Racism and sexism are real constraints in the lives of African-American women. Bell, Denton and Nkomo (1993) assert that the meaning of gender and the relationships between women of color and men of color are confounded by racism. The experience of African-American women managers cannot be explained by focusing solely on race. Evan and Herr (1994) investigated the possible effects of racial identity and perceptions of discrimination on the career aspirations of 111 African-American college students. They concluded that racial identity and perception of discrimination were not predictive of the career aspirations of the respondents, and that other factors may be involved. The interaction between race and gender leads to different perceptions of the major issues confronting African-American women in management positions and the needed responses (Bell, Denton, & Nkomo, 1993). They further posit that the experiences of African-American women will perceive their treatment, as one not based solely on sex. African-American women’s experiences in organizations are seen from the perspective of being black women.

Lack of Mentors

Mentors and sponsor represent key relationships attributed to career success and there is some indication that mentor relationships are harder to manage and provide a narrower range of benefits for women and minorities (Kram, 1985). Thomas (1986) asserts that the explosive mix of race and sex makes racism particularly volatile and durable. Therefore cross-sex/cross-race relationships are the most difficult to sustain. Facing the taboos these relationships create, black and whites retreat to less intense ways
of being together. Protégés are deprived of the mentoring relationships they need to
develop and get ahead. Cross-race relationships take longer to initiate, are more likely to
end in an unfriendly fashion, and provide less psychological support than same-race
relationships (Thomas, 1986).

Lack of similarity to senior managers may prohibit the involvement of women and
minorities in informal social networks. Research suggests that cross-sex/cross-race ties
tend to be weaker in a variety of ways than same-sex/same-race ties (Ibarra, 1993).
Similarity to senior managers may result in greater personal attraction and identification
on the part of senior managers for subordinates. Some research has examined the ways
similarity and interpersonal attraction affect work relationships. Konrad, Winter, and
Gutek (1992) reported that demographically similar individuals will behave more
positively toward one another. Their findings reveal that women, when they are in the
minority, are more likely than men in the minority to experience negative social
experiences such as social isolation. Cianni and Romberger (1995) found that minority
managers saw barriers, which prohibited building relationships with senior managers,
with Black managers expressing the strongest feelings of exclusion. They first lacked
information about the organizational importance attached to social events and they felt
discomfort in the social setting preferred by the organizational members. Black male and
female managers believe that their behavior was judged differently than the behaviors of
others at social events.
Performance Evaluation

Performance evaluations play an important role in promotion decisions and systematic biases in performance evaluations can place women and minorities at a distinct disadvantage when being considered for promotions. The possibilities for biased perceptions and evaluations of African-Americans and women increase, particularly if, contrary to stereotypical beliefs, they are extremely high performers (Pettigrew & Martin, 1987). In this case, their performance is likely to be attributed to luck or unfair advantage rather than competence (Pettigrew & Martin, 1987). African-Americans employees tend to receive lower ratings of job performance than white employees (Kraiger & Ford, 1985).

Some portion of race differences in rated job performance may be attributed to rater bias especially when the raters themselves are white, particularly when African-Americans are only a small percentage of the workforce. It is also possible that there are race differences in actual job performance. Ilgen and Youz (1986) suggested that the differential treatment minority members’ experience might explain race differences in job performance. Greenhaus, Parasuraman and Wormley (1990) examined the relationships among race, organizational experiences, job performance evaluations, and career outcomes for African-American and white managers. They found that compared to white managers, African-Americans managers felt less accepted in their organizations, perceived themselves as having less discretion on their jobs, received lower ratings from their supervisors on their job performance and promotability, and were more likely to have reached career plateaus. and experienced lower levels of career satisfaction. Landau
(1995) examined the relationship of race and gender to manager's ratings of promotion potential for a sample of 1268 managerial and professional employees. The result showed that race and gender were significantly related to promotion potential. Females were rated lower than males and African-Americans were rated lower than whites. Greenhaus and Parasurman (1993) examined the impact of managers' gender and race on job performance attributions made by supervisors. They illuminated that the performance of African-Americans managers were less likely to be attributed to ability and effort and was more likely to be attributed to help from others. They also found that African-American managers were perceived to have less favorable career advancement prospects than white managers, and that the effect of race on career advancement was indirect, operating through job performance ratings and ability attributions.

Some research have found that race does not have an impact on the evaluations of minorities. Pulakos, Oppler, White and Borman (1989) examined the race and sex effects on the performance ratings on first-term army enlisted personnel. They also found that race and sex had very little or no effect the performance ratings of employees. Sackett, DuBois and Noe (1991) in their study of 814 work groups demonstrated that composition of white and African-American employees has little effect on performance ratings, and that the stereotyping behaviors do not generalize to all minority contexts. Cox and Nkomo (1986) found no differences between African-Americans and whites in overall performance ratings, but found differences in the criteria used to determine overall performance.
In summary, African-American women face the same factors that affect the career development of all women. However, the issue of race aggravates their circumstances. Studies that shown that race and gender have inordinate impact on career development of individuals. Thus affecting career mobility, satisfaction, and performance.

Training

This section is divided into three parts. Parts one reviews training for women. Part two reviews women-only training programs. Part three discusses mixed-sex training programs.

Research has addressed the issues surrounding women’s career development (Cannings, 1988; Lewis & Fagenson, 1995; Hite & McDonald, 1995; Tharenou, 1995). Hite & McDonald (1995) contend that “the opportunity for supervisory development that involves training is one factor examined as being critical for career advancement” (p. 5).

Training for Women

Supervisory development programs should be structured to meet the needs of women. Such development programs can include women-only training programs, mixed training programs, and mentoring programs (Lewis & Fagenson, 1995). One of the most effective strategies for facilitating the advancement of women into managerial positions is training. Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright (1994) state that:

Training refers to a planned effort by a company to facilitate the learning of job-related knowledge, skills or behavior by employees. The goal of training efforts is for employees to master the specific knowledge, skill, or ability emphasized in a specific training program and to apply it in their day to day activities (p. 365).
Management and supervisory training programs are now pervasive, with the programs often being accepted as successful in imparting the desired knowledge and skills, and attitude change and behavior.

Training is one of the most frequently discussed strategies for improving the status of women in management (Dipoye, 1987; Ford & Fisher, 1995; Lavoie, 1990). Fernandez (1981) found that 42% of the white male managers in his sample believed that women need special training whereas only 30% of the white women and 28% of African-American women felt that women needed such training. On the other hand, 44% of white men, 42% of white women, and 56% of black women believed that white male managers needed special training. The topics that were mentioned most frequently by male managers as areas in which women need training included technical skills (59%), dealing with male subordinates (48%), and understanding the political aspects of management (23%). Men were seen as needing training in overcoming their biases and stereotypes toward women and minorities (32%), and understanding problems specific to women and minorities (14%), and human relations (13%).

Ragins and Sundstrom (1989) posit that training can develop knowledge, skills, credentials, credibility, and expertise to assist career advancement. For women, training may be an essential source of expertise in managerial skills, which they may have little opportunity to gain through job assignments and work experience (Tharenou, Latimer, & Conroy, 1994). Training may be seen as signs of deficiency and could impede promotion (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). Where training is helpful or a prerequisite to advancement, organizational factors that limit access to training, impede its completion, or bias the
evaluations of performance during training may limit women’s possibilities for promotion.

Tharenou, Latimer, and Conroy (1990) conducted a study that tested the effect of training on men’s and women’s advancement. They concluded that training led to managerial advancement and was of more advantageous to men than to women. Work experience and education increased training, again more for men than for women. A spouse and dependents at home reduced women’s work experience but increased men’s with subsequent effect on training and advancement. The study also reported that career counseling had a more positive effect on training for women than for men. However, Harlan and Weiss (1982) in their study of 100 male and female managers found that there was no difference between men and women in access to formal training programs. They also found that women attended these training programs as frequently as men.

Veum (1996) found that there are no gender or race differences in the probability of receiving training, in participation in multiple training events, or hours of training received. White women, however, are more likely to experience higher training per hour worked that white men. Veum (1996) contends that more training is needed for white women because training intensity is associated with lower-skill, entry-level jobs that are more likely held by white women.

**Women-only Training Programs**

There are many training and development programs to assist managers and each program offers a somewhat unique focus or method. However, the underlying assumption of most of these programs is that women have unique problems which they
must deal with when placed in management positions and these issues cannot be effectively resolved through traditional organizational development programs (White, Crino, & DeSanctis, 1981). Hite and McDonald (1995) noted that gender inequities exist in the training classroom. Women are likely to believe that the content of most training programs, textbooks, and teaching methods are “masculine” (p. 10). They argued that in the training environment, care must be taken regarding the selection of manuals, videos and experiential activities and the instructor is responsible for being aware of his/her own biases. Although specific training programs for women have declined over time, (Hite & McDonald, 1995). Some trainers have continued to offer courses particularly for women. It is argued that such courses can actually impede their progress toward promotion, because it may be seen as mislabeling them as deficient (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1990).

Alpander (1976) in a survey of 101 women and 121 male managers found that the perceived training needs of the two sexes were essentially the same suggesting that women may not require specialized training, or they perceive themselves not requiring the training. Larwood, Wood, and Inderied (1978) posit that women feel that they do have special problems in the workplace. These problems to a large extent, are due to a general lack of experience in business-related interpersonal processes. Therefore, training programs for women that provide both a theoretical appreciation of such dynamics and opportunities to practice specific techniques would be a considerable benefit to women. Women managers face subtle and pervasive barriers and breaking down those barriers demands equally subtle training strategies (Lee, 1986).
Lewis and Fagenson (1995) contend that women-only training programs are designed to meet the specific needs of women who are either in management positions or are candidates for such positions. The programs usually include basic material relating to leadership and general management development such as decision-making, organizational communication, coaching and providing feedback to employees and managing conflict. These skills are usually taught using participative methods such as role-playing and simulations. Some women-only training programs have emphasized stereotypically masculine traits and attitudes towards work such as aggressiveness, and leadership.

Lewis and Fagenson (1995) maintain that women-only training programs assist women to develop leadership abilities which they lack relative to men, and impart some skills and knowledge to women managers. They also provide a forum in which to discuss their organizational experiences and to provide an effective arena for support and discussion among female participants. A disadvantage noted by Lewis and Fagenson (1995) is that women-only training programs serve to exclude and isolate women further from the male-dominated management ranks. They also provide an artificial environment from which men are excluded and may affect the generalizability of learning interpersonal communications and conflict management.

Mixed-Sex Training Programs

Researchers have advocated opportunities for men and women to attend mixed-sex management training programs (Larwood & Wood, 1995). These programs are designed to impart basic management and leadership knowledge and skills to management incumbents and potential managers (Lewis & Fagenson, 1995). These
programs have been found to increase the level of leadership knowledge and skills for participants, and reduce negative stereotyping and bias against women (Lewis & Fagenson, 1995). A disadvantage of mixed sex training programs is the expectation that such training will guarantee women equal representation in management positions. Some authors have argued that while such programs increased women’s participation in management positions, they will not guarantee equal representation in management positions (Lewis & Fagenson, 1995).

In a follow-up study to their 1978 study Larwood and Wood (1995) reexamined the needs for training and development as perceived by a sample of successful business executives. The study found that the women believed that training in gender differences in socialization are still important. They were not concerned with training dealing with stereotypes, although they encounter stereotyping. The category of skill development was still considered important, but their opinions differed on what specific skills to be developed. The women agreed that communication and politics are important to career advancement and have not been addressed in training programs. They also agreed the special problems they experienced with training and development are that men are being particularly selected for management and leadership programs, while women are often shunted to programs designed specifically for women. Alpander (1986) determined the skill content for first-line supervisors to communications, planning, organizing, team building, motivation, employee training, production control, performance evaluation, and building supervisors’ influence. He found that very few training programs contained these elements.
A study conducted by Rusaw (1994) showed that training to acquire skills for mobility is not very effective, unless it is integrated with other kinds of organizational structures. However, this requires an “analysis of the learning environment in particular settings, alignment of policies and practices, and adaptation to specific needs of individuals” (Rusaw, 1994, p. 264). Paddison, (1995) agrees with Rusaw (1994) and posits that training is best carried out as part of a broader, established equality or diversity strategy, with clear objectives based on careful monitoring. Training rarely works well if done in isolation or before key equality initiatives are in place. Paddison (1995) also recommends that training includes consideration of the issues facing women in organizations, personal effectiveness skill, career and life planning, goal setting, making a positive impact, and action plans for future self-development. Lewis and Fagenson (1995) argued that some management training programs make significant contributions to increasing women’s leadership skills, decreasing prejudice against women and helping them advance into and through their ranks of management.

Betters-Reed and Moore (1995) suggest that in order for management training to become more effective in the development of women managers, there should be an increase in the education and awareness of gender and race. Betters-Reed and Moore (1995) postulate that “education and training programs should be designed to meet the needs of diverse groups of women and should not represent women as a monolithic group” (p. 26). They also argued for the establishment of a new that paradigm that must acknowledge that race and gender are major bases of discrimination in society and directly influence the status of women in organizations. They believe that this
acknowledgment will result in programs, which address the needs of women that are not
typical of men. The concept of management development will encompass women at all
levels because managing diversity and developing managers are interrelated; and should
be aimed at breaking down artificial barriers and effectively developing the potential of
every employee.

Tharenou and Lyndon (1990) conducted an empirical study that investigated the
effect of a supervisory development program on leadership style. The study indicated that
training can enhance subordinate perceptions of, and self-attitudes about consideration
and structure, at least in the short term. Training programs can be effective if they
emphasize what supervisors need to do, and give opportunities to apply the material to
their specific work situation. Therefore, the traditional type of supervisory development
programs can bring about change.

Tharenou (1994) contends organizations use training and development in the form
of formal off-the-job courses extensively to broaden employees and to provide them with
job specific, state-of-the-art knowledge and skills. These individuals should then gain the
preparation for progression into higher management levels. For women, training may be
an essential source of expertise in managerial skills, which they may have little
opportunity to gain through job assignments and work experience. Thus the study
concluded that organizations need to ensure that access to training is not limited for
women as part of a pattern of tracking that grooms men more than women for leadership
positions.
Lee (1986) asserts that training can play a very important part in alleviating the career immobility of women into management positions in order to build skills and awareness among women. Training is a good place to start a dialogue about the male orientation of the business world. Training can focus on subtle barriers. Organizations must work toward normalizing the presence of women. Therefore, executives need to set policies that determine the organization’s culture. Managers and supervisors must be held responsible for grooming women for promotions, and women themselves must be shrewd enough to prove they are competent.

In summary, the ultimate goals of training programs are to produce more effective managers who will help the organization to be more productive and efficient and, therefore more competitive. Companies choosing not to develop and groom women for management positions are losing valuable resources. Some programs aimed at developing women managers are making significant contributions to increasing women’s leadership skills, decreasing prejudice against women and helping them advance through the ranks of management. However, some of these programs also present some concerns to accomplishing these objectives and need to be arranged carefully.

Synthesis of the Literature

This chapter presented the relevant literature and studies related to African-American women in workplace. The review of the literature focused on three main areas: women in management, career development, and training.

The review of the literature of women in management discussed the status of women in the workplace, their educational levels, and the opportunities afforded them.
This section also reviewed the literature on African-American women in the workplace, African-American women in management, and a discussion on the interactive effects of race and gender. Career development focused on career developmental theories in general, career development theories for women, and career development for African-Americans. This section also included a discussion on barriers of the career development of women, and barriers to the career development of African-American women. The barriers were categorized into internal and external factors. The section on training explores the reason for training for women, women-only training programs, and mixed-gender training programs.

This review of the literature illuminates major biases in the workplace. Both in the content of the analysis as well as the resource and space given in the exploration and examination of work related phenomena. This bias is deepened in the case of African-American women because of racial as well as gender biases entering into the analytical processes. When it comes to the structuring of scholarly subjects on women in the work, the literature review shows the position of African-American women as key elements in the workforce and the wealth producing process has been nearly invisible. African-American women are seen as best as residual groups, and minor role players in the career development process. Therefore, African-American women tend to be reduced to the bottom rungs of analytical discussion. Given this fact, it should not be surprising that we know very little about the nature, character, implications and consequences of the involvement of African-American women as professional managers and supervisors.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter three is divided into six sections. The first section presents the rationale for the methodology. The rationale is divided into the following parts: the conceptual framework of the study, the methodology, and the researcher's assumptions. The second section presents the sampling technique. The sampling technique is divided into the following parts: the number participants access to the participants, and the settings. The third section presents the data collection. The data collection is divided into the interviews, instruments, observations, and documents analysis. The fourth section presents the researcher. The researcher is divided into the following parts: field notes, personal journal, data analysis, data management, the timeline for the study, triangulation, self as instrument, and the peer debriefer. The fifth section presents the interpretation. The interpretation is divided into the writing up of the data, the description, analysis, and interpretation, internal validity concerns, and external validity concerns. The sixth section presents the ethics in qualitative research.

Rationale for the Methodology

African-American women are gaining entrance into first-line supervisory positions in the workplace. This study describes the nature of the lived experience of
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African-American women and their career development process within organizations. This study describes the strategies the women employed to achieve and maintain success in an environment where they are double-jeopardized, that is, African-American and female.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is based on feminist and phenomenological approaches to the study of career development. According to Anderson (1988) a feminist approach to research believes differences and similarities in women’s experiences can lead to change in existing policies and theories and the development of new policies and theories. Feminist research can help to rediscover “groups of women who are rendered invisible by studies that concentrate only on the experiences and perspectives of dominant groups” (Anderson, 1988, p. 8). Therefore, feminism recognizes the experiences of Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American women as unique; these experiences are founded in the intersection of racism and sexism (Anderson, 1988). Stanley and Wise (1983) purport that feminism is important because personal experience provides detailed examination and analysis to further an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation:

Feminism insists that women should define and interpret our experiences, and that women need to re-define and rename what other people, experts, have previously defined and named for us… The personal and the everyday are both important and interesting and ought to be the subject of inquiry. It is important not to
downgrade other people’s realities...It is essential to get away from the power relationship that exists between the researcher and the researched (Stanley & Wise, 1983, p. 114)

Feminism informs my sense making of the ways race and gender affect the participants’ world as first-line supervisors. This erudition is done by allowing the interpretation of these women’s experiences to take center-stage (Bogdon & Bilken, 1992).

The phenomenologists’ aim at “gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences” (van Manen.,1990, p. 9). Phemenologists also try to enter the conceptual framework of the participants so as to understand “how and what meaning they construct around events in their daily lives” (p. 34). The phenomenologist’s focus is on what the person experiences in a language that is as loyal to the lived experience as possible. Phenomenological inquiry attempts to describe and elucidate the meanings of human experience. This inquiry attempts to get beneath how people describe their experience to the structures that underlie consciousness (Rudestam & Newton, 1992). The phenomenological framework essentially asks the question, “What is the nature and essence of the career development experience of female African-American first line supervisors? (van Manen, 1990).

Patton (1990) suggests that interpretation is vital to the understanding of experience so that we can make sense of the world. Phenomenology claims that there is no separation or objective reality for people. Patton (1990) posits, “There is only what they know and what their experience is and means” (p. 69). Bogdon and Taylor (1975) assert that the “phenomenologist is concerned with understanding human behavior from
the actor’s own frame of reference” (p. 2). Bogdon and Taylor argue, “The phenomenologist examines how the world is experienced. For him or her the important reality is what people imagine it to be” (p. 2). In order to understand the interpretation process, the phenomenologist requires an empathic understanding or an ability to reproduce in one’s own mind the feelings, motives, and thoughts behind the actions of others. The phenomenologist attempts to see things from that person’s point of view (Bogdon & Taylor, 1975).

Phenomenology designates and permits understanding of the lived experience as the core foundation of inquiry into the varied interpretations, the emic understanding of what appears to others not as the monocural single portrait or presentation of a single universal truth, but rather the creation of multiple truths encountered within a binocular landscape (Walzer, 1987). Phenomenology is concerned with the understanding of a reality embodied in human experience and expressed in reasoned action comprised of stocks of knowledge, common sense construct and categories of understanding that are social in origin and shared in immediacy with others (Holstein & Gubrium, 1994).

Phenomenology is important to this study because of its emphasis on understanding and interpretation of the world. But one should keep in mind that “to construct a full interpretive description of some aspect of the lifeworld, and yet to remain aware that lived life is always more complex than any explication of meaning can reveal” (van Manen, 1990, p. 18). Therefore, complete reduction is not possible, neither are full or final descriptions attainable (van Manen, 1990). Phenomenology is also important because the researcher must “bracket” (Schutz & Luckman, 1989) her past experiences
and professional and theoretical assumptions in order to set aside her own taken for

Methodology

I wanted to describe how African-American first-line workers advance to first-line
supervisors and their experiences at that level of management. Therefore I needed a
process to help discover key phenomena that would support tracking career advancement,
and describing a population that has rarely been researched. The experiences of these
women will be represented and interpreted through a qualitative research design as a form
of understanding, represented by and contained within the phenomenological philosophy.

This is a collective case study that examines the experiences of twelve first-line
supervisors. Stake (1994) argues that the collective case study is where several cases are
studied to provide insight into a phenomenon, population, or general condition. The
individual cases may or may not be known in advance to manifest the common
characteristic. Stake (1994) contends the cases may be similar or dissimilar, but are
chosen because understanding them will lead to a better understanding, better theorizing,
about a larger case. This study is also interpretive because it sought the emic point of
view, the meanings and understandings of the lived experience of the each woman
(Bogdan & Bilken, 1982).

Assumptions

It is hoped that by acknowledging my assumptions the reader will be able to
understand my views and how they might affect the data and the women’s career
development experiences.
1. African-American women are subject to inequities based on their race and gender. I believed that African-American women face challenges in the workplace as they attempt to advance in their careers.

2. Previous models of career development are constructed outside the experiences of African-American women. The models of career development are based on the studies conducted on white males and more recently, white women. Therefore neglecting the careers of African-American women.

3. The career paths of African-American women are significantly different from others. I believed that African-American women are forced to choose different and more complex career paths to achieve management status.

4. My values and background influence my understanding of African-American women first-line supervisors. My background and values influenced my decision to select the type of study, the participants and the methodology of this research endeavor. However, I attempted to present the voices of the women interviewed for this study.

5. A study into the career development experiences of African-American women may improve human resource development programs. Human resource development practitioners will be better able to understand the dynamics of this minority population. Thus, this understanding will assist them to plan effective career development programs.
Sampling Technique

Patton (1990) identified several sampling strategies of which I combined the chain and criterion sampling techniques. Chain sampling allowed me to identify “information-rich key informants” (p. 176). I started by inquiring of instructors, students, colleagues to identify organizations that are committed to diversity programs and as such would have African-American women supervisors. The names of four private organizations located within the state were given to me along with their contact persons. These contact persons were attorneys or human resource managers. I contacted these individuals of the private organizations but was denied access. The reasons given were that they were not able to accommodate any research or evaluation at this time.

My advisor then recommended that I try state agencies because they usually have a good reputation of hiring and retaining minorities. He gave me the name of the director of human resource department. I made contact with her and she gave me name of a person who worked within the agency. It was with this person’s assistance that I was able to locate five of the participants for the research. As I made contact with each of these five participants, I inquired about other first-line supervisors within the state government. They gave me names of several people to contact from other agencies. After contacting several people I was successful in contacting a director of human resources of another state agency who was interested in my study and was willing to work with me. The director assisted me in locating seven first-line supervisors in several cities within the state. Hence, I was able to secure twelve participants for my study.
In utilizing the criterion sampling method, the participants had to meet certain criteria. The selection criteria required that a participant be:

1. An African-American woman
2. First-line supervisors status reporting to a mid- or executive-level supervisor.
3. Employed a minimum of six months at the current organization.

These criteria met the focus of the study. I wanted the participants to have a minimum of six months experience at the first-line supervisory level. I believed that this amount of supervisory experience would be necessary to engage the participants in meaningful conversations about their career development process.

**Number of Participants**

The minimum number of participants sought for this study was ten. Morse (1994) suggested that for a phenomenological study the researcher should have at least six participants. Thirteen participants were identified for my study but due to unforeseen circumstances, twelve were used in the study. While interviewing one of the participants the tape recorder was on “play” instead of “record” and this error was not discovered until several questions later. The participant was unwilling to set up another interview time to tape the missed questions and responses. Therefore, I had to reluctantly remove her from the list of participants.

One of the limits of the study was the time I had to travel to the various cities in the state to conduct the interviews. The participants had very busy schedules and I was able to be flexible to work within the time they allowed. Each interview session took
approximately two and a half to three hours. I was also limited in the amount of money I
had and this imposed some restrictions on the number of sites and women I could
interview.

Access

At the initial face-to-face contact with the directors of human resources
departments for each agency, I presented them with a proposal outlining the purpose,
intent and timeline of the study (See Appendix A). They arranged for me to meet with the
potential participants in the agency’s conference office. During this initial contact with
the women, the goals of the study were clarified, the interview process was described,
time commitments were ascertained, trust was established, and agreement to participate
in the study was obtained. Follow-up letters were sent to each participant thanking them
for volunteering and reiterating the purpose of the study (See Appendix B).

Settings

It is important to collect data through contact with the participants in the settings
where they spend most of their time (Bogdon & Bilken, 1992). I discussed with the
participants the settings that would be most comfortable for them to conduct the
interviews. Nine participants agreed to be interviewed in their offices. Three chose to be
interviewed in conference rooms within the agencies to minimize and/or deter
interruptions.

Data Collection

In order to achieve a vivid account of the women’s experiences in the
organization, this study conducted standard open-ended interviews, and observations of
the participants (LeCompte & Preissle 1993, Glense & Peshkin 1992; Bogdon & Bilken 1992; Patton 1990). Document analysis of the agencies’ employment was also conducted. I also kept a journal. This section explains the different components of the data collection process.

**Interviews**

Anderson, Amitage, Jack, and Wittner (1990) suggest that “interviewing is a method that is used to incorporate the previously overlooked lives, activities, and feelings of women into our understanding of the past and present” (p. 95). Interviews tell us how women feel and can interpret the personal meaning and value of particular activities. Anderson, Amitage, Jack, and Wittner (1990) suggest that “oral interview not only allows women to articulate their own experiences but also reflect upon the meaning of those experiences” (p. 102). Reinarz (1992) asserts that interviewing offers researchers access to people’s ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher. Reinarz (1992) also contends that interviewing is particularly important for the study of women, “because in this way learning from women is an antidote to centuries of ignoring women’s ideas altogether or having men speak for women” (p. 19).

Before interviews begun, the participants were given copies of the release form to read and sign (See Appendix C). The interviews allowed me to probe for more explanation, more clarification, and better description of their responses. I also used the interview to explore alternative explanations of my observations. Each interview was tape-recorded with the permission of the participant and lasted between two and four hours. The interviews were transcribed verbatim.
Instruments

Interview guide. I utilized the standard open-ended interview which allowed me to carefully plan a set of questions for the participants (See Appendix D). According to Patton (1990) standardized open-ended questions are used to “minimize interview affects by asking the same question of each respondent” (p. 285). This process assisted by ensuring that I asked the same questions of each participant thus helping me to use my time efficiently. The questions used in the study were structured around the research questions. The questions were separated by categories of interest to the researcher. The major categories were (a) career development, (b) career path, (c) barriers to career progression, and (d) facilitators to career progression. Patton (1990) contends that the “interview guides presumes there is common information that should be obtained from each person interviewed” (p. 280).

Demographic information form. The participants were also asked to complete demographic information forms. The demographic information form was used to collect information on the participants’ age, marital status, educational levels, salaries, previous and current position, tenure in the organization, and the number of people they supervised (See Appendix E).

Observation

Observation was used to collect data where allowed by the participants. According to Patton (1990), “the purpose of observational data is to describe the setting that was observed, the activities that took place in that settings, the people who
participated in those activities, and the meanings of what was observed from the perspective of those observed" (p. 202).

I used observation to describe the women’s workplace, their colleagues, and behaviors. I observed their interaction with others, their expressions when asked about certain issues, and their reactions to problems when I was able to sit in meetings with several of the participants and observe their response and mannerisms. I observed the first-line supervisor’s contact with their customers and also with their supervisors. The observations were conducted during the interviewing process or in other work settings opportunities.

**Document Analysis**

Documents and records are particularly rich source of information for the qualitative researcher (Patton, 1990). Documents and records can provide stimuli for generating questions that can only pursued through direct observation and interviewing. They are a basic for source of information about program decisions and background, or activities and processes, and give the evaluator ideas about important questions to pursue through more direct observation and interviewing (Patton, 1990).

Among the documents that I analyzed were the employment records showing the number of employees hired in the organizations, their gender, race, the positions they hold, the length of tenure, and promotions. The researcher also examined the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s (EEOC) report of one agency. These documents and records served to augment the primary sources of data.
Data were collected from the researcher in the forms of field notes and a personal journal.

Field Notes

Field notes are the researcher’s written account of what they hear, see, experience and think in the course of collecting and reflecting on their data (Bogdon & Bilken, 1992). Field notes were taken during the interviewing and observation processes to note the environment of organization, the interaction the women had with their co-workers, their attitudes at work, their mannerisms, as well as my ideas, hunches and reflections. I wrote the notes in a notebook and later reflected upon them.

Personal Journal

I kept a personal journal to write my thoughts on the research process that would be difficult to remember at a later date. The personal journal included notes on the interviews and my reactions to certain situations. For example, I used the “play” instead of the “record” button while interviewing one of the participants and lost rich data. Thus, the journal helped me to vent my frustrations, clearing my mind and allowing me to move on with the interviewing process. I used the journal to capture my feelings and impressions of the first-line supervisors, their interactions with others, and the activities in the environment. I used the journal to record my personal biases.

The journal allowed me to keep notes of my contact with my peer reviewer and my committee members. Their comments, suggestions and criticisms were noted.
Questions that I had concerning the research process were also noted. The journal was also used reflect on the data analysis and interpretation process.

Data Analysis

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) suggest that data analysis involves organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so that you can make sense of what you have learned. As a result of analyzing the data the researcher creates explanations, pose hypotheses, develop theories, and link your story to other stories. I used themes as a means of understanding the career development process of African-American women first-line supervisors. According to van Manen (1990) grasping and formulating a thematic understanding is a process that involves “seeing” meaning.

As the study was initiated, I formed several research questions that were asked of each participant. The interviews were transcribed, read, and analyzed for emerging themes. As the transcripts were read, I asked the question, “What statements or phrases seem particularly essential or revealing about the career development experience being described? I then highlighted each statement and these statements became the themes. With the ongoing analysis of the data, additional themes emerged and were added to the list of themes. The themes were identified with the first reading of the interview transcripts, and an effort was made to identify all themes on each of the transcripts.

As the descriptions of the experiences of the women were studied and the themes discerned that emerged, I noted the experiential themes recurred as possible commonalties in the various descriptions gathered. The task was to hold
on to these themes by lifting the appropriated phrases or by capturing in singular statement the main thrust of the meaning of the themes.

As the themes and thematic statements were uncovered from the interview transcripts, an attempt was made to capture the statements in a more phenomenonogically sensitive paragraphs. Thus, notes were written on the analysis of the interview transcripts and the observation conducted on the women.

I attempted to grasp the essence of the career development experience in phenomenological description by systematically developing narratives that explicates the themes while remaining true to the universal essence of the participants’ experiences by using direct quotations from the women.

**Data Management**

I used an IBM compatible computer with Microsoft Word 7.0 and NUDIST to manage and organize the data. Transcripts and data records were stored on 3.5” floppy diskettes and as hard copies in a folder.

**Timeline**

I attempted to be realistic in developing a timeline by incorporating other demands on my time, including employment. The timeline is shown in Appendix F. The timeline commences from the approval of the proposal stage to the oral defense stage.

**Triangulation**

One way of strengthening a research design is through triangulaion (Patton, 1990). Patton (1990) suggests that using a combination of data sources increases validity
as the “strengths of one approach can compensate for the weaknesses of another approach” (p. 244). This use of multiple data sources is one way of ensuring triangulation (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Patton, 1990; Merriam, 1988).

In this study a combination of data sources was used. The data sources were observations, interviews, and document analysis, field notes and a personal journal. In using this combination I checked pieces of data gained from one source with another to validate one source against the other.

**Self as Instrument**

Wolcott (1988) asserts that qualitative researcher is the instrument of data collection and analysis. Thus the qualitative researcher is imperfect, partial, easily distracted, and detached. The researcher influences and is influenced by the study. Instead of than trying to eliminate this influence qualitative researchers acknowledge this influence as part of the instrument. Eisner (1991) suggests that the researcher “engages the situation and makes sense of it” (p. 34).

Goetz and Le Compte (1984) acknowledge that qualitative researchers have expectations as well as presuppositions about the site and the people in it. By acknowledging these presuppositions, however, the researcher provides a depth of understanding not often found in other research approaches. Further, by acknowledging and grounding their own views, qualitative researchers reveal how and why they interpret situations the way they do.

My past professional experience as a Black first-line supervisor has stimulated my interest in this study. These experiences have influenced the types of questions asked, my
reactions to the responses and the data and analysis process. I have experienced instances of racism and sexism in my career development process and have surprised myself at my coping skills. I have also had some very positive experiences in my career, which have enabled me to expand my educational and professional experiences. I believe that this study will offer meaningful insight on African-American women career experiences. Thus the study will expand educators’ and professionals’ understandings on complexities of the African-American women’s leadership roles.

Peer Debriefer

Lincoln and Guba describe the peer debriefer as a:

…noninvolved professional peer with whom the inquirer(s) can have no-holds-barred conversation at periodic intervals. The purposes of the debriefing are multiple: to ask the difficult questions that the inquirer might otherwise avoid (“to keep the inquirer honest”), to explore methodological next steps with someone who has no axe to grind, and to provide a sympathetic listening point for personal catharsis (p. 283).

I used a peer debriefer in this study. The peer debriefer, Tonette Rocco was chosen because of her knowledge in the areas of human resource development and adult education. Tonette had a reputation of being efficient and knowledgeable about qualitative research. She also possessed in-depth experience of the process.

I met with Tonette on assigned days and times. She reviewed my work, gave suggestions on my methodology and recommended books and journal to peruse, and
checked on my progress. Her contributions were invaluable to this study because they kept me focused and challenged me to meet certain standards.

**Interpretation**

According to Wolcott (1994), interpretation is the “threshold in thinking and writing at which the researcher transcends factual data and cautious analyses and begins to probe into what is to be made of them (p. 36). Interpretation goes beyond descriptive data and seeks significance, explanations, conclusions, inferences from the data (Patton, 1990). Thus interpretation emerges from using good descriptions from the data and the connection between the description of the data and its interpretation should be apparent to the reader. The following sections discussed the approach used in this study.

**Writing Up the Data**

Writing gives form to organized data. Writing links together thoughts that have been developing throughout the research process and also stimulates new thoughts and connections (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). In writing one is engaging in a sustained act of construction from the data that have been analyzed. Writing makes some aspect of our lived experience reflectively understandable and intelligible (van Manen, 1990). According to van Manen (1990) in order to do justice to the fullness and ambiguity of the experience of the lifeworld, “writing may turn into a complex process of rewriting, (re-thinking, re-reflecting, recognizing)” (p. 131).
The writing process guided me in organizing and making sense of the data. The writing helped me to visualize the themes that emerged from the data, therefore clarifying the career development experiences of first-line supervisors. The writing of the data served as a basis for me to have discussions with my committee members. These discussions served at producing themes and insights the I needed to help me create a text to which the themes would apply.

**Description, Analysis, and Interpretation**

According to Patton (1990) sufficient description and quotations should be included in qualitative research to help the reader “enter into the situation and thoughts of the people represented in the report” (p. 430). Patton (1990) also asserts that “description is balanced analysis and leads into interpretation” (p. 430).

In this study a “thick description” of the career development experiences of each participant was presented. The data were analyzed by identifying themes across the twelve cases. Each theme was depicted by the experiences of the women. This analysis showed patterns and relationships among the cases and revealed the essence of the career development process. Patton (1990) advises that the researcher should own the interpretation and make clear the difference between the description and interpretation.

**Internal Validity Concerns**

Merriam (1988) discusses that validity is deals with how a researcher’s findings match reality. The questions one should asked of validity are, “Do the
findings capture what is really there? Are investigators observing or measuring what they think they are measuring? This section discusses internal validity concerns of subjectivity and usefulness.

Subjectivity

Subjectivity is defined by van Manen (1990) as:

...one needs to be perceptive, insightful, and discerning as one can be in order to show or disclose the object in its full and in its greatest depth. Subjectivity means that we are strong in our orientation to the object of study in a unique and personal way—while avoiding the danger of becoming arbitrary, self-indulgent, or of getting captivated and carried away by our unreflected preconceptions (p. 20).

The task of qualitative researchers is to make reasonable a sense of our lived experience by deliberation, reflection, and judgment in the interpretations of the actions of others in the world as well as own. There is always the element of prejudices of beliefs, traditions, and histories in the interpretation.

Eisner (1991) asserts researchers are:

...always “stuck” with judgments and interpretations. Interpretations are always inherently an act of judgment. The fact that we make judgments does not mean that we have no basis for judging the soundness of the judgments we make. We must consider the evidentiary basis of our judgments; whatever they are, they will always be fallible. It is reasonable
to expect that we have good grounds for the judgments we make, but not
that our judgments are certain (p. 109).

The qualitative researcher is the instrument of data collection and requires that the
researcher reflect upon, deal with and report potential sources of bias and error (Patton,
1990). In this study I have attempted to control subjectivity by using triangulation of data
sources, a peer debriefer, by identifying my assumptions and by discussing self as
instrument.

Usefulness

This usefulness of this study will be determined by the readers and it is assumed
by the author. The problem statement, review of the literature, methodology, results and
conclusions of this were carefully presented. Additionally my biases and assumptions
were identified. These will help the readers determine the usefulness of the study.

External Validity Concerns

Merriam (1988) posits that “external validity is concerned with the extent to
which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations. That is, how
generalizable are the results ” (p. 173). The concepts of generalizability and
transferability are discussed in this section.

Generalizability

This study was not an attempt to generalize the career development process of
African-American women first-line supervisors to other minority groups or to other state
organizations. It is up to the reader of this study to ascertain whether the findings can
apply to other situations or people (Merriam, 1988). This study provided a detailed
description of the methodology and the findings so that the readers can draw their own
conclusions about the generalizability of the study.

Transferability

Lincoln and Guba, (1985) contends that it is the responsibility of the researcher to
provide data wide in scope and thick description so that readers can make their own
conclusions about transferability of findings. This study provided “thick descriptions” in
detailed and complete documentation of the participants’ experiences. The
documentation included interview tapes, transcription of each interview, field notes and
records from each agency. The study also carefully reported the research process and
case content. These will help the readers make informed decisions on the context and
meaning of the data, the analysis and interpretation.

Ethics in Qualitative Research

The people, informants with problems, concerns and interests are the core of
qualitative research (Spradley, 1980). Ethical considerations should coexist with plans,
thoughts, and discussions about each aspect of qualitative research (Glesne & Peshkin,
1992). Glesne and Peshkin (1992) contend that ethical consideration does not end with
the human subject review board but is inseparable from your everyday interactions with
others’ and with your data.

Ethical concerns in research tend to fall into several global categories: (a)
informed consent, (b) protecting the informant(s) from risks and/or harm, (c) the different
methodologies used and, (d) the analysis and dissemination of data gathered (Bogdan &
Bilken, 1992; Lincoln & Guba 1985).
The researcher has several factors to deliberate on informed consent. The subject should be informed as much as possible as to the intent and focus of the research project, including the purpose and activities of the research (Erickson, 1986). Informed consent includes extra work that the informant may have to do as a result of participating in the research. The protection of the informant’s privacy and advising her exactly what is going to be done with the research, the following through with that information, is a necessity to establish trust and confidence for both parties. The task of the researcher is to inform as the design unfolds, and to be truthful about the data that are being collected.

The informants should know what potential risks there are by being involved in the research. These risks tend to be more psychological and social then medical or physical in field research. The interests of the very vulnerable informants should be protected and the researchers should negotiate for strict confidentiality and protection of information from the outset (Erickson, 1986).

Exploitation is another factor that researchers face. Exploitation occurs when the informant gains nothing or actually suffers harm from the research (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). The researcher may feel guilty for how much she is receiving, such as fame, wealth, information, but how little she is giving in return. Knowing the possible risks, planning for the unexpected, and having a substitute plan to use in emergency help to protect the researcher and the informant. Another area of ethical concern is the methodology used in conducting research. Methods used in qualitative research could be used in unethical ways because they presume “underlying assumptions, a structure of relevance, and a form of rationality…” (Simon & Dippo, 1986, p. 195).
Ethical concerns can arise in the analyzing and disseminating of data. The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and the data have been filtered through her theoretical orientation and biases (Merriam, 1988; Bogdan & Bilken, 1992). The investigator makes the decision on what information is important, what information should be included, and what information should be excluded. Merriam (1988) posits that these biases are not readily apparent to the researcher, nor are there practical guidelines for all situations the researcher might face. Some attempts recognized to help control biases are recognizing and admitting that bias is an issue and discussing biases in field notes and analysis (Bogdan & Bilken, 1992, Merriam, 1988).

It is important that the agreement made between researcher and informants concerning the dissemination of findings be upheld. According to Gartner (1993), “if the research was promised not to be published, it should not be; if the decision has been agreed upon to publish, sometimes a difficult situation must be made between what is acceptable to those who provide the data, and the need for a wider audience to see the big picture” (p. 95). A solution proposed is to trust oneself as a researcher and to write clearly, accurately, and without mystification. The burden of producing a study that has been conducted and disseminated in an ethical manner lies with the researcher (Merriam, 1988).

Merriam (1988) contends:

No regulation can tell a researcher when questioning of a respondent becomes coercive, when to intervene in abusive or illegal situations or how to ensure that the study’s findings will not be used to the detriment of
those involved. The best that an individual researcher can do is to be conscious of the ethical issues that pervade the research process, from conceptualizing the problem to disseminating the findings. Above all, the investigator must examine his or her own philosophical orientation vis-a-vis these issues. Self-knowledge can form the guidelines one needs to carry out an ethical investigation (p. 184).
CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

The chapter is divided into six sections. Section one presents the composite profiles of the participants. Section two presents the individual case descriptions. Section three presents the nature of the career paths of the participants. Section four presents the data of participants’ measures of success. Section five presents the challenges and limitations experienced by the women. Section six presents the influences on the participants’ career development process.

Participants’ Profile

Twelve African-American first-line supervisors were interviewed for the study. A brief summary of their background reveals that the women range in age from 29 years old to 56 years old. They have from one to sixteen years of service as first-line supervisors. One woman has a Master of Art degree, six women hold Bachelor of Art degrees, five started but did complete college, and one has completed high school only. The State of Ohio represents all the women. Most of the women currently earn between $41,000 and $60,000, two women earn between $21,000 and $40,000. The women supervise between one and nine employees. Table 1 presents a composite profile of the participants.
The names of the participants have been changed and their respective titles and agencies will not be identified in order to protect their identities. Therefore the following discussions use pseudonyms.

Case Descriptions

This section presents summaries of the participants’ profiles and presents the individual case description of the participants’ career journey to first-line supervisors. The section concludes with a brief description.

Joy

Profile

Joy is a twenty-nine years old supervisor, single and no children, and is the youngest of the women interviewed. She has a Bachelors in marketing and management for Central State University. She has been a supervisor for two years. Her salary range is $41,000 to $60,000.

Career Path

Joy has always worked. During college she was employed as a work-study student. She was also employed at a telemarketing firm. Upon graduation she worked temporarily with a high voltage company in their customer service department for approximately six months. She left that job and pursued employment with the school board as substitute teacher for approximately three months. Joy recognized that teaching was not the career she wanted, “It really was not my goal to be a teacher and the school system in which I was working required a whole lot of disciplinary situations that somewhat prohibited me from teaching the way I wanted to” (33-36).
The women in this stage have worked for a number of years within the organization, possibly in a number of different positions. They felt that they have made satisfactory progress based on their education and tenure with the organization. The women are satisfied in their current positions. Most do not rule out applying for other positions in the agency, but have no desire to leave the state employment. Susan explains why, “Fear, the security is not there. I am more secured with the state and I have nothing to fall back on. I am ten years away from retirement and I would not want to rock the boat” (947-950). There are others like May who is fearful of reliving the traumatic experience when she first became a supervisor. May explains, “I don’t want to go anywhere from here. This was such a tough transition going from investigator to supervisor” (444-446).

The women are motivated at the job. They see providing services as a motivating factor. They still find their jobs challenging. May states, “I like analyzing cases, I like getting the whole story” (1121-1122).

The women in this stage believe that they are successful. Their work performance is being recognized as good. Their employees and supervisors respect them. The women acknowledged that they still face challenges in the workplace because of their race, gender, and educational levels. However, these challenges do not hinder them from pursuing their goals. Susan examines her challenges, “I always looked at the fact that people applying for jobs have some degree. I have education in high school, but things always worked out” (744-746).
The women had various reasons for choosing the career they did, but the main factor was that they had to work and the state agency offered them that window of opportunity. They expressed that state government gave them opportunities to advance or move into different areas of interest.

**Learning from previous jobs**

The women expressed learning from each job they held and applying it to their subsequent jobs helped with their success. They learned the importance of teamwork, and how each job function affected another. They learned the importance of listening and communicating, because they help resolve conflict and confusion. They learned the importance of patience and perseverance because “no job comes easy, and it can wear you down and affect your self-esteem” (Linda, 37-38). Nadine states that patience and endurance what she learned because, “I learn how to deal with people” (34-85). The women all agreed learning those people skills from their jobs. May indicates that she is still learning in her present position. She articulates:

I learn and am still learning to separate friendships and relationships from decisions that have to be made. I am learning how to be fair to everyone and not to show preferences to people you like a little bit more. I learned how to give to and do things for a person without expecting anything back. Because if you expect something back but don’t get, it was just the right thing to do…I have learned that it is important to be honest and up front with a person (154-177).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Time in current position</th>
<th>Salary</th>
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<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Single</td>
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<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>2 years</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Married</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>BA</td>
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<td>Widowed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>BA</td>
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<td>Supervisor</td>
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<td>Some college</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>15.5 years</td>
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</tr>
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<td>50</td>
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<td>Some college</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>10 years</td>
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<td>$41,000-$60,000</td>
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<td>BA</td>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>$41,000-$60,000</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kia</td>
<td>38</td>
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<td>None</td>
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<td>Some college</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>$21,000-$40,000</td>
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<td>Supervisor</td>
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<td>$41,000-$60,000</td>
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<td>Some college</td>
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<td>1 year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elaine</td>
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<td>Some college</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>$41,000-$60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>48</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>High school</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>$41,000-$60,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Profile of women who participated in the study
During her tenure with the school board, Joy learned of a vacancy in another city with her current organization. She was hesitant at first because it involved leaving home, but she acknowledged that, "I will be completely on my own...my parents taught me to take chances, and to think about the advantages and how it could help me in my future career...not to limit myself or be too scared to take chances. She applied and was hired as an entry worker in December 1993.

Joy worked in that position for one year and three months. She found that her first year was difficult and challenging and she missed her family. The job was very demanding and stressful. She felt like giving up a couple of times, but realized that she could not disappoint herself nor her family. She claimed that the job helped her to “grow up,” and made her aware of her capabilities and abilities. She attributed her adaptiveness to her upbringing:

I kind of look to the Lord and prayed on it. My dad told me, ‘Joy life is not easy. You have had a good life. You had a good upbringing and you didn’t see a lot of difficulties that people went through as a child growing up and now you are an adult. You have to make your decisions. You have to make your own way’...So I stuck it out with the job and things panned out... My parents were really proud of me (94-103).

Joy was promoted to the second level after a year and the job entailed more difficult cases and demands on production. She was further promoted to level three after ten months. Joy stated that she began to feel stagnated in that position and began exploring opportunities for promotion. In 1997, she relocated within the same
organization to another city as a first-line supervisor. She likes the job but was dissatisfied with the city because she was far away from friends, and began seeking opportunities to relocate back to the first city. She eventually transferred back as a supervisor. However, when she returned, she sensed some hostility from others because they were competing for the same position. She has had the position of supervisor for almost two years, and is enjoying it.

Joy currently supervises five employees. She is responsible for insuring that her employees are effectively and completely investigating adjudicating the charges of their case load. She meets with them on a regular basis to review cases to determine that they are addressing all issues involved in the individual cases. She also ensures that the clients are been treated fairly.

Hope

Profile

Hope is 50 years old, divorced, and the mother of two children. She is an enthusiastic person and speaks with candor and is very expressive. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from University of Galia. Her salary range is from $41,000 to $60,000.

Career Path

After graduating in 1971, she worked as a clerical outreach worker with a community action commission for nine months. She left that job to work with her father-in-law as a property manager in real estate business. After two years, she left and went to work with a state department. She started in the state department as an entry
level worker in which capacity she worked for one year, then was promoted to first-line supervisor. She left the state agency in 1977 and joined a large public utility company as their first professional Equal Employment Opportunity investigator. She advanced to supervisor of investigators within three years of starting. During her tenure at the utility company, Hope had several lateral supervisory positions. She moved from supervisor of investigations to supervisor of contract compliance to manager of Equal Employment Opportunity counselor. Her tenure at the utility company came to an end in 1988 because of massive restructuring efforts within the organization.

Hope then moved on to a major university as an Assistant Director of Affirmative Action where she worked for two and a half years. She was disappointed with her tenure at the university because as she stated:

...at the university it was unlike working in the government, there is a lot of politics and if you are not really a political worker they you meet some real challenges. So eventually we parted because we were philosophically incompatible...I thought I was coming to do a job. But I was really coming to fill a position, and I had extreme difficulty with that (70-75).

Hope then taught in the public school system. She started out a substitute teacher then moved into the adult education program where she is still teaching part time. Her decision to return to the state agency was a consequence of the phasing out of the teaching position. She was rehired at the state as a first-line supervisor in December 1996.
Hope currently supervises four employees. She provides training to new employees. She is responsible for the overseeing, editing and facilitating the work processes of her employees.

June

Profile

June is fifty-six years old widow and the mother of two children. She is a soft-spoken, pleasant and an emphatical person. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Personnel and Labor Relations. June makes between $41,000 and $60,000 per year.

Career Path

June started her career working as a retail clerk in a clothing store for a year. She then made the transition to the hospital working as a nursing assistant in labor and delivery for approximately six years. She stopped working and attended college where she completed internships with banks in their labor and human relations departments. After college she remained with the bank for an additional two and a half years. Due to downsizing and restructuring she lost her position and found employment with the state agency in 1980.

June began her tenure with the state agency as entry level worker. After a year she was promoted to the next level. She remained in this position for another year and was then promoted to the next level where she remained for the three years. She acted at various times as supervisor before being permanently promoted to supervisor in 1989. She has held that position since with changing roles.
She currently supervises six employees and carries dual responsibilities for two
different sections of the organization. June meets with her employees and discusses their
workload. She identifies any problems, makes recommendations to facilitate their work,
give directions on how to proceed on certain cases. She states, “I give them guidance
and teach them the proper way to convey information they gather to a report and make
that concise and thorough” (180-184).

April

Profile

April is forty-five years old, married and the mother of two children. She
attended college and her interest was in education. She is currently working as a Human
Resource Analyst Supervisor and has been a supervisor for over fifteen years. April is an
exuberant person and loved talking about her job. She makes between $41,000 and
$60,000 per year.

Career Path

April’s career started as a typist in a title company typing escrow and mortgage
documents, and essentially preparing the paperwork for closing transactions. She
remained in that capacity for two and a half years and then started training for a loan
officer. It was during that time that she applied to the state agency and was hired as a test
monitor in 1976, where she administered civil service examinations. She remained in
that position for a year then moved into a public relations position, which she held for
eighth months. She was promoted to the deputy director’s office of the division of
personnel as public liaison worker. April enjoyed this job and it inspired her to seek other opportunities within the state department. She stated:

I really enjoyed interviewing and I had finally made up my mind as far as setting goals that I wanted to continue to stay involved with personnel or human resources…So I started checking around myself to see what else human resources and personnel had that could offer me that I might be interested in doing to further my knowledge and experience (57-59).

April applied for and received a position that propelled her into a very significant part of human resources. She wrote job descriptions for state departments and trained personnel. She thought:

This was fun because it was something that I did not know exist…that this another part of personnel. It helped me to understand how all this will eventually come together and from me starting off with giving civil service exams to actually writing those jobs. And learning what classification specifications were about and where you acquire the knowledge to write job duties for statewide agencies. It was awesome (73-77).

April moved on to another position where she reviewed resumes and made the determination of hiring potential employees, and completing the relevant paperwork. She worked in that position for three and a half years before setting her goals on a supervisory position. An opening became available for a supervisor over a unit that oversees the processing of the personal actions. She applied and received it in 1983 and has held that position for the past fifteen and a half years.
April currently supervises nine employees. Her duties and responsibilities entail the managing of personnel offices within the organization. She keeps agencies abreast of the changes in the laws, rules, and procedures. Her staff processes personnel applications, and labor contracts. They represent the organization in court cases, arbitration and personnel review hearings. They implement and revise the personnel action manual. April also wears many hats because she represents her administrator in the office and at meetings.

Shirley

Profile

Shirley is fifty years, separated, and is the mother of two children. Shirley received her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, completed two years of law school, and one year of the doctoral program in Political Science. She has also earned a Master of Art in Management. Shirley is ambitious and innovative. She tries to become very involved in all aspects of the organization that affects her work. Her salary is between $41,000 and $60,000.

Career Path

Upon completing her first year of law school in 1973, Shirley received a summer internship with a state agency and enjoyed it so much she remained. She worked with that particular agency for three years before being promoted to a position in a different department. She was appointed to the Chief Officer in 1974. Shirley moved rapidly through the ranks and was appointed Bureau Chief of a unit. She lost the management of that unit with no explanation given to her, “The whole construction unit was taken from
me for no reason. No reason was given. Just the coordinator decided to give it to one of my employees, my whole unit. Took the care, everything…” (110-113).

Shirley has held her supervisory position since 1982. She currently supervises two employees. Her responsibilities are to assist entities of state government, including colleges and universities to utilize minority businesses to meet the established goals. She provides agencies with training and assists them to develop plans to reach certain businesses within the state. Shirley is proud of the work she is doing and has been recognized for her work by several agencies.

Kia

Profile

Kia is thirty-eight years old, divorced and has no children. She is currently working towards her Bachelor of Arts degree in human resource management. Kia is a high-energy person who has the aptitude to perform many tasks at the same time. She earns from $21,000 from $40,000.

Career Path

Kia began her professional career in the military. She joined the army as an administrative assistant to a commander at a certain base. She still works for the military in a reserve capacity and would spend weeks in training with them. After military training, she returned home and found a position with a state agency as a personnel aide. She remained with the state agency for three years and was later promoted to personnel technician. She notes that whenever she received a promotion within the military she concurrently receives one in her civilian job. The next step for her in her civilian career
was to become a human resources officer in a different state agency. She remained there for two years before she was promoted to the next level. She held that position for two years and a half years before offered the supervisory position. She has been a supervisor since 1996.

Kia is in charge of three employees. Her job responsibilities entail keeping abreast of the issues concerning employment and reporting them to her coordinator. She facilitates training workshops on diversity and prepare strategic plans with other state agencies. She also evaluates the agencies to ensure that they are compliant with state laws.

Linda

Profile

Linda is thirty years old, single, and has no children. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in business administration and human resource management. She is an assertive and innovative person, and is very passionate about her job. She earns between $41,000 and $60,000.

Career Path

Linda started out as a college intern with a state agency mostly conducting computer programming, software applications, and testing. After graduation from college, she received a job as a receptionist. She worked in this capacity for two years then she was promoted to a business service officer where she worked for two years. She received a promotion to an accounts clerk supervisor. She remained in that position for a year before being promoted to her present position which she has held for the past two
years. Linda reflects on her career progression, "After I graduated college from college I took a job as a receptionist with a double major and a bachelor's degree. But I looked at it as my way of getting in the state government, because you can work your way up" (13-15).

Linda currently supervises seven employees. She assists the deputy director of the agency and handles all the administrative work. She describes her job as “My job description vaguely tells of my responsibilities. It does not go into details and I am not one to worry about position description. I do not limit myself say this is the only thing you pay me to do, I do whatever I am told to do” (30-31).

Linda assists with the administrative work by responding to letters of complaints and requests for information. She oversees five units to ensure that they are working cohesively. She establishes deadlines for the units and monitor for the completion of tasks. Linda is also the personnel liaison and manages all the personnel work for the unit.

Nadine

Profile

Nadine is forty-seven years old, separated, and has two children. She has completed high school and has taken some college courses. Nadine is a professional and takes pride in her work. She earns between $41,000 and $60,000.

Career Path

Nadine started out as a secretary for a unit in a governor’s office where she worked for almost two years. She went on to work in another agency within the state as a test monitor, administering civil service examinations for two years. After that, Nadine
came to work for the current agency as an officer. She served in that capacity for two years and then moved on to the personnel department where she monitored state agencies’ Affirmative Action Plans. She remained in that job for two years before moving on to another agency as an officer. Between the personnel job and the first officer job she supervised one person, but did not have the title or position of supervisor.

Nadine then went on to work in another office position for two years, where she determined the eligibility of businesses for certification. She acted an interim supervisor for that unit for several months. Nadine approached the administrators to have that position become permanent:

It was not a matter of applying because at that point while I was handling these duties and responsibilities, I approached them about that issue. It became an issue and so I think at that point they already had someone else in mind…I felt that I was being used. I was good enough to do it on an interim basis, but not as a real one (49-54).

Nadine was then promoted to an audit administrator. She felt this was done as to save face to redress their previous actions. She worked in this capacity for the next thirteen years before was promoted to program manager. She has been in her supervisory role for one year.

Nadine supervises six people. Her responsibilities include reviewing applications for certification and conduct site visits. Her unit conducts investigation on complaints filed on one of their businesses. They meet with various agencies to identify set aside programs. They also conduct training for the agencies.
Susan

Profile

Susan is forty-eight years, married, and has three children. She holds a high school diploma. Susan is very enthused about her job. She presents herself as a professional that has high standards for her department. She earns between $41,000 and $60,000.

Career Path

Susan started her career working with a public, non-profit organization as a full-time secretary. She did not enjoy that work and soon left to sell Tupperware and after a two weeks became a manager. She worked in that capacity for a year, but relinquished that position after her involvement in a car wreck, “Managers were given a car, and my children were in there and we were almost killed and I never went back (9-10). Susan then worked as a bank teller, and really enjoyed it, but the pay was low and after the basic expenses she had no money and eventually acquired a part-time job in a bar to help with expenses.

Susan started seeking a possible position with the State of Ohio. Obtaining a position with the state was very difficult so she worked with a program that assigned her to a state agency, but she was not a state employee. She worked as a typist and a month after starting, the secretary went on vacation making them short staffed. The department needed someone to fill in, so Susan volunteered, and she typed letters and memos. Performing these tasks helped Susan with her typing skills and when a typing test for a typist II became available she completed the test and passed. Shortly afterwards, she was
called for interviews with three agencies. She interviewed with the one where she is currently employed and was hired on the spot. She started with the agency in 1979 as a typist. She was promoted several times within the agency, from a typist from 1979 to 1980, to a an account clerk from 1982 to 1984, to a purchasing agent, from 1986 to 1994, to a printing coordinator, to a purchasing supervisor from 1994, to an analyst supervisor since 1995.

Diane currently supervises seven employees. Her responsibilities include overseeing the purchasing procurement of certain services for state agencies. She evaluates the specifications for certain jobs that need to be accomplished.

Rhonda

Profile

Rhonda is forty years old, married and has one child. She has a Bachelors of Arts in computer science. She is high spirited and enjoyed talking about her work. She earns between $41,000 and $60,000.

Career Path

After graduation in 1984, Rhonda taught in the public school system as a substitute teacher for two years. She then taught computer classes and professional development classes at a community college for three years. While teaching at this college, Rhonda went with her students to a career day, and spoke with the human resources manager of a state agency. The job seemed interesting to Rhonda.

...The human resources person was talking about the agency and the type of work they did and it just seemed interesting to me. Just fascinating, I thought, I would
like to do that, particularly when knew that I was a people person. Although I have my degree in computer system, I knew that I was a people person. And so she made it sound so interesting that I applied myself for a position (18-20).

Rhonda was hired in the state department within three months after applying as an entry-level worker. She was promoted very quickly to the third level, foregoing the second level after a year. Within six months, she was promoted to supervisor. She also frequently serves as the interim director. She has been a supervisor for the past five years.

Rhonda supervises seven employees. Her job responsibilities include reviewing and directing her employees’ work. She conducts “boring” administrative work, which involves much paperwork. She conducts training and is frequently solicited for speaking engagements for other agencies and the community. She oversees the work of employees in twenty-six counties. She meets with her employees and addresses their concerns.

Faith

Profile

Faith is forty-seven years old, married, and has three children. She has a Bachelors of Arts degree in criminology. She earns between $41,000 and $60,000.

She is industrious and meticulous in her work.

Career Path

Faith started her career immediately following high school at an automobile industry. She worked as support personnel for the salesmen, and was promoted to a group leader after five years. She was eventually promoted to administrative assistant to
a manager. She remained with the company for seven years before leaving to have children.

Faith left gainful employment for fourteen years to devote her time to her family. During that time she attended college. Following that she worked as a intake personnel with the police department for approximately one-year. Her family moved to another city in 1991 where she was hired into her present organization at the entry level. She quickly advanced in the organization. She was promoted to first-line supervisor three years into her tenure. Faith expressed that there is a disadvantage for moving up so quickly in the organization:

Well when you move so quickly, you are not acclimated to the changes that are involved. The total changes are coming from the second level to supervisory staff and cutting off ties there. I found the acclimation to be very difficult. To say I am their manager now because I used to be their friend and “buddy.” To make that line has been very difficult for me. And also being a supervisor so fast, I did not get the complete training as a third level worker. I should have received the full experience as a third level worker. But when you hear the name supervisor, you become excited. When I look back on it I wish I had stayed longer as a third level worker (74-78).

Faith believed that the experience and the involvement in more cases would have prepared her both mentally and physically for her role as a first-line supervisor.

Faith currently supervises six employees. She claims that at the moment she is wearing the hats of supervisor for three different units. She is the supervisor for a pilot
unit, and the supervisor for two regular units. Faith is presently more involved in getting the pilot unit performing as the administration wants it.

Her responsibilities include determining the eligibility of clients for services. She evaluates and monitors the work of her employees on a daily basis. She answers calls pertaining to questions about unit. Faith believes in giving her employees the latitude to work and to exercise their capability and authority:

I believe in giving my people space and letting them exert their own energy. I don’t have them do a written itinerary...I believe you should treat people as professionals because this is how I want to be treated. I don’t result to any of these menial, “sign here, sign there.” I look at being a supervisor as how I want to be treated as a worker. I want to be treated with respect. I want you to know and trust me. I want you to know that I am here to work for the mission of the organization. So I do that to them. I show them respect and stress teamwork...(196-199).

May

Profile

May is fifty years old, divorced, and the mother of two children. She has completed almost three years of college, but never graduated. She earns between $41,000 and $60,000. May is a resourceful and industrious person who enjoys her work.

Career Path

May began her professional career journey in an Illinois state agency where she worked for three years. She then relocated to another state and began her tenure at the
present organization. Her hiring at this organization was through some odd circumstances:

When I moved to this state, I would have liked to pursue a career in the one I left, but the job market was very tight. A lot of people were losing their job. I really didn’t have much hopes of getting a job in that same field. So what I did needing to work was to sign up with a temporary agency just to do some clerical work.

The first assignment that they gave me was working at this organization as a typist. Arriving here and realizing that this agency did the same type of work that I had done before, I inquired about a position. I was told basically that there was a hiring freeze…so I continued to work temporary positions, then out of the blues someone from another city called instructed my regional director to have me complete an application…. And I was hired at the entry level (10-16).

May worked at the entry level for one year and a half, before advancing to the second level. She worked in that position for another two years before being promoted to the third level. She worked in the third level for approximately four years.

May’s superiors recognized her potential for supervisor and implied that she should apply for the next supervisory position that becomes available. May stated, “I didn’t put much thought into it because within this agency, people don’t leave very often nor retire so I dismissed it…I was pretty content with being a third level worker” (40-44). A position became available; she went through the application and bidding process and was offered the position. May has been a first-line supervisor for approximately ten years.
She currently supervises four employees. Her responsibilities include reviewing and monitoring the work of her employees. She meets with her employees to discuss their cases and offers recommendations to assist in the adjudication of their cases. She likes to bring out the best in her employees:

A part of the job sometimes is to challenge the employees to do more, which they never like. I like challenging them sometimes on their conclusions...Nobody like to be told or even to think that their assessment is incorrect, or work is incomplete. That's is always a nice challenge for me...It's not an indictment against you. I think you are a very good worker, it just that in particular cases something you have overlooked (430-435).

Discussion

This section illustrated the profiles and career journeys selected by the first-line supervisors. The women had diverse reason for choosing their career paths, but the main factor was they sought gainful employment and the state agencies offered them that window of opportunity. Once the women secured employment with the various agencies, they advanced through several positions within those agencies. No two women No two women selected the same career paths, but there were some similarities.

The Nature of Career Paths

This section is divided into three parts. Part one present the data on the main theme, becoming a supervisor. Part two presents the data on, being a supervisor. Part three presents the data on planning for the future.

135
**Becoming a Supervisor**

The data are presented by the sub-themes that emerged in the data analysis. The sub-themes are interest and values, learning from previous jobs, information used to advance.

**Presentation of the data**

Table 4.2 presents the data.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Hope</th>
<th>Rhonda</th>
<th>Kia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interest and values</td>
<td>My interest in a job was in pleasing people. I was interested in the unfairness to the underdog. The agency introduced me to where I want to go professionally. It introduced me to a different focus and where you could make a difference and from that I decided that is something I really want to do. So I spent my time honing my investigative skills and refining it and going where it took me.</td>
<td>My recognition of job I wanted was realized by observing the behavior of the adult student that I taught. These people needed someone to fight for them. They were not educated and did not know a whole lot about their individual rights. So I wanted to be in that arena and make a difference right away. This agency affords you that opportunity.</td>
<td>My interest in a job was that you’ve to eat, you’ve got to live. I want to be self-sufficient. The most important thing for me at that time was getting a job, keeping it and my interest in people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning from previous jobs</td>
<td>I learned from my previous positions to be flexible but focused, and committed to what I do.</td>
<td>I learned from my previous positions how to deal with conflict, have good time management, and to become an independent learner, and polish my research skills.</td>
<td>I learned from my previous positions the necessity to know the rules of the game. You need to about getting promoted and what you have to do. You need to talk to someone and get all the information you can. Have people skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information used to advance</td>
<td>When I started out here with a BA degree and little background. I came in with an open mind and a zest for learning. When I was at the Authority we had a lot of training. We went to all kinds of professional development training. They also brought in consultants who worked with us consistently. It was then that I started to develop myself in lots of different ways professionally. Here at the agency, it was important to know the techniques involved in obtaining information and the investigative process.</td>
<td>I had to know the people I was working with and know the agency. I needed to know what it takes to get to the next level. I had to study the organization and the culture and determine the end results. I read a lot of the manuals and books pertaining to the job including law book. I also went to different seminars and training. I talk to people and learned from them.</td>
<td>I found that the most important information was the approved information that was already written and cannot be disputed. So if I needed one in this and a year’s experience over here, then I went ahead and made sure I had my ducks in a row. In order to get the right information it is important that you ask the right questions.</td>
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Table 4.2: Becoming a Supervisor
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>Faith</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interest and values</td>
<td>I never really saw myself doing this type of work and I actually happened upon this type of work in Chicago. All I knew from a pretty early age is that I wanted to work. I wanted money and it was mainly clerical jobs. My landlord recommended me for this type of work. I got the job and once I started doing it, it just kind of fit together. My interest then became on racial issues. I always had a heart for people who have been treated badly or differently for reason such as color.</td>
<td>I got into this type of work because my husband had experienced discrimination and I wanted to understand what he was experiencing. So it caused me to enter a field that would relate. My interest had always been in the human service as that is one of my strengths, and my interest was to make a living.</td>
<td>I did not want to work, but after I had my babies my husband sent me to work. I did not even know this agency. But I came in here and I got the job. My interest was listening, organization and working with people. I had a gift to communicate with people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning from previous jobs</td>
<td>I learned from my previous jobs the law and the legal aspects of the job. I learned how to manage cases and to make fair judgments. I have also learned how to deal with people from all levels and have honed my communication skills and conduct effective interviews.</td>
<td>I learned from my previous positions how to deal with different people and how to handle different situations.</td>
<td>I learned from my previous job how important each job function is and every function work together to make an end result. I learned responsibilities and how to work with people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information used to advance</td>
<td>I believed my analytical, and writing skills helped me in my advancement. The agency gave us training on an ongoing basis that helped me, but the hands-on was how you learn to do the job. The technical knowledge of the job you need to know</td>
<td>Factors in advancement that helped were that I was blessed in having good people skills, ability to communicate and I possess good people skills and negotiating skills and analytical skills. I read a lot concerning this area and conducted research. I started building up on the skills needed for the job and do your best. I learned from my supervisor</td>
<td>I produced the work needed, and used my organization skills. I was always ready and prepared. I am a listener and people want someone to listen to them. My supervisor looked at my record and she believed that I could do the job and recommended for promotion. This organization offers a lot of training, seminars and I signed up for all of them. The organization worked with us and answered our questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>Nadine</td>
<td>Joy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest and values</td>
<td>My interest was surviving and doing what I needed for my family. I wanted to teach but you stumble upon something you really like and if you didn’t, fine, just keep working. I found my interest with my job with the state because of the changes in the world of technology. It is very interesting.</td>
<td>I was interested in early childhood education but I just got into government and started doing clerical work to get my foot in the door. I liked what I was doing and we represented so I looked for opportunities here to progress. I was also looking for job security because I had a family to take care of.</td>
<td>I did not know what were my interest. I just did the dance and when I came here I felt that I have found my niche. I found it interesting. Money and security were important. I also wanted to prove myself to my supervisors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning from previous jobs</td>
<td>I learned from my previous jobs just typical clerical, and people skills. In my advancement I volunteered to do a lot of things and I never said no when someone ask me to do something. I asked a lot of questions and learn everything I could.</td>
<td>I learned endurance and patience from my previous jobs. I learned how to deal with people</td>
<td>I learned good work ethics and to be professional. I learned how to deal with people from diverse backgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information used to advance</td>
<td>The information I used to advance was to not turn down a learning opportunity. I also observed people and learned. People could rely on me to get the job done. The organization has not offered me any training and development activities in my advancement.</td>
<td>I got to where I am by hard work and willingness to take on challenges. There was a lot of training given by HR but I did not take advantage of a lot of the training. I acquired the skills I have on the job, by supervisors and others on the job taught me. I developed my interviewing and communication skills</td>
<td>I began to develop more self-confidence and self-esteem and realized that now matter how much education you have these are important. What helped me the most was first hand experience and talking to people. My co-workers had quite a influence on me. I learned my trial and error. I have to read to keep up with the changes in the law.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Shirley</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>Linda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interest and values</td>
<td>My father had been a minister and I’d seen helping people all his life.  Then I went to a Black college and that just reinforced my desire to help people, especially minorities, and people who are victims of the system. I interned with CRC and my love for the field set in.</td>
<td>I was interesting in interviewing. Then I started looking into other areas to see if I really wanted to stay with the state and I said this is it. My value was I wanted to strive for better things and nothing was going to stop me.</td>
<td>My interest was how much money I can make and job security. I also wanted to make a difference. Therefore I did an internship with the state and after graduation was hired. I also took advantage of every training opportunity I could.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning from previous jobs</td>
<td>I learned from my previous jobs the meaning of legal discrimination. I learned how to maintain an upward professionalism and how to get the job done.</td>
<td>I set my goals on personnel and I spent 2 years in each position learning before applying for another position.</td>
<td>I learned from my previous jobs patience and perseverance, because no job comes easy. I learned how to play the game. You have to learn to play the game better than most because you are African-American. I also learned how to be professional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information used to advance</td>
<td>I was able to get promoted based on my academic training and experience. I took several courses in management and supervision also. My networking with others in the state helped me to become aware of opportunities and I was able to take advantage of those opportunities.</td>
<td>I got my information for advancement from other people including my supervisor. I tap into them that they may give me information. I wasn’t afraid to ask questions. I read a lot from the manuals they had here. Constant reading, checking and referencing.</td>
<td>I received promotion by researching each department, and meeting the minimum requirements for each position. I also presented myself well. I received training inside and outside the state. Some were not useful at the time but I took them to get ahead.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

This part discusses the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the main theme, becoming a supervisor.

Interest and Values

The women’s values and interests at the time they chose their career are varied and interesting. Their interests initially were financial, security, finding steady income that could support themselves and families. Once these were achieved, their interests changed to commitment to the job and the people they serve, and doing the best they can to perform their duties.

Desire to help others. Shirley states, “I wanted to help people, especially African-Americans minority groups...people who were victims of the system and have not received good opportunities” (320-322). Kia reiterates, “My values were most importantly you have to eat, you have to live. I was single at the time and was young. People were saying, I will take care of you now. I said no, I don’t want you to take care of me; I want to take care of myself. I want to be self-sufficient. I wanted to do something on my own” (532-538).

Joy’s priority at that time was finding a job with some degree of security. She had just left college and needed a car and a place to live so finances took priority based on the situation she was in. She also wanted to prove herself to her new employees that she was a good worker, and it was gratifying for her knowing that she gave them her best. April expresses her intent for being the best at her job:
I want to do the best I can. Once I gain all this I am okay...This is important and it is something I have to do. I am going to stay a little after work to get that extra piece of paper, extra bit of knowledge. I could sit in that office with Mike, my supervisor to discuss a term or a procedure. This was important to me. I am going to learn. I can do this and I am going to do it. Nothing is going to stop me. I am somebody. Everybody is going know my name (1064-1678).

Seeking employment. The women were gainfully employed in various jobs before seeking employment with the State of Ohio. They were employed in education, banking, automobile industry, the military, and other state departments. Several of the women deliberately sought employment with the state. Susan states:

I couldn’t get a state job. It was very hard. I heard about a program, I couldn’t remember the name of it, where they paid you what you worked with the state. You were not on state payroll. I thought that was a way to get my foot in the door. So they assigned with the Department of Aging in the Golden Buckeye Section (20-24).

Linda also willfully sought opportunities with the state:

I was a college intern with the State in the computer services division, mostly doing computer programming, software applications testing. After I graduated from college, my first job was a receptionist so I was receptionist with a double major bachelor’s degree. But I looked at it as my way to get in because once in State government when you get in you can work your way up (9-13).
**Found work by chance.** Other women found state employment by happenstance. Joy explains how she received her job with the state after working with the educational system:

Yeah. Because actually - well maybe 6 weeks into that I found out about the agency. And I went on and applied and I got called for an interview. And it just so happened that the agency in Cleveland - we have five regions, one being in Cleveland where I was did not have any vacancies but I discovered there was a vacancy in this city (46-49).

May also found about employment with the state by being on assignment with a temporary agency,

I started working here at the agency. Really it was kind of an odd set of circumstances. I had that background in investigation. I would have liked to pursue a career in that but when I came to Ohio that was at a time when the job market was really tight. A lot of people were losing jobs. I really didn’t have much hopes of getting a job in that same field. So what I did was I needed work and I signed up with a temporary agency just to do some clerical work. The first assignment that they gave me was working here as a typist for the Civil Rights Commission. And upon coming here, realizing that basically this agency does the same kind of work that I had done before I inquired about a position. I was told basically there was a hiring freeze and they would not be hiring any investigators or any positions at that time. So I continued to work in the temporary area and then out of the blue someone from C instructed my regional director to have me
complete an application and apply for a job as a worker, which I did. And of course was hired as worker, and the job was practically identical to the job that I did in Chicago. So it was a pretty easy transition (15-23).

**Found job within agency.** Some of the women explored areas of interest within the organization until they found it. April states, “I started looking into other areas to see if I really wanted to stay and when I found the different areas, I said, ‘this is it.’ I want to stay here. But I had to learn more. I had to find out. I had to really know...I was really interested in interviewing and I convinced myself that I could do it” (2/1/99, 1046-1060). Rhonda states:

I realized by observing the behavior of the adult students I taught that I wanted to make some changes. That these people needed someone to fight for them. They weren’t educated. They did not know a whole lot about their civil rights. I wanted to be in an area that would make a difference...This organization affords you that opportunity. So it was a calling. When I met the Human Resources Director, she told me about all the types of things that the commission does and I said, “That’s it. That’s where I want to be”” (574-582).

Mary knew what kind of career would interest her based on her husband’s experience. She felt based on the discrimination that her husband was experiencing in the workplace, she needed a clearer understanding. She did this by getting involved in work that addresses discrimination. She states, “So his experiences caused me to enter a field that would relate so that we could better understand what he was experiencing and feeling” (409-416).
The women had various reasons for choosing the career they did, but the main factor was that they had to work and the state agency offered them that window of opportunity. They expressed that state government gave them opportunities to advance or move into different areas of interest.

Learning from previous jobs

The women expressed learning from each job they held and applying it to their subsequent jobs helped with their success. They learned the importance of teamwork, and how each job function affected another. They learned the importance of listening and communicating, because they help resolve conflict and confusion. They learned the importance of patience and perseverance because “no job comes easy, and it can wear you down and affect your self-esteem” (Linda, 37-38). Nadine states that patience and endurance what she learned because, “I learn how to deal with people” (84-85). The women all agreed learning those people skills from their jobs. May indicates that she is still learning in her present position. She articulates:

I learn and am still learning to separate friendships and relationships from decisions that have to be made. I am learning how to be fair to everyone and not to show preferences to people you like a little bit more. I learned how to give to and do things for a person without expecting anything back. Because if you expect something back but don’t get, it was just the right thing to do…I have learned that it is important to be honest and up front with a person (154-177).
The women learned from their previous job qualities that enhanced their potential to become supervisors. They regarded their learning experiences from their past jobs as important factors for their career advancement.

**Information used for Career Advancement**

The women relied on formal and informal mode of information to help in their career advancement. Information regarding job and promotional opportunities were structured within the agencies as they were posted on job bulletin boards sent in by the central recruitment office.

**Taking the initiative.** The women took the initiative to seek and apply for jobs within the state government. Linda stated, “Jobs are posted by the central recruitment office, so it is easy to look for a job” (209). The opportunities to learn of jobs were easy within the agencies. Nadine attested to this, “They were all kind of opportunities provided and I can’t blame anyone for his but myself because I did not take advantage of a lot of opportunities that were there” (279-281).

**Asking questions.** Information was also received by being aggressive in their search by listening and asking others. Kia expressed that the information used and found most useful were the rules and policies that the agency adhered to and cannot be disputed because it is written and agreed upon:

The information I found most important was the one that was approved information. That was already written and could not be disputed. So if I all I needed were six courses and I had them the why wasn’t I getting the interview?…That’s the most important information; The hard and fast
information, that's accurate; The information that was indisputable; The information that was there, and there is no way in the world you could look around it (302-309).

Some of women found that soft information received from speaking from others was also important. They felt that they in order to get the information they needed, they have to ask the right question. Kia stated, "You need to know what you really want, because people are not going to tell you how to form that question to get the answer you really need" (324-327).

Shirley attributed her information also to talking to people. Her networking with personnel from different agencies:

My cousin introduced me to a friend who was the state coordinator of personnel. He knew that a job that I was qualified was about to come open and he didn't know anybody else with the background for it. They asked me if I wanted it ...so that was an opportunity for me to do something on a bit higher level. It was the first time I had ever supervised staff or that kind of thing (1/25/99, 304-308).

**Preparedness for advancement.** The women also emphasized certain factors in their career advancement. These include having a certain amount of knowledge, skills, work ethics and values, commitment to job, and aggressiveness to advance in the organization. Some did not regard education as the foremost factor for advancement.

Hope asserts:

I started out in this organization with an open mind and a BA degree and a zest to learn about the job and long with that there has to be some personal characteristics
that are important to this job... One requirement is trust. I have to be able to know
that I can talk to you about this and it is not going any further... I also discovered
about myself that I was very task oriented. I liked what I did and I enjoyed it... It
was satisfying. So why would I want to do anything else? Well, it got pointed out
that to me that I would make a really good supervisor (3/11/99, 286-289).

Hope did excellent work, and her superiors recognized it and recommended that she
applied for a supervisory position when one became available. May was also
recommended by her superiors for promotion to supervisor before even thinking about it.
Hope also found out that learning the politics of the organization could be beneficial in
the retention and promotion of employees:

...I always thought that if you work hard you can get where you want to go. So I
didn’t think about the politics. I just thought about the work... though I got a little
more sophisticated and started to look beyond the task to how people operate.

How people think. What peoples’ agendas are, and why those agendas are
important to those people and that affects you (316-324).

Interactive Skills. Some of the skills identified by the women are analytical and
communication skills. June was one of the women who believe that people-skills,
analytical and communication skills were important to her advancement:

I was blessed in having good people skills. I am able to communicate. I am able
to communicate if your are the lowest person, a janitor or whether you are a judge
over some Supreme Court. I also have good negotiation skills. You could talk to
people and they could see some of your main points. And of course, you have to
have good analytical skills... You also have to have good writing skills because you are always interviewing. So you have to be able to hear what that person is saying. You have to be able to convey that information through written form as well. You have to be able to put that information down in a report where it is concise and accurate and thorough to address all of the issues that may have been raised (108-128).

Hard work. Linda was one who attributed her advancement to hard work and tenacity. She also recognized that hard work is not good enough all the time, African-American women have to be confident and tenacious in their quest for upward mobility:

It was hard work, learning more than what my job called for. I saw the opportunity coming and when I got that promotion it was created for someone else and I realized that I just had what it takes and that job was for me. I knew that job was created for someone else so I did everything that I needed to do. I researched everything about the position because, I knew that that they would try to throw something in there that I wouldn’t know. I learned everything about that position without having hands on experience. So when they interviewed, it came down to me and another woman who was the administrator’s niece... I eventually was offered the job (213-229).

Willingness to learn. The willingness to learn new things and not be afraid of challenging assignments was another factor stated by the women. Susan offers why being aggressive can be an asset in the quest for career progression:
I was never one to sit and do my work only, I could never sit and do the same thing all the time. Which is possible why I left the bank. So when I became a typist, I volunteered a lot to do different things. People would come and ask me to do things and I never turned anyone down, I never said no. So there was this lady who had accepted a promotion and was leaving and the agency could not afford the gap between her leaving and hiring someone for her position because of the type of work. So they asked me if I would be interested in filling the position, and that they could not promise me a promotion, I would still be at the lesser pay. I thought sure, let me learn something new and let me see where it would lead to (92-100).

Susan also took the opportunities to ask and learn more about the organization and the work process:

So I moved over to the accounting section and I worked very hard to prove that I was capable and I got a promotion before long. But I worked a little with the lady at the job, and just some of the questions I would ask taught me a little bit, so when I became an Accounting Clerk paying these bills, I had to know a little bit more about printing - other ink goes on paper... So I would have conversations with the purchasing agents in the purchasing sections on the paper. I needed to know what kind of paper was this, why do we order this way and so on and so forth. So in learning that to pay the invoices, I taught myself how to buy paper, so a couple years after that a position came open as a paper purchaser agent and I applied and they hired me (109-116).
Interpretation

The interpretation of the data is guided by the themes presented in the previous discussion.

**Interests and values.** The women were employed in low-skilled blue collar jobs in various occupational roles. They were clerical assistants, substitute teachers, bank tellers, nurses assistants, sales clerks, typists, receptionists and secretaries. Their interest was in helping others and the state offered them the opportunities to serve the public in various capacities. Their interest was also of economic survival. Therefore being compensated adequately to provide for their families’ needs was important. The women also needed job security in the workplace. The constancy of traditional civil service work and protections offered by the government was acknowledged by to women to provide as more security than private sector jobs. This provided the opportunity for growth and stability in their careers.

**Learning experiences.** The women’s previous employment prepared them for advancement with the requisite skills and knowledge for advancement. Their learning experiences were important because it prepared to be flexible, deal with conflict, know the “rules of the game,” team work, and dealing with people. These skills are necessary for higher skilled work.

**Information used to advance.** The women utilized the training opportunities provided by the state to get information for their advancement. They also learned information by on-the-job training. The women were willing to learn new information and used it in their jobs. They aggressively sought information by talking to others,
taking the initiative to learn about opportunities, and possessing good work ethics and values.

**Being a Supervisor**

The section presents the themes and sub-themes that emerged on the women being a supervisor. The themes are significant contributions, involvement in special projects, solicitation of opinions, description of self, description by others, and treatment by others.

**Presentation of the Data**

Table 4.3 presents the data.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Hope</th>
<th>Rhonda</th>
<th>Kia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Significant contributions</td>
<td>I standardize the investigative procedures for TVA. There were a</td>
<td>I have made suggestions especially on redlining and these have been</td>
<td>My significant contribution is my creativity and my sharing of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>number of cases that I argued that I got some meaningful decisions</td>
<td>implemented and have changed how we process certain cases.</td>
<td>information that is important to the agency, such as newspaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>articles that need attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in special</td>
<td>I am involved in special projects here at work. I am currently</td>
<td>I am involved in a project called Kids Inc. where we develop women</td>
<td>I am involved in several speaking engagements to talk about the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>projects</td>
<td>writing a proposal for supervisors in this office to do outreach</td>
<td>coming off welfare</td>
<td>National Guard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>programs with high schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solicitation of opinions</td>
<td>As a supervisor, my superiors solicit my opinions</td>
<td>My opinions and ideas are solicited from my employees, supervisors</td>
<td>My supervisor solicits my opinions and ideas on certain issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and outside agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of self</td>
<td>I am competent, flexible, helpful, able to provided instruction and</td>
<td>I believe that I am dedicated and focus. I believe in self-</td>
<td>I believe I am a professional and a detailed person and like getting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>training and fair. As a supervisor I will push an employee beyond</td>
<td>improvement</td>
<td>the job done. My supervisor solicits and respects my opinions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the obvious. I am a team player with other supervisors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description by others</td>
<td>One of my employees will say that I am a witch. Others will say that</td>
<td>My peers describe me as result-oriented, knowledgeable, a team</td>
<td>.My peers see me as energetic and a good communicator and one that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I’m helpful, I listen, and I can be instructive. I can be direct and</td>
<td>player, dependable and pleasant to work with. My employees respect</td>
<td>gets things done. My employees see me as having a good sense of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I can be demanding.</td>
<td>me and find me knowledgeable</td>
<td>humor but I am no-nonsense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment by others</td>
<td>With some Black women I am treated with respect, with other I am</td>
<td>Black women treat me fine. I treated fine by Black males except the</td>
<td>Some black women treat me fine. Some white women are a little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>treated with a lot of distance. White women treat me with contempt.</td>
<td>one I directly supervise. White workers treat me with respect. I have</td>
<td>threatened, Black men back off after a while, the white man I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am treated well by white men. I have a good working</td>
<td>the utmost respect of other supervisors. I work well with my</td>
<td>worked with tried me at every level. My employees respect my</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>relationship with my supervisor.</td>
<td>superiors. I do receive support from my superiors and employees.</td>
<td>authority. I have a good relationship with my superior. We have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>open communication. She gives me support. I also get support from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>my employees.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3: Being a Supervisor
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>Faith</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Significant contributions</td>
<td>My contributions to the agency as a supervisor in the form of stability to the office. I also motivate people to do better.</td>
<td>I have made significant contribution because of my thoroughness of cases, the care for other people. My proudest moment was I was able to have a settlement of $45,000.</td>
<td>My record reflects that I can deal with people, and I have shown that I am here to be a public servant. One of my most proud moment is that I was able to help someone get his job back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in special projects</td>
<td>Special projects include being a member of a statewide labor-management committee</td>
<td>I am not actively involved in any special projects with the agency, but I was once on a committee to review rules and policies that were already in place.</td>
<td>I was asked to be involved on a special committee but that did not work out because my allegiance was not with management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solicitation of opinions</td>
<td>My bosses and peers solicit my opinion on issues affecting the organization</td>
<td>My superiors solicit my opinion.</td>
<td>My supervisor approaches me to help resolve organizational problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of self</td>
<td>I would describe myself as a professional who works hard.</td>
<td>I believe that I am a kind-hearted person, a hard worker and sometimes I lack self-confidence.</td>
<td>I enforce discipline and I try to be fair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description by others</td>
<td>My peers describe me as outspoken, committed, challenging, mostly a loner but can be a team player. Supervisor sees me as my peers do. My employees respect me because of my knowledge and expertise. They believe that I have integrity.</td>
<td>My peers find me knowledgeable and very detailed. My employees find that I have high standards but very fair. I detect an air of jealousy from black women. I treat others as I have been treated.</td>
<td>My peers know that I am organized. They know that I am learning that I cannot be a friend to everyone. My employees see me as approachable, and that I may show favoritism towards some.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment by others</td>
<td>Treated by other blacks well. Sense there is some barrier with whites, no closeness. White males tend to be intimidated. Treated well by supervisors and employee.</td>
<td>I am treated well by white women there is not that intense competition. I am treated with respect by my superiors. I am treated with respect by my employees. I don’t have any problems with black men. White men are uncomfortable around me.</td>
<td>I am treated by the educated and tenured women well, but the less-intelligent, not so well. Black and white men respect my authority. My supervisor gives me the space to manage and respects me. My employees are supportive with the decisions I make.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Susan</th>
<th>Nadine</th>
<th>Joy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Significant contributions</strong></td>
<td>I spot check my employees' work and have saved the state thousands of dollars.</td>
<td>I feel that I am making contributions through my knowledge, support and commitment. I take responsibility for everything that goes out of this office is done accurately and professionally.</td>
<td>I feel that being a team player is important to the success of the agency. My proudest moment is getting through my first years that was the hardest thing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Involvement in special projects</strong></td>
<td>I am involved in special projects such as the Q-step which is charged in streamlining the paper process.</td>
<td>I am not involved in any special project nor was I called to be on one.</td>
<td>I conduct outreach programs in the community which also helps to build my speaking skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Solicitation of opinions</strong></td>
<td>My opinion is solicited by others concerning issues with the job.</td>
<td>My opinion is solicited by everyone on both personal and work problems.</td>
<td>I am consulted as part of the supervisory team on issues confronting the agency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description of self</strong></td>
<td>I would say that I am too easy, and don't address issues until I get angry.</td>
<td>am laid back, but I will do what I need to get the job done. I am committed and dedicated to my work and employees.</td>
<td>I am very professional and empathetic and sympathetic, but can be firm when I need to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description by others</strong></td>
<td>One of my employees would refer to as a Black bitch, while others will say that I am the fairest person they know. My peers see me as hard working but they see as an outsider. Other women make comments that I overdress, they also criticize my work, but they recognize me as the manager, except one. I have no problems with men.</td>
<td>I believe my colleagues think that I am not aggressive enough because I have to be pushed to believe in myself. My employees think highly of me.</td>
<td>My peers see me a being fair and I am not a control freak. My employees see me as easy going and I give them breaks with reason because this job is serious and one can get burned out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Treatment by others</strong></td>
<td>My female colleague and I do not get along, but I do get along with my male colleague. I have a good working relationship with my supervisor, a white male. He is supportive of me and my decisions.</td>
<td>I am treated well by my superior. She supports me and we respect each other. I am treated very well by my employees.</td>
<td>Black women treat me fair. White women treat me fine. Black men seem intimidated by me. White men are intimidated by me but they recognize my authority and expertise. My employees seem to respect me. My supervisor knows that I am a hard worker.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Shirley</th>
<th>Linda</th>
<th>April</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Significant contributions</td>
<td>I know that I have had a major impact on agencies in terms of their expenditure. My team has had a direct impact on increasing funding to businesses.</td>
<td>My boss complimented me that I am practical and a good micro-manager. So my contribution is that I am a team builder.</td>
<td>I put our manual together that contains the civil service laws and rules and kept it updated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in special projects</td>
<td>I am part of the statewide diversity committee and we have been working to set some uniform policies and procedures for state agencies to adhere to.</td>
<td>I am involved in work outside of my area. I am involved in charity campaigns where we raise donations for needy families at Christmas.</td>
<td>My supervisors always want to put me in charge of a committee or group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solicitation of opinions</td>
<td>Others inside and outside the agency recognized my knowledge</td>
<td>Everybody seeks my advice because they know that I am a take charge person</td>
<td>Many people from different offices call me to get information and ask my opinion on issues pertaining to HR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of Self</td>
<td>My peer would describe me as having a lot of energy and have institutional knowledge and that I go above and beyond.</td>
<td>I see myself as a fair supervisor. I treat everybody as how I would like to be treated. I treat everyone with the same level of respect, no favoritism.</td>
<td>I am sensitive and my feelings get hurt. I am a team player.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description by others</td>
<td>They describe me as supportive and fair. I am a team player.</td>
<td>I have gained the respect of everyone here. My employees see me as a working supervisor. I give them the assistance they need and take time out to explain any new assignment.</td>
<td>My peers would describe me as being very knowledgeable and willing to help. My employees depend on me and they know that I will stick up for them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment by others</td>
<td>My employees treat me OK. They either love me or hate me, but most of them and I get along really well. Men treat me with respect. My superior does not trust me and I don’t know why. I have been a difficult time with her. My peers support me.</td>
<td>Men treat me with respect. Women tend to be jealous of me and it is worse from Black women than white women. Men treat me with respect.</td>
<td>I believe that the majority of black women look up to me. White women treat me wonderful. I get a lot of respect from black men. Some white men give me respect but other are real hesitant.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

This part discusses the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the main theme, being a supervisor.

Significant Contribution to the Organization

The women felt that they are in some way contributing significantly to the organization. They contribute by their creativity and innovativeness, involvement in special projects, unique skills, knowledge, support to the agency, working with others, and through their pride and commitment to the job. Nadine states, “I just think that my knowledge, support, commitment have all helped. I take the responsibility that everything that goes out of this office is done accurately and professionally” (440-448).

Susan has taken the initiative to manage wastage. She explains:

There are things that I do that if I did not will cost us a lot of money. I spot check jobs, not behind anyone’s back. They know that. Everyone that is estimated has a checker, and then the hob goes on its merry way. But I have seen some things last year that was not quite right so now that I am spot checking them. I did with some work that had some spoilage, thousands and thousands and thousands, which is why I started doing them this fiscal year. The fiscal year before there was over $26,000 in spoilage and we cannot operate on that. Spoilage should be maintained under $1,000 (466-573).

April used her expertise to upgrade and develop new materials and forms for the agency. She explains:
I put the manual together. With the input of my staff on how it was going to be set up. Of course you know everyone has got to have input but its drafted right here. It’s put in here. This little book of civil service laws and rules…The old state applications, the yellow ones, used to be blue before that. I developed that, and the yellow ones came after that one. I was also on another committee and designed a new application because it was too lengthy (1283-1298).

The women considered themselves important to the success of the organization. Their contributions whether tangible like April in developing new materials or like May who lends support and stability to the organization are appreciated. The women are proud of themselves and proud to be a part of the agencies in which they work.

**Involvement in Special Projects**

The women are very much involved in special projects that are not essentially a part of their job. They are involved in activities outside the office and in the community in which they live. These include organizations such as churches, The Urban League, the Red Cross, primarily and high school, Each One, Teach One. They are also asked to participate on special committees to address concerns or interests of the state government.

Shirley shares her commitments:

I am a part of the state-wide diversity committee and we have been working to set some uniform policies and procedures for all state agencies to adhere to. The diversity area is still real fuzzy for a lot of agencies and some of them really have it together, those who have been able to able to go to conferences and learn a little bit more about diversity. I am still part of that committee and of the dispute
resolution team, which is a state-wide committee where we try to put to respond
before filing grievances (934-944).

Hope shares her endeavor:

One of the things that I am currently involved in is writing a proposal for
supervisors in this office to do outreach work with the high schools, particularly
12th grade in doing heir civic responsibilities. So that we would be doing in
essence is giving them training and seminars on civil rights because a lot of these
kids graduate from high school and then to work and fail out of the course. They
think staring at somebody's butt is cool. Oh no, that will get you in deep trouble.
But they don't know any better...So I would like to become more involved in
outreach, educational outreach to the schools (3/11/99, 932-945).

June shares her involvement in her church:

I have many outside activities...I am highly motivated and involved with my
church. I am president our usher board which means I am responsible for each of
the different levels of the usher board of the church. I am on the state level. I
have also gotten involved there, being officer on that board, the
Interdenominational Church Usher (714-721).

The women take the time to become involved in community activities and
projects on the job. They are dedicated to these activities that they hope will result in the
enhancement of lives for everyone.
Solicitation of Opinions

The women expressed that they are approached to give their input into decisions affecting their organizations. Their expertise and knowledge in their respective areas are recognized and thus give them the opportunity to demonstrate their interests in the field. The women are willing to assist within their sphere of control.

Rhonda observes that people within and outside the agency solicit her opinions. She gives an example:

An attorney will call me. He/she is preparing for a case. And they are not really sure about the law or how a particular law works regarding something or how best to prepare their case. And they will say, I will take you to lunch if you just tell me how to go on this or what are some of the defenses that the other party can come up with. What is the law regarding this? (815-819).

The women are approached to give input into resolving problems within their agencies. Susan has worked with the director in making decision regarding the purchasing of materials for the organizations. Joy has contributed to decisions to resolve problems and issues. June states:

My manager, the Regional Director and sometimes other colleagues seek out my opinions. Just recently they were in the process of trying to identify why we need interns to work here. So they asked what they do and me to review and see how I would use an intern and then what do the interns that work with one unit. And how does that compare with the other interns doing employment (744-749).
Nadine is sought out by her employees, managers, and colleagues. She states, “I am one of those people who employers feel okay in coming to talk to. I find myself counseling a lot, so they feel comfortable in coming to me and talking and I will listen to them” (533-535). Linda also finds that everyone approaches her to assist in resolving issues. She attributes this, “Because I am the type of person who takes action. To me the best way to resolve a problem is in the early stage” (821-824). Shirley expresses that she was approached for her opinions in the past, but has not been approached in since the change of Director of the agency.

Their superiors and other employees solicit the women’s opinions. The women are recognized for the expertise and talents in various areas.

Description by Others

The women sensed that their colleagues perceive them as team players, respectful, and assiduous, fair and knowledgeable about their job.

Respect of others. Linda states, “I think I have gained the respect of every person here. I treat everyone with respect and I expect them to treat me with respect and a lot of people understand the position that I hold working for the deputy director is not an easy thing” (111-114). June states, ”I would feel that they would think that I was very knowledgeable and very detailed. They might think that I am overly detailed. But in general, they would thing I’m a nice person and a team player” (188-190). Hopes states, “Well, I would imagine that they would describe me as knowledgeable, congenial, respectful, cooperative, but also firm. I will help you but I am not going to let
you impose. You can borrow my people if you need them but you can’t borrow them all the time" (217-221).

**Unflattering descriptions.** A few of the women felt that their colleagues might have diffidence about them. Their colleagues might see them as being disorganized, uncommunicative, a talker and not much of a listener, outspoken and challenging, and not much of a team player. Susan states:

The other managers I only deal with them if I have to. We meet every Wednesday morning at 8:30 for the management staff meeting…unless I have to consult with someone, I do not associate with them. They have a clique and I do not belong to that clique. They are not going to include me in their little ring, okay…withholding information from me…(251-267).

Shirley is experiencing some conflict with other members of the management staff. Overall she believes that:

Some people will probably say that they don’t think I am organized because they see papers on my desk, that kind of thing…I know that I am very organized….So if they are really honest they really can’t say I am not organized because everything is down and charted. I think they will say that I have institutional knowledge and I have a lot of energy (281-289).

**Description by employees.** The women perceived that their employees are satisfied with their performance as supervisors. They would find them approachable, fair, helpful, supportive, concerned, dependable and knowledgeable. April states:
They can depend on me. They know that I will stick up for them. Sensitive issues, concerns, if they are not quite sure or really don’t want to tackle sensitive issues they will bring it to me. And we can sit down and discuss it, talk about it and hash it out…I have had to discipline one person out of my fifteen and half years as supervisor, and that was for tardiness. She did the work but it was just her getting here. I know my staff, and they know me, and they all know that we are here to get the job accomplished. We don’t have time for pettiness or bickering or things that would hamper our operation (366-34).

Shirley states:

The employees who have worked with me would describe me as fair. I am not a pressure supervisor. If I give you an assignment I let you complete it. If I see that there is a problem and you are not meeting the deadline then I will come back to you and see if you have any problems and offer my assistance. I have always had supervisors who apply a lot of pressure and I just don’t think that employees operate to the utmost of their performance when they are under a lot pressure. So I try to give them an assignment. Try to give clear instructions and then just let them get the job done (310-318).

Both Nadine and Linda had surveys completed on them by their employees to assess their performance and get feedback as supervisors. They both assert that they had high ratings. Linda states:

Their names were not on the surveys and they all rated me high and to say that I don’t have negatives. But I am sure that they say something negative. I just do
not know what it is. Even when I have to discipline it has never been an argument because they know that I am fair, they know that this was something that they deserved (150-156).

**Negative.** There were others who expressed that some of their employees would see them in a negative light. This is due to conflicts they have had and the employees would treat them as a personal attack. Susan explains:

One of them would refer to be as a black bitch. I have heard some of them say that I am the fairest person they know, some will tell you that they don’t agree with my decisions but will abide by them. I am a hard worker...I tried speaking to the employee and she felt that she was evaluated poorly and that I was doing this to her personally. I tried telling her that there is nothing personal, you are just not performing in this area...Other people that I supervise, we have problems, we have disagreements, we get upset and we just go on about the business of the agency (220-243).

Hope believes that one of her workers would claim that she was a witch, but overall her employees thing highly of her. Faith believes that her employees perceive her as showing preferential treatment to some. She states, “There can be negative talk about me, negative feelings about me from the ones who are not getting my attention. Which I should not do but do not realize I am doing it (241-245).

**Description of Self**

**Strengths.** The adjectives used to describe themselves on the job are sensitive, empathetic, sympathetic, detailed but flexible, committed and dedicated, professional,
fair, result oriented, competent, industrious, disciplinarian, and love interacting and teaching others. These were at the professional level. Joy states:

I think that I am very professional. I think I am empathetic. I can be sympathetic. I think that I am easy going. I can be firm when I need to be. I think I know what my role is and that is the biggest thing. If you don’t know what your role is, it is hard to do what you want to do. I think that I am basically successful at what I am doing (400-406).

May states:

I think that I am pretty professional. I think that in addition to being professional I am pretty light hearted. I love communication. I love interacting with people. I like relationships with people. So I always try to establish relationships with people. It is good to have some sort of rapport...I think that I do work hard, even though I don’t always feel like I have accomplished all that I want to accomplish. I feel that I am committed to this agency and to its mission (316-323).

Linda states:

I am a very fair manager and the staff will agree with that. I treat everybody like how I would want to be treated. Regarding people treating me the way I want to be treated, it doesn’t change the way I am going to treat them. I have to treat everyone with the same level of respect, no favoritism or disparate treatment (127-132).

Weaknesses. A few of the women admitted to weakness in their professional attributes. Rhonda states:
Actually sometimes I feel that I am a bit of a wimp though because I think I let them kick me around. I really don’t want to do it and just for the good of all I just go ahead and do it...I feel that sometimes that I am too soft. Sometimes I am too giving and have too much patience and tolerance. Therefore, I could be taken advantage of and I have to watch out (202-230).

Hopes feels that, “I can get suckered in. I can be too compassionate on one end and too stern on the other” (246-248). Susan also feels that she is a pushover, “I am the type of person that takes a lot, I have a lot of patience, until my patience runs out then watch out (282-285). June believes that she lacks self-confidence, “I don’t believe I have the confidence in myself that I should have. Lots of people tell me. I have to check to make sure that I have done what I think is satisfactory to somebody else and I need that feedback” (202-208).

The women enjoy spending time with family when away from the office. They take time to be involved in church and other social activities. Some enjoy the outdoors and are avid runners, swimmers and campers or just exploring nature. Some enjoy reading or just working off their energy around the house.

Treatment by Others

**African-American Women.** Several of the women felt that other African-American women treat them generally well. They have established cordial-working relationships, even though there may be instances where African-American women have challenged them. Several women also voiced that it is very difficult to establish good working relationships with other African-American women. As Margaret states, “There
are some here in the workplace you like, some you don’t like. Some who like you, some
who don’t like you” (957-958).

Rhonda feels that she is treated fine by other African-American females but she is
having difficulties with one woman whom she believes is jealous of her, “She gets tired
of hearing that I am so wonderful. Even though she says it sometimes. But when people
over her says it, it seems to bother to her” (614-618). April is treated well by other
African-American females but have heard rumors that at least two African-American
females consider her an “Uncle Tom,” where is sitting in her office “kissing butt.”

Joy finds that she is treated fairly by African-American women. However she is
very diplomatic in her relationships. Joy explains:
I kind of steer my relationships the way the women want them to be. If they are like the
secluded types that don’t really like a whole lot of interactions then I don’t interact with
you. I can give you your personal space. I respect who they are. And there were some
people that didn’t know how to take me because at that point, I was confident. And some
people don’t know how to take a confident black woman (947-954).
Hope gets mixed treatment from African-American women. She states:
With some women I am treated with a lot of respect. With some black women I am
treated with a lot of distance because they don’t know me and I go back to if you are not
confident in who you are you have difficulty being accepting of other people who are.
Instead of seeing them as an ally, you see them as a threat, and that’s something that I
think black women have to move away from (1158-1163).
Linda finds a lot of jealousy from other women, both black and white, but more so from black women. She explains, “With black women there is always that power struggle…it is hard to get cooperation out of another black woman who is also in a management position” (942-946). Faith finds that she gets respect from the educated African-American women and not so much from the less-intelligent and immature ones. June senses jealousy from other black women. She states, “As a result of that jealousy I think they kind of find ways of putting you down, trying to crush your spirit or something. They do it in subtle ways” (806-809). She also feels that she is in constant competition with other black women.

**Treatment by white women.** The women had different experiences with the treatment by white women. Some women felt that white women exhibited courtesy while others raised issues with the treatment they received.

Rhonda believes that the white employees are judging her. She explains: Unfortunately racism, subtle as it may be to say Rhonda is great and wonderful and knowledgeable, but is really saying, she is a credit to her race. That in of itself is racism. And to say stuff like she writes very well. Part of my job is to edit words. Without saying race, I have heard critics of other supervisors by name and it always seems to be the black supervisors with this real criticism. I have noticed this and what they are saying is that Rhonda is different from her race (910-916).

April confirms that she is treated wonderfully by white women. Hope on the other hand finds that white women can treat her with contempt, “They either like you or they don’t. If they like you, they can use you. If they don’t they are not comfortable with being direct
with me” (1176-1178). May claims that she gets along well with white women but could never really develop closeness. She explains, “I do believe that we kind of play off each other. But generally respectful, but there is a barrier. It’s like okay. You can get so close but no closer. And I’m not quite sure if it’s going both ways. I could be transmitting that and receiving that. It’s really hard to say. With white women I get along with them but there’s not that closeness” (967-972). Linda on the other hand finds those white women display jealousy and they have an air that they are superior regardless if they are your clerks.

**Treatment by men.** The women believe that they are treated well by men, except for issues with certain individuals. They are treated with deference and some times admiration. The men recognize their expertise and authority, and trust the decisions they make concerning work issues. The women felt the men found them approachable.

**White men.** April finds that although white men treat her respectfully there seems to be some hesitancy. But she attempts to build the communication and rapport with them. Hope states, “Most white men find me extremely exciting. Intellectually challenging and very supportive but it is my choice that I do not interact except professionally with white men.” (1249-1251). May finds that white men can be patronizing but have not had any difficulties with them in general. Linda also found that white men tend not to recognize positions of authority held by black women. She muses, “It’s funny because white men don’t have as big a problem working for white women as they do for black women. And white people are so good at playing games, smile in your face, stab you in the back” (951-957). Linda found that white men tend to be
uncomfortable with a black female supervisor. Kia found that white men are a little threatened by her authority. She explains, "I don't feel that they are getting it because they still see a black female maybe. And they see someone with an attitude where you do whatever you want to do but I know what I have got to do" (1007-1015).

Black men. April states she gets a lot of respect and admiration from black men. Hope declares that she is treated with "contempt, fear and loathing by black men because of my refusal to play games" (1247-1249). A few of the women felt that Black men may feel a little intimidated by them as their supervisors. Nadine says, "they don't like to be told what to do and it was kind of hard but they kind of came around. Everyone wants to be treated fairly. I had to make them recognize my authority...I like everyone to think that we are in this together and we can get this done together even though I might have the accountability over it all, but sometimes you have to pull your trump card" (974-992). May finds that black men might challenge her authority, but have had not major problems with them. Linda find that respect that black men is respectful, "They have an overall respect for women who hold management positions" (952-953). Linda has not had problems with African-American men but did encounter some disrespect from an African man. She has since decided that it was a cultural difference where women are not treated equitably in his country.

Treatment by supervisors. They get the utmost respect from their supervisors. They tend to have good working relationships and are respectful of each other's ideas and opinions. There may be challenges and differences in opinions but they are courteous and respectful of that. They find that their supervisor have confidence in them and can count
on their integrity. However, Susan and her supervisor do not get along. Susan considers her supervisor “very bossy and controlling.”

**Treatment by employees.** The women found the employees are very respectful of their roles as supervisors. Nadine took the necessary steps to make sure that her employees understand her role as their supervisor. Nadine states, “They had to learn how to work with me and learn what I expected of them and basically what type of work ethic I think they needed to accomplish this job. And I think they respect me for that” (1007-1010). May states that her employees treat her “pretty good.” I don’t have any problems other than the normal things that come up every once in a while” (1013-1014). Susan says of her employees, “They treat me I believe with the respect I deserve” (741-742).

In summary, most of the women felt that they are receiving the treatment they deserve from their colleagues, supervisors, and employees. When broken down by race and gender, the women expressed that each group has issues. However, these issues do not interfere with the daily functioning of the job.

**Relationship with supervisors.** The women for the most part acknowledged that they have a good working relationship with their supervisors. They received support from their managers in the decisions they make affecting their work and there is mutual respect. They are quick to point out that they do not always agree on everything but respect the other’s opinions and point of view. They maintained a professional relationship.
June describes her relationship with her supervisor:

I think it’s a good working relationship as well as friendship. I think it’s enough room where she’s always able to kind of - I don’t want to say sever a relationship but should she need to discipline or say something harsh to me that there is still room for that and I know it’s nothing personal. It would be something professional. I think it’s a good working relationship as well as friendship (911-915).

May described the relationship with her supervisor as “not deeply personal. More professional than personal, but very good” (1092-1094). May asserts that her supervisor gives her support but there are some problems. She explains:

For the most part if I present a situation to her she will support me. There are situations when if there is an issue between one of my subordinates and myself and this is my perception and one of my subordinates because some of my subordinates are good friends her. They socialize together and all of that. So if a situation comes up between the two of us, she tends to side with them and I kind of know that. So I’ll concede to that because I kind of know that’s the way that is (1098-1104).

Linda describes her relationship with her supervisor as one that took time to developed.

We have a very open relationship. It’s so, I’m so very grateful that we have gotten, our relationship has developed to the point where I’ve had depend on her regardless, but now she depends on me. And it’s good to know it’s two-way.
Because she doesn’t have to depend on me... We compliment each other... (1108-1120).

Hope states that she respects her supervisor and he is very knowledgeable and fair, “We would argue and fight but we got along well in here and when we left here, that was it. So there wasn’t that grudge carrying... (884-888). Kia enjoys working for her supervisor and claims that they do have an open communication. Faith appreciates the fact that her supervisor trusts her and has given her the breadth to carry out her supervisory duties.

**Relationship with employees.** The relationship with employees can be unpredictable. There are some where there is some degree conflict and animosity, while others are friendly and cordial. But underlying them all is that factor of respect and for the most part have their employees support.

Faith describes her employees:

I divide them into the intelligent and the mature. They support me. The other half, no. I can see it now as immaturity and I think I can empathize with that now. Before I didn’t see it. Someone pointed it out to me. These are younger people coming in here. You are talking to your children maybe and I really didn’t realize it (852-856).

Kia states that her employees support her and the decisions she makes. She states, “They give me support because they when I ask for something it’s because I really need it (1337-1338). She continues by explaining any corrective actions she has to take, “I let them know up front that it’s nothing personal. I like you... Now I have to do. I think they understand” (1341-1346). May explains:
Generally speaking if I get a chance to talk to them about it before something happens then I get good support. I find that when they don’t understand where I’m coming from there tends to be more opposition so I try to kind of keep the lines of communication open so that they will understand what’s going on and where I am coming from and what I have to do (109-1113).

The women strive to maintain a professional relationship with their employees. That relationship generally encompasses support decisions made on behalf of the employees and the agency, mutual respect and open lines of communication. Negative issues are discussed and resolved in a manner that leaves everyone’s self-respect in place.

Changing of Relationships. The women discussed how their relationships changed over time with their colleagues as they advanced in the organization. They acknowledged that there will be feelings of envy, jealousy, strive and hurt. May asserts, “I think as you move up like that you are steadily putting bandages on relationships (637-638). Kia describes the changes in her relationships:

First of all, I was working with one other person and then I became the supervisor that had been here for ten years prior. That was not fun. It wasn’t fun because they rallied other people to she shouldn’t have gotten the job. It wasn’t fun that I had to get past that. Say this is the job that we will do, because she felt she knew more than I did in this position and maybe she did, maybe she didn’t…What I have learned about it, the things that have happened because of it and the relationship changes is that first of all it took a long time for everybody to accept
it...I’ve seen changes that I was friends with some people. I am no longer friends with those people (763-788).

Rhonda concedes that it also took some time for people to adjust to her moving up and being their supervisor. She illustrates:

There was no particular respect for my skills or abilities. As time went by they were more respect for me and as an individual. Not that I was just part of group but they respected my abilities and work ethics. Some resented it and some respected it. And as I move up the ladder, then they saw me differently as a teacher and as a guide. And so I think that’s where I am at now with those under me. Those who are above when I first came in I was just another worker. I had to prove myself and I was okay but as time went by there was a respect for my work and my abilities and now I think they see me as more or less a partner around. A major part of the team and a really good team player (732-740).

June discusses the changes in her relationships:

Initially there was a problem with that because my relationship had been equal co-worker and when I became a supervisor, I did have to supervise those people and that created a little bit of a problem. I think when management would discuss certain things in confidence and I had a tendency to want to tell my co-workers watch out because they are doing, this or that matter of fact, one time I did tell a young lady that she needed to change some behaviors because they are going to write her up. My boss heard me telling her...and said there’s going to have to be a separation of your friendship, relationship with your co-workers and the
managers...Because there was a conflict. I think people here, some of them may think that I’m a good friend. I care about them. I am very much concerned about the quality of their work, the thoroughness...They also know that I will defend them also... (632-650).

Linda did not experience resentment from her former colleagues when advancing in the organization. She states, “They respect me just the same” (737-750). Nadine explains that it was difficult for her to accept the transition as their supervisor. She states, “…but they made it easy. I happened to have a good unit, good people who are supportive and didn’t make my life difficult, and they were even part of the ones who recommended me (477-485).

The women faced some challenges from their former colleagues when they became supervisors. Relationships became fragmented and strained. However, for the most part the relationships improved over time. They were eventually accepted and respected as supervisors.

Interpretation

The data are interpreted according to the sub-themes.

Significant contribution. The women are making contributions to the success of the organization. Some are streamlining the work processes for efficiency. Some are increasing the funding level of the programs, and some serve as quality consultants for the finished products. Their supervisors recognize their contributions.

Involvement in special projects. The women are active in projects outside of their work jurisdiction. These projects tend to enhance certain of their skills such as public
speaking. The projects also improve the image of the organization. Their jobs became enrich with special projects and more recognition of abilities.

**Solicitation of opinions.** As supervisors, the women’s opinions are sought for issues affecting the organization and their employees. This shows that upper management has respect for them as leaders in the organization.

**Description of self.** The women have a sense high self-esteem. They are fair, industrious, trustworthy, and possess positive attitudes. They believe that they are performing well as supervisors. They tended to practice a participatory management giving their workers enough autonomy.

**Description by others.** The women’s employees, peers, and superiors have high regard for the women. However there are instances of conflict with others, but they tend not to distract from

**Treatment by others.** Most of the women had the support of their employees, peers, and superiors. None of the women stated having social relationships within the departments but they do work as team players.

**Planning the Future**

This part presents is divided into three components. The first presents the data on the themes and sub-themes that emerged. The second components offers discussion on the data. The third component presents the interpretation of the data.

**Presentation of the Data**

Table 4.4 presents the data. The data is presented by the themes that emerged.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Hope</th>
<th>Rhonda</th>
<th>Kia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other job opportunities</td>
<td>I am satisfied with where I am in my career. I am not looking for other opportunities. This is as far as I want to go. There’s a lot of discussion with the Chief leaving that I will be the next Chief. But I am not interested in the position. I have paid my dues. I have proven myself professionally. I am satisfied with my self professionally and personally. I don’t have anything to prove. I don’t have any ax to grind. That’s a position of accountability and at 50 years, I am not into being real accountable. I am not going to be working real hard in these next 50 years.</td>
<td>I would like to run the agency or at least this regional office one-day. I am the acting chief of supervisor whenever my boss is out of the office. I also see myself branching off and starting my own organization. There are all kinds of grants in this area, and I see myself getting into that business one day.</td>
<td>I would like to be a diversity consultant. I’m fearful sometimes when I think about stepping out of state government. People remind me everyday that I don’t have a degree. But I am a very hard worker and sometimes that says a lot. So I think I want to start my own business within the next few years and in the military I’d like to hopefully be the base commander and get as high a ranking as I can.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth and security</td>
<td>As far as security goes I feel pretty comfortable. In terms of professional growth I think the door is opening up for that. If this job is becomes defunct I believe that there’s a tremendous need for the service in the private sector, and opportunities for consultants who can do good work.</td>
<td>I feel that I am experiencing some level of growth in the organization but not security because others are pulling the strings. Security in my career is that I know they don’t want to get rid of me. I think if that you begin to feel too secure in your career you stop growing and won’t move on. I see myself moving on past this.</td>
<td>I feel that I am experiencing some level of growth in the agency because my supervisor has allowed me to manage my unit which has helped me to do the things I need to get the job done. She trusts me to do a good job. I feel a little level of security here. 2 years ago I would say OK, but today I don’t know what going to happen. I hope that things will be OK with this job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update skills</td>
<td>I intend to take advantage of the training opportunities to keep my skills up to date.</td>
<td>I plan to keep enhancing my skills by reading, training, and taking more classes. I always wanted to go beyond a BA.</td>
<td>I have been out there and touch so many people that I don’t think I will have a hard time getting a job in HR. I do know that I need a degree and I plan to go back to school this quarter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 4.4: Planning the Future
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>Faith</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other job opportunities</td>
<td>I don't want to go anywhere from here. I've pretty much decided that this is it for me. I am where I want to be in my career.</td>
<td>I will retire from the state and would like to own an apartment complex. I don't believe. I am interested in climbing the organization's ladder but I do not like the chief investigator's position but it is the next level. I am more interested in bypassing that level and going to the director's level.</td>
<td>I enjoy being a worker. It's in my blood. I do not want to progress to the next level. I am even thinking about going back to being a worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth and security</td>
<td>I believe that I am experiencing growth within the agency. In this job it is very hard to become stagnant. The job provides a good degree of security. I don't think they will fire me. If another employer let me in the door, they will be impressed in what I have to offer.</td>
<td>I feel that I am experiencing some level of growth and security within the agency because I think people respect my knowledge. I feel secure because I know my job and the agency recognizes that. If I should lose my job I have a real estate license where I can sell real estate. I plan to keep current on the laws and know the changes.</td>
<td>I feel that I am growing in the agency. I feel secure in my career that I could go and do some consulting work. I have an interest in diversity training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update skills</td>
<td>I plan to enhance my skills by attending as many training opportunities as I can.</td>
<td>I plan to continue participating in training opportunities.</td>
<td>I plan to take courses on communication and computer and even some psychological classes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Susan</th>
<th>Nadine</th>
<th>Joy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other job opportunities</td>
<td>I would like to have the title Administrative Officer which would be the same pay range as I am now but I would be responsible for all state departments, not just one. I would also apply for the job of deputy director. I don’t think that I would ever be comfortable in leaving the state</td>
<td>I am where I want to be in my career. I have the mindset that it is fine here and I am not driven by going anywhere. I have 25 years and have 5 to retirement and I am not really interested in having that type of pressure and responsibility.</td>
<td>I basically want to move out of first-line supervisor into middle management. I would also seek management positions outside of this agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth and security</td>
<td>I feel secured in my position because we have a very important job here. Also I have the most service here if the state decides to lay off one of us supervisors. I have been acquainted with a lot people during the years and if I need a job we will find out.</td>
<td>I felt secure at one point but the mood this country this in towards programs of this nature, I am not sure. I believe my administrative and people skills can be used elsewhere.</td>
<td>I am experiencing growth by becoming more aware of people and issues around me. I feel secured because I know my rights as an individual. I feel secure in my career because my skills can be transferred to other organizations. My education also gives me some security to find another job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update skills</td>
<td>I want to keep my skills up to date by participating in the training provided through the state.</td>
<td>I plan to enhance my skills by taking more classes.</td>
<td>I go to training all the time and plan to keep going.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Shirley</th>
<th>Linda</th>
<th>April</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other job opportunities</td>
<td>I want to finish my Ph.D. and hope to begin classes in spring. I retire from the state in 3 years and then I plan to start my own business, called “Catch Them in Time,” to assist people that have had disadvantages in life, prison or whatever to make sure that they have a place to work when they come out. I will operate a full-time vocational school. I want to have a Young Entrepreneurs program where young people will be encouraged to start their own business.</td>
<td>I have spent so much time with the state I plan to retire after 30 years. I plan to learn as much as possible about each division in this agency and prepare myself to be the director. I would apply for deputy director then for the directorship.</td>
<td>My ultimate goal was to become the manager of this department but I chose not to take it because of the politics involved. But some day I would like to have my own consulting firm for personnel because I really enjoy interviewing. I will retire in 7 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth and security</td>
<td>I am stagnated and have not a promotion since 1982. But I do have security based on my tenure of 27 years. I feel confident that if I had to leave tomorrow, I have spent enough time making, establishing relationships. I know people out there need my services and I am ready.</td>
<td>I feel that I am experiencing growth in the agency. I feel secure and confident that if anything should happen to this job I could easily apply my skills to another state department. I could even be better in the private sector.</td>
<td>I am experiencing growth, because there is still so much to learn. I love and enjoy my job. I would say 2 years I felt secure but the changes with decentralization I am not so sure. I think my job is secure here. There are several people outside the state who want me out there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update skills</td>
<td>I plan on keeping my skills up to date by returning to school and that would help my research skills. To develop my speaking skills I plan to join this group. Also to take computer classes.</td>
<td>I plan to do more training especially in computers and communications</td>
<td>I intend to continue taking classes and training seminars on computers and goal setting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

This part discusses the themes and sub-themes that emerged from data relating to planning for the future.

Other Job Opportunities

Several of the women expressed that they are satisfied with their careers and not interested in any other jobs, upward promotions nor lateral promotions. Susan states, “I am fine here. I am not driven by going anywhere else. Years ago I might have been, but at this point I am not driven” (773-784). May admits, “I am pretty much where I want to be. It sound negative to be content but I am content” (1260).

Several of the women also expressed their desire to be the director or administrator of the agency. Others would like to explore other opportunities. June states, “I would like to be at the top of the organization. I hope that’s not being conceited. But I think it’s a lot of responsibility to be over everything that goes on” (1040-1042). Joy wants to explore other opportunities within and outside of the state. She explains, “I don’t know where I want to end up. Like I said, I wanted to explore other opportunities even within this field. I don’t necessarily have to stay in this field but if I were to branch out in this field, I wan to be at the forefront instead of at the back-end fighting discrimination” (979-1003).

The women currently work in organizations where there is a structured approach to career advancement. For them to reach the top of the agency, there is a career path where the next step is predictable and where the employees need to focus to continue in their advancement. However the higher up the hierarchy the more limited the
opportunities. For example, the opportunity for the directorship positions is contingent on the present director leaving. Of course, this might take years.

Future Plans. All the women are essentially satisfied with the positions they are in and are looking forward to retire from the state government. The older ones do not have any aspiration for higher management positions. Although some voiced with a certain degree of hesitancy that they would apply for higher positions within the agency. They have essentially set their thoughts on embarking on some type of entrepreneurial interest once they are retired. For the younger ones (29 years to forty years) would like to remain within the state and apply for higher management positions. Some have already done so and are willing to try again when a position they desire become available.

Resignation to current position. For the women who have no ambition for further advancement, Nadine states, “I will retire in five years. I want to do something after retirement, but I don’t know what it is. I would like to go out and try something” (336-339).

Faith reiterates:

I don’t look forward to advancing any further. I am a worker, it’s in my blood. I love people. I love getting out. Really, even being a supervisor I’ve had to take on a whole personal of sitting here like this. And sometimes, I do think about going back to being a worker (383-387).

May also had a difficult time making the transition from worker to supervisor. She echoes the difficulty of two of the women and the competition that exists for promotion:
I really don't want to go anywhere from here. This was a tough transition going from worker to supervisor. And I can't even begin to tell you the turmoil that my promotion created. It tore apart relationships, friendships that had been built over the years. It did much to damage to all, and it's just not worth it. To me, even now when I look back, I learned a lot from it and I am glad for the experience but I don't think I would have applied for the position because I had virtually not support. It felt like everybody was against me. I wouldn't want to go through anything like that again. So I have pretty much decided that this is it for me. I don't want to and I know that sounds so defeatist but I am okay with that (444-454).

Seeking opportunities within the state. Several of the women would like to strive for the top management positions within their agencies. Linda declares:

I have spent so much time with the state. If I stick with the state, thirty years, you can retire regardless of your age. Well I started with the state when I was eighteen years old and I already have thirteen years of service. So I can hang in there seventeen more years. My goal is to be the director of a state agency (306-310).

Joy would also like to move up in the management of the agency, but has her sight on other possibilities within the state. She shares, "I would like to move out of first-line and move further into management. I am not going to limit myself to the state, so I might transfer to another city. If something opens, that' available I will by all means explore that. Maybe becoming chief supervisor or regional director" (486-496).
Seeking opportunities outside of the state. Women like Shirley and Kia would like to branch out into private business. Kia would like to start her own consulting business in diversity and work with some prominent organizations. Shirley after retiring from the state would like to finish her Ph.D. and open a center in the inner-city to assist disadvantaged people like the ones who were in prison. She would concentrate on vocational training.

For the most part the women are satisfied with their career. They are at a level where they are comfortable and not striving for more within the agencies in which they work. However, most would still consider the possibility of promotion if the opportunity occurs. Several of them had attempted for higher management positions and were unsuccessful. They recognize the competition in attaining such positions and have shown some vacillation in pursuing such positions.

Growth and Job Security

All except Shirley believe that they are experiencing growth in their organization. One factor for this belief is that they are respected. June states, “I think people respect my knowledge, respect me as a person, respect that I would be fair, honest in whatever decisions because the decisions we make in this line of work are very important. They impact people’s lives” (565-566).

Improvement of skills. The women state that they are experiencing growth because they are always learning how to do their job better. Their supervisors are committed to giving challenging assignments and the responsibilities to conduct the
supervision of their units. However, Shirley is not growing in the organization and feels stagnated. Rhonda states:

I don’t know if you could really find a point of security because I think you stop growing. If I get too comfortable and secure, I want to move on. I think that interferes with my vision and I notice I get restless. It’s no longer fun and it’s not challenging and I am looking for new accomplishments. As I see myself moving on past this (686-691)

Possession of skills and knowledge. They expressed feeling secure in their jobs because they have the expertise and knowledge. They feel that the administrators and supervisors recognize their commitment and abilities. A few like June is secure in the fact that they have marketable skills that they can use somewhere if the agency is to become defunct. June declares, “When I graduated from college and while working here, I decided to get my real estate license. I always keep my real estate license in the background” (581-584). Nadine feels that she could be a consultant, and has an interest in diversity training. Joy thinks that her knowledge gained in having a major in marketing and her skills developed at the agency will make her a viable candidate for the market, if she decides to leave the agency. Susan is confident in her skills and states, “These agencies need the expertise of one of us” (536-537).

Lack of commitment of organizational commitment. May is also confident in her abilities but questions the agency’s commitment. She states, “I feel secure to the extent anybody in this country that feel secure about anything. I think that this job provides a good degree of security unless the government collapses or the close the agency. I don’t
think I will do anything so egregious that they will fire me. But you never know. I do feel pretty secure” (752-755).

Others such as April does not feel as secure in her job with the agency. She explains:

I would say two years ago, yes. I was secure but knowing that we are decentralizing, this department used to control everything, personnel, payroll, benefits, printing, etc. We have now decentralized a lot... We did not need all those people. They branched them all out. They moved them elsewhere. Some quit; some retired. I think my job would be secured, but it would force me make a choice. To move on to something else (156-1266).

Nadine also expressed some doubt about the level of security in the job:

I did at one point in time. Simply because of the mood of this country towards programs of this nature and Affirmative Action and that kind of thing. You begin to feel less secure. Our program has been challenged and it was ruled unconstitutional. So that puts a degree of insecurity because you wonder after 25 years, what is going to happen in the next four or five months (408-412).

Overall the women felt secure and confident that if they should lose their present jobs, they could apply their skills and knowledge to other organizations. Some expressed that they could do better in the private sector, because their skills would be utilized more readily. They perceived that there is a need for the services they are providing and the opportunities are available in the private sector. Some questioned the commitment of the organization to their programs.
Enhancement of Skills and Abilities

The women expressed their desire to keep their skills up to date because they are necessary to their career development. They are attending training workshops, registering for classes at nearby colleges and universities, and are members in organizations that emphasize training in certain areas. Their main focus tend to be on computers, acquiring a degree in human resources, attaining a higher degree, or just get more learning on special areas of interests.

College courses. Linda is interested in enhancing her computers and communication skills. She states:

….It is definitely the computer age. I don’t ever want to become computer illiterate. I am comfortable with using computer and every time software comes out, I want to see what it’s got to do, I want to see what it is doing. See if we can improve procedures in our department…You can never be too polished at communication. And sometimes life experience will help you backslide, and you lose focus or you forget how to communicate effectively…I think a big part of portraying yourself as being professional is your communication (759-780).

Nadine is also interested in enrolling in college courses. She would like to concentrate on grammar and psychology. Kia is returning to school this year to complete her bachelor’s degree. Shirley would like to complete her graduate degree, and also enhance her communication skill with a concentration on her speaking skills because she would like to conduct motivational speaking. Shirley is also actively involved in updating her computer skills. Rhonda is also interested in pursuing a higher degree. She states,
I need to work more on myself and either pursue a masters or I was thinking about law school...But I am not satisfied with my educational level because I have always wanted to be beyond bachelors. But a problem I have, one big criticism of myself is procrastination. And again I have to watch this, putting others ahead of myself...

(754-760).

**Training through the organization.** Several of the women expressed interest in the training provided by the organizations. May explains:

Well the commission is pretty good at that. The offer all kinds of training opportunities and I attend as many as I can. But really, even though, I didn’t get my degree I really love school. I really love education. I love learning. But I try to go to whatever I can, especially if there’s a topic that I really feel that I need to work on (863-867).

Hopes declares that the organization have given the employees computer training and she plans to follow up with some computer classes on her own to become more proficient. She also tries to keep abreast of the changes in the law and how it affects her job. Joy also takes advantage of the training offered by the organization and her volunteer association. She states:

I am going to training all the time. We have free training and I try to take advantage of that. You can never get too much I don’t think. As long as time permits and I’m a member of NIRA which is National Association of Human Rights workers. So even within that field they have training, conferences where we go to workshops (818-821).
Individualized learning. Two of the women, June and Shirley, are more interested in keeping abreast of the laws and policies affecting their job. June explains, I think being more current on the law, the changes of the law” (681-687). Shirley explains, “with all the changes to keep up with legislation. I am going to try to be able to get a subscription to that or at least be able to get on the mailing list so I can keep abreast of the changes in the law” (870-873).

In summary, the women expressed interest in enhancing their skill and knowledge. The planned to do so by returning college, or through training offered by their organization.

Interpretation

The part presents the interpretation based on the themes of other job opportunities, growth and security, and enhancement of skills.

Other job opportunities. Most of the women who have worked over 20 years in the organization envisaged retirement. For them a good pension is important. Some noted that they would embark on another career such as real estate, and community service. Two women do no envisaged retirement despite their long tenure with the agency. The younger women would seek middle management opportunities within the organization.

Growth and security. The women had typically gained some level of job security based on their tenure with the organization. They were also aware that no job is secured and felt confident that they would be able to transfer their skills to the private sector or other work settings.
Enhancement of skills. The women regard training and education as important factors to enhance their skills. They are aware of the changes in technology and desire not to be obsolete.

The Measures of Success in the Participants’ Career

This section is divided into two parts. Part one presents the data based on the main theme; defining success. Part two presents the data on the main theme, achieving success.

Defining Success

This section is divided into three components. The first presents the data themes and sub-themes that emerged for the main theme, defining success. The second component offers discussion on the data. The third offers the interpretation of the data.

Presentation of the Data

The part presents the data according to the themes of meaning of success, measuring success, and criteria for success. Table 4.5 displays the data.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Hope</th>
<th>Rhonda</th>
<th>Kia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaning of success</td>
<td>Being happy with who you are and with what you are doing. I feel good with whom I am</td>
<td>Success is that you are happy with what you are doing. If I am happy with what I am doing and find it fulfilling.</td>
<td>You are doing what makes you happy and you are good at it and are getting paid what you deserve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measuring success</td>
<td>I measure success by how well by employees do. How well we produce work. How high the quality of work is.</td>
<td>You are making a difference and changing lives. You are affecting the way people do things.</td>
<td>To me when I am in Ebony because I have done some super thing where people have been touched by what I do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria for success</td>
<td>Don’t compromise with who you are. Be flexible but don’t sell out. Be aware of the environment and people. Be careful with whom you form close relationships with.</td>
<td>Take control of your lives and keep focused. Remain focused. Know what you want and where you want to go. You have to have good directions. You can’t just sit back and wait and hope to be discovered.</td>
<td>Don’t get caught up in women’s issues. Get out of girl’s gossip and stay focused. Professionalism is important. Learn the rules. Figure out what they are Don’t just think if yourself as an African-American female. Don’t get caught up in color. Pick somebody that is successful and watch them. Learn from them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5: Defining Success  
(table continues)
### Table 4.5 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>Faith</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaning of success</strong></td>
<td>It is the ability to work on a job that gives you satisfaction. To earn enough money to maintain a life style that you are comfortable with.</td>
<td>Meeting some of the goals that you have set for yourself and continuing to move forward. I am not quite there but moving in that direction.</td>
<td>Success knows that you can make a difference in your employees’ lives. That you can help them become a better worker in the areas you are strong in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Measuring success</strong></td>
<td>By my own sense of contentment and my ability to see that it is based on how far I can look into the future</td>
<td>Everything I do I want it to be for a reason that will help someone other than myself. When it’s done and I need to move on.</td>
<td>I look at how my employees are succeeding. Treating people the way I want to be treated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Criteria for success</strong></td>
<td>Try to separate your friendship from the job you have to do. Don’t compromise your professionalism or your integrity for the sake of friendship or relationship</td>
<td>You need to have people’s skills because it is a form of communication and you have to when you are dealing with so many different people. You have to have the desire to increase your knowledge.</td>
<td>Interpersonal communication. You need to know how to talk to people. What you shouldn’t say and what you should say.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>Nadine</td>
<td>Joy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning of success</td>
<td>I have a job that I do like. I consider myself successful based on where I was 20 years ago and where I am now.</td>
<td>That I have been able to withstand and manage and be able to get my kids educated and live the kind of life that I want. I am happy.</td>
<td>When I feel that I am successful in what I’m doing. I’m happy with what I am doing. I am not necessarily content. I’m successful as of right now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measuring success</td>
<td>I measure success based on when I became the supervisor in 1994 and the interruptions it caused in personal relationships and where I am now with those people.</td>
<td>That I am able to provide for my family and they are my primary focus. I did what I had to do for them and this job provided the means</td>
<td>I measure success against what I want out of life. I am not done yet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria for success</td>
<td>Think carefully before pursuing it because sometimes we ask for things we don’t really want.</td>
<td>Get all the education you can. You will have a lot of ammunition.</td>
<td>Just never give up. See yourself as being able to do the job. Be able to sell yourself and feel good about yourself. Be secure in what you do. Lean, do your research. You have to be able to prove yourself. Set high expectations but at the same time be realistic. Try not to make the same mistakes over again. When people tell you something use it to your advantage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
### Table 4.5 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Shirley</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>Linda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaning of success</td>
<td>Obtaining those things in your career that you are qualified for and you are able to attain. I feel successful even though I have not made a quarter more.</td>
<td>Is the goal that I set and have accomplished it. I am very satisfied, I am happy.</td>
<td>To know that I am appreciated and I know that without a shadow of a doubt that the next person who comes in after me is going to have big shoes to fill. I have made a difference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measuring success</td>
<td>When I look at the report that we produced. When I know that we've have gone off the list of .03% in 1982 to over 15% now.</td>
<td>That I can actually sit back and say I planned this, I set my goals. I did it, I accomplished it!</td>
<td>I have gained the respect of my peers and my deputy director. That I have learned how to write policies and procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria for success</td>
<td>You have to be a survivor. You have to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in your work. Always try to get the job done. Don't be discouraged even if you know you are the most qualified. You need to endure and move to the next step. You have to continually prepare yourself, get the education and never deny yourself training.</td>
<td>Believe in yourself. You know what you are capable of. Have the determination to get in there and do it. Use your skills and knowledge to the best of your ability. Don't get caught up in socialized groups.</td>
<td>Educate yourself. Must have interpersonal communications skills. Also written communication skills, motivation skills, and coaching skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion of Data

This part presents the discussion of the data based on the sub themes of meaning of success, measuring success, and criteria for success.

Meaning of Success

The women perceived themselves as successful in their careers or are moving in the direction of success. They essentially define success with being happy with who they are and with what they are doing. Some of the woman defined success as achieving some of their career goals. They also define success as getting satisfaction from their jobs and enjoying the financial rewards. Some of the women felt that success is improving their employees and making a difference in someone’s life.

Measuring Success

Personal gratification. Nadine describes success, “Success is knowing that you can make a difference in your employees. That you can help them be a better worker in the areas that you are strong in” (1047-1049). Joy defines success, “Basically I think it’s a personal type of situation where I feel that I’m successful I what I am doing. I am happy in what I am doing. I am not necessarily content. But I think it is my personal gratification out of what I’m doing” (1242-1245).

Achievement of goals. Some of the women consider their success in the achievement of goals. April states, “Success is a goal I set and accomplished it. And I’m very satisfied with it. I’m happy that I can actually sit back and say I planned this, I set my goal, I accomplish it, I did it…And I can sit back and say I’m not disappointed. I don’t have any regrets. I did exactly what I wanted to do, how I wanted to do it. And I
did it" (1970-1976). June states, "Meeting some of those goals that you have set for
yourself and continuing to move forward" (1071-1072).

Hopes states success for her is, "I have to be able to see some benefits and results
of what I do. And I like to be respected for doing it. I think that I am pretty successful. I
don’t have to have labels. I don’t have to have self-descriptive tales. I feel good about
who I am. I feel good about what I’ve done. I feel good about the contributions I can
make and have made and I think I’m cool for it (1622-1629). Linda also defines her
success on her contributions, "I’m not here in vain. I have made a difference. I can say
when I leave here, I’m taking with me the fact that I’ve gained respect of my peers. That
I’ve learned how to write policies and procedures. That I’ve gained the respect of my
deputy director (1290-1295).

Accomplishment of tasks. The women tended to measure their success on the
appreciation and respect of their co-workers, the quality of the work they produced, their
performance on the job, and the accomplishment of tasks. Mary illustrates the
accomplishment of task, "I measure by saying, ‘that’s done’. I need to move on" (1083).
April reflects on the goals she has accomplished, "I go back and see how I went about
accomplishing them, my steps. I always go back when I accomplish a goal sometimes to
see if I had to do over, if I would change it. And most of the times I can say, no" (1986-
1989)

Joy finds success as an ongoing process. She wants to achieve more in her career.
She measures her success against what she wants out of life. Kia explains her measuring
of success, "Measuring is looking where I came from and looking to where I’ve been with

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all the obstacles that I’ve had to deal with and I have had professional obstacles” (1540-1543). Rhonda measures her success on the number of positive responses she receives form the public; and Nadine based hers on the feedback she receives from her employees on her performance. While Hopes measures her success based on the work her agency does. She emphasizes the quality of work versus the number of cases produced. Shirley measures her success on the amount of financial resources she can offer to her clients to make them competitive.

Criteria for African-American Success as Supervisors

Education. The women believed that women who want to be supervisors should possess certain qualities and skills. The women all agreed that women who want to be become supervisors, especially African-American women should get as much education as possible. Nadine reflected that with at least a bachelor’s degree, “You are coming in with some ammunition, I always felt that because I did not finish college, that it really gave people a tool to use against me. I think I used it more so than anybody else” (343-347).

Even though the women thought education is important they recognized that it does not guarantee one’s success. May explains:

I do think that education is important, but I think that education is the kind of thing that will get your foot in the door. It does not guarantee success and I think that some people over emphasize education to the exclusion of other factors. I think that if I have this or that degree, that no matter what my personality is like or anything like that ought to override, it just doesn’t. And by the same token, my
not having a degree closed many doors. Many doors will not be open to me, just by the fact that I do not have a degree (532-540).

Kia adds, “Education is a stepping stone. It gets you through. Plus you have to know that it is not the end-all, be all” (3/19/99, 158-182).

**Supervisory skills.** The women emphasized more characteristically qualities in order to achieve. Some skills that were seen as very important were interpersonal, coaching, motivational and communication skills. It is important to know your employees, show respect and trust towards the people you work with, and there should be some allegiance to upper management. It is important to stay abreast of everything that is happening in one field. June asserts that, "It is very important to have the peoples’ skills because it is a form of communication and you have to have open forms of communication when you are dealing with people. It helps because you are dealing with so many different personalities (390-394).

**Confidence.** Several of the women expressed the importance of self-confidence, self-esteem, self-determination and assertiveness. One woman explained:

> Just never give up. I think it is never easy. It is never easy, but I think if you build up your self-esteem and see yourself as marketable, you will see yourself as definitely being able to do your job, and somebody is going to see that in you too. And you may not get it this time or you may not get it the next time, but somebody is going to see that in you. And I think that is just the aura you give off about yourself. You have to be able to sell yourself and you have to feel good
about yourself in order to do that. So I think the most important thing is to feel

good about you. Be secure in what you do. And learn. Learn (557-565).

April agrees by suggesting:

Believe in yourself. You know what you are capable of. You know pretty much
what you want to do and how you want to do it. Have the determination to get in
there and do it...I wasn’t great at writing but that was something I knew I wanted
to know. I may never use it again...but I learned it (956-970).

Setting goals. One has to be realistic in the goals they set for themselves. Women
who are striving for management positions need to be cognizant that it is a process. A
process, in which, they proceed through stages and grow and mature in their
development. They should learn from others criticism and advice. They should also not
be afraid to make mistakes but should learn from them. It is important for women to set a
goal and be focused on that goal, attaining management status. Rhonda explains,

“Sometimes you are dealing with a buddy system. You have to know the players. You
have to take control. And you have to demonstrate that you are the person that can get the
job done. You are the type of person they are looking for in that position. You have to
take on the leadership early on” (539-544).

Within the organizations, if the odds seem to be against one getting ahead, the women
offered that one should be steadfast and diligent in her work. It is important to maintain a
state of continual learning and improving skills and abilities. Shirley voiced:

You want to always be on step ten when everybody else might be on steps five or
six. If you are in a situation where you are denied training, and there are lots of
training opportunities available…they need to dig in. Find out whatever training they can get and continually prepare themselves for the job after the one they are in (546-549).

**Maintaining integrity.** The women believed that for African-American women, it is important that they maintain their integrity. They need to be flexible to work within the culture. It is also important to maintain professionalism. Kia advises:

Don’t get caught up in women issues…African-American women need to stay focused, stay out of the girl gossip…and take the streets out of the office.

Professionalism is important. First of all, people are not going to expect you to be professional, so it is really important to be professional…Don’t think of yourself as an African-American female…Don’t get caught up in the color…(487-4 92).

**Being Black.** Another issue that African-American women need to be cognizant of is issues will arise due to the fact that they are black. Margaret discusses them:

There will be challenges to your authority. Not just be whites but by Blacks as well. I think this country still has a lot of the old attitudes about the intelligence of blacks, the motivation that blacks seem to lack based on stereotypes...In addition to that, even though it should not be so, I think that you cannot do and get away with everything that you see your white peers do. It’s unfair and it’s hard to tell a person that because it sounds like you have an attitude or something like that, but I’ve learned that to be true. But I would say those things should not hold them back. They shouldn’t be impediments. These things can be overridden. It will take time, commitment and patience (546-572).
The women are achieving success. Their criteria for success is essentially speaks
to the intrinsic values and not materialistic. They are successful because they are in jobs
that they like, and are compensated accordingly.

**Interpretation**

This part presents the interpretation based on emergent themes of meaning of
success, measurement of success and criteria for success.

**Meaning of success.** The women felt that they were successful. Success for the
women were derived from working in jobs they like and compensated accordingly. They
were able to achieve personal and organizational goals such as making a difference.

**Measuring success.** The women regarded success as having positive experiences
with in their work. They made comparisons of their past status with the presence and are
satisfied.

**Criteria for success.** The women have set high standards for themselves and
others who wish to be successful. Typical themes were being focused, confident, and
determined.

**Achieving Success**

This part is divided into three components. The first presents the data to themes,
highlights of careers, and important aspects of career. The second part presents discusses
the data. The third part presents the interpretation.

**Presentation of Data**

This component presents the data with the themes of highlights of career and
important aspect of career. Table 4.6 present the data.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Hope</th>
<th>Rhonda</th>
<th>Kia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highlights of career</td>
<td>The thing that I am most proud of is the number of cases where I have made a difference in people's lives. That speaks to them getting their jobs back, getting money, and giving people opportunities.</td>
<td>It was case where I was able to crack a big insurance scam and get the victims $20,000 to $100,000.</td>
<td>Who would have known that I would have work for the state and the military for 14 years. Each time I received a promotion in the military, I received a promotion in my civilian job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important aspects of career</td>
<td>I was able to win several difficult cases that made a difference in our clients' life</td>
<td>I had the ability to handle very complex cases and was promoted from level 1 to level 3.</td>
<td>I think the important part of my career advancement is training and education. Education is the part that lets me know the basics. Training is the part that lets me do the job.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5: Achieving Success  

Table 4.5 (continued)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>Faith</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highlights of career</td>
<td>I am most proud of the fact that I am able to motivate people to do better than they would ordinarily do.</td>
<td>An attorney and I were able to obtain a settle with an organization in the amount of $45,000.</td>
<td>Getting somebody's job back. I just settled a big case with 40,000 other investigators. That was very satisfying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important aspects of career</td>
<td>I had supervisors who before a position was available made encouraging comments. However when a position actually became available they did not support me.</td>
<td>Important aspect of career advancement is my ability to communicate with people at all levels. It is important to understand each other.</td>
<td>That I am a person that is able to listen. I do care about people and they want someone to listen to them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Susan</th>
<th>Nadine</th>
<th>Joy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highlights of career</td>
<td>Did not respond</td>
<td>Making the transition from worker to supervisor. It is stressful and you want to do your best, but my employees rated me quite high which was surprising.</td>
<td>Getting through my first year. That was the hardest thing. I had it in myself not to give up. Show within myself that I can get over anything. My self-esteem was low and for the first time I felt that I could not do anything. I am proud that I got through that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important aspects of career</td>
<td>Did not respond</td>
<td>Most important aspect of my career is that you’ve been overlooked even though you know that you are doing your best. I was just been used and not given the recognition I deserved. It seems with me that I just happened to be in the right place at the right time in my advancement</td>
<td>Most important aspect of my career advancement is just being able to prove yourself and there is always something that you will have to learn and be flexible. You have to be able to love what you are doing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Shirley</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>Linda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highlights of career</td>
<td>When I see my agency go from 3% funding to over 18% in a matter of 5.6 years. That is success.</td>
<td>My staff and I put together a personnel action manual. We revised it. We have also put together a terminal entry manual that gives the step-by step process of how to enter all information into the system</td>
<td>I let people know that they are appreciated for everything they do. I let people know that they are contributing to the achievement of our agency’s mission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important aspects of career</td>
<td>An important aspect of my career advancement is when I first came to this agency I was the only one with previous experience and I helped them put together the first complaint process.</td>
<td>The most important aspect for me is interviewing and was glad to be part of the opportunities that allow women into HR.</td>
<td>Most important aspect of my career advancement was that I did not stay in a position for more than 2 years. I learned what I could from each job and moved on.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

This section presents the discussion of the data based on the emergent themes, highlights of careers, and important aspects of career.

Highlights of Careers

The women had different high points of their careers. They essentially characterized their proudest moments with the service and satisfaction they have given to their customers. The fact that they were able to assist and to make a difference in their customers’ lives speaks especially in difficult circumstances and has made some of the memorable moments of their careers.

Service to others. For Faith it was getting one of her client’s job back. She states, “that was rewarding where I just settled a big case…to settle something like that where a definite wrong was done there is satisfying” (427-428). Hope states, “The thing that I am most proud of in my professional career is the number of cases where I have made a difference in people’s lives. And that specifically speaks to getting jobs back. Getting money. Giving opportunities and knowing that by doing that it has affected that person’s life. And that person’s family lives and that’s very important to me” (566). June shares her proudest moment as:

One time there was a case that we were working on and there wasn’t much ground or merit to that case. However, there was an attorney friend that I had developed a friendship with. I was an investigator at that time and she was the attorney. And we took the company. We talked to them and we ended up with $45,000 settlement as a result of this dialog (617-621).
Rhonda shares her proudest moment of her career:

My proudest moment is when a big area of discrimination particularly against minorities and the area of insurance. And my proudest moment was when I was able to crack the insurance scam that was going on. How these big insurance companies are not insuring minority neighborhood.

What they do for minorities is give you an inferior housing insurance or don’t insure you at all. So I was on the cutting edge of cracking the big insurance scam…They got clapped for $100,000,000 for insurance against minorities. I was real instrumental in helping to crack this insurance scam in the Toledo area. As a matter of fact we settle our files. They are almost ninety percent settled because they know I am coming at them. I really made a difference…I am talking about my team of investigators in the Toledo regional offices (509-524).

Relationships with employees. Several of the women felt that their proudest moments were their relationship to their employees, their ability to withstand workplace pressure, and succeed regardless of the obstacles. May shares her proudest situation, “I think the thing that I am most proud of, even though I think it’s hard to quantify and hard to prove is that I am able to motivate people to do better than they would ordinarily do.

And I don’t even know how I do it but I do know that typically in my unit the employees tend to pretty good producers. The quality of their cases is pretty good” (459-463).

Surviving jobs. Joy shares her proudest moment:

I think getting through my first year was the hardest thing for day one. I think that I had it in myself to not give up. Show within myself that I can get over anything.
I can accomplish anything but I thought I was, my work was not good. That was just so, so hard for me. It was just being judged and not being appreciated and I suffered low self-esteem. It was the first time I felt that I couldn’t do something and I just wanted to give up…When I look back I am surprised that I am here. Because I was ready to quit. Just go. Walk out the door and not say anything to anybody. I was to that point…And I am just really proud of myself that I got through that. It just taught me a lesson that anything that I feel is a problem or something that’s overwhelming that time will wait things out. Give it time, to think things through and not act rashly because the spur of the moment you say things, you do things and you cannot always take them back. It was a good lesson. I was very proud of myself (536-553).

Kia is proud of the fact that she is able to succeed at two important jobs simultaneously.

Kia explains:

I am most proud that I have been able to really truly sustain and be mobile in both my civilian and my military careers at the same time. Both of them for thirteen or fourteen years…So I look back and I think when I was working at Lazarus who would have known that I would have gotten, went into the military? Who would have known that I would have gotten a job with the state? Who would have known what I would have done for fourteen years? Who would have known that in fourteen years I would have gotten a promotion in the military and I got a promotion in my civilian job. It’s been hard work but I’ve been able to maintain
that. And that opens up opportunity for creditability in both arenas. So that's the thing I am most proud of but it did not come easy (458-469).

The women were able to identify periods in their careers when they experienced some rewarding moments. They were proud of assisting clients overcome some form of injustice. They were proud of accomplishing goals with their employees, and they were proud of achieving some level of success in their careers despite the challenges.

**Important Aspect of Career Advancement**

On reflecting on their advancement, the women considered aspects that were important and prominent. They thought that the fact that they were able to prove themselves worthy of management positions and being successful in them was important. Taking on challenging assignments and excelling at their work is good. Learning the job and how to work it for them were important. Faith states:

> I was able to pick out that I really enjoyed people. I found out that I was very organized and that play as major part in being a productive employee. To be organized makes you a powerful asset to the organization because it you are always ready for the unexpected (1/22/99, 103-106).

For Nadine, it was the recommendations she received for each promotion before applying for them, however she was overlooked for the positions she really wanted:

> The way things happened to me and for me. I almost feel like it has been tolerance and endurance to a certain degree, flexibility. I that a lot of times I was just overlooked although I was used to fill in for those positions. Although they
felt that I could this and that, when it came to actually being recognized and
compensated for the job, it just did not occur (177-122).

The women recognized what strengths they had and improved upon them. They
recognized these as important in the career advancement.

Interpretation

This part presents the interpretation of the data. The interpretation is discussed by
the emergent themes, of highlights of career and important aspects of career.

Highlights of career. The women’s individual achievement of the organization’s
mission and their accomplishments of certain tasks represent some proud moments of
their supervisory careers.

Important aspect of career. The women felt that demonstrating their skills and
knowledge on their jobs were important aspects of their careers. They felt that they were
doing a good job and were committed to their work. Their positive attitudes have
enriched their experiences.

The Challenges and Limitations Faced by the Participants

This section is divided into three parts. Part one presents the data based on the
main theme of encountering barriers. Part two presents the discussion. Part three
presents the discussion.
Experiencing Barriers

This part presents the data and the sub-themes of experiencing barriers. The sub-themes are contact with barriers, discrimination, and dealing with barriers.

Presentation of Data

Table 4.7 presents the data in and the themes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Hope</th>
<th>Rhonda</th>
<th>Kia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact</strong></td>
<td>No, I haven't experienced any barriers. My reality is that there may be barriers but that does not stop you from implementing your ideas.</td>
<td>We had limited resources available such as books, equipment and education. We just got computers last summer and they are pretty much outdated. There is limited money to do certain things such as studies and research.</td>
<td>I can't say I have experienced any barriers because every time I applied I got the job. There as one time that this man thought that I was too assertive and told me that he did not want me outshining him He try to just change on the job. He is an position to make my life miserable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discrimination</strong></td>
<td>In 1982 the Inspector General audited the FBI. They attacked me personally and accused me of misappropriating $308.62. I felt that racially motivated.</td>
<td>I have not experienced any discrimination in terms of gender nor race here at the agency. When I was teaching, I experienced race discrimination. I was probably one of two Black instructors and I soon discovered I was observed more than my white counterparts. I was supposed to know more and do more.</td>
<td>I new I did not get a job in the military because of my gender. It was always the same. They felt that a women shouldn't be doing the job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dealing with barriers</strong></td>
<td>I went back and offered a response point for point. So my document ended up being thick. So I did that in every instance they cited and they couldn't shake it. God helped me.</td>
<td>I usually sit down with someone and brainstorm to get around. Surely there is more than one way to skin a cat. You simply have to make a decision based on what you have in hopes that you have enough that will carry forward.</td>
<td>I said that this man was not going to mess with my head and attack my self-esteem. So I would go home and get regenerated for the next day because he picked on the wrong person. I came in with more self-esteem and looking better than the day before. Then I had God on my side.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7: Experiencing Barriers

(table continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>Faith</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact</td>
<td>Really no barriers.</td>
<td>Barriers may be limited opportunities sometimes. You would like to do certain things but because you’re just a supervisor you don’t have that authority to make that final decision. Another barrier is the lack of knowledge and lack of training.</td>
<td>I think the barrier is the agency not utilizing my capabilities. Upper management was not recognizing my capability. They never gave me the chance to do things. They don’t offer enough training where you really need it. If I tell you that I have problems with being a manager, give me some training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>I rarely feel discriminated against because I am a women. I probably am but not in touch with that. I’ve felt that being a woman in terms of working has been a major impediment.</td>
<td>No I have not experienced any discrimination because of my gender. If I were I was not aware of it. Neither because of my race.</td>
<td>I have not experienced any discrimination based on race or gender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with barriers</td>
<td>I would go to a supervisor. I kept picking up on other people’s work. If I see a case I would pick it up and speak with the more experienced workers.</td>
<td>I just sat back and prayed one day they would recognize me. Then they started giving me stuff like crazy</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Susan</th>
<th>Nadine</th>
<th>Joy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact</td>
<td>I think that I was very fortunate that when I came to state agency at a time when people looked at my experience and knowledge. My biggest challenge is the department has done nothing to help people get along and keep the peace.</td>
<td>I was not aggressive. I got to the point to where I was not doing much to improve my skills in terms of education and training.</td>
<td>As a worker there were not any barriers except this is a stressful job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>I have not experienced a situation based on race or gender.</td>
<td>The fact that they can use me as an interim manager but have someone else in mind for the position. They did not want to compensate me for it. I felt that this was discrimination.</td>
<td>I never really experienced anything because I always got what I wanted. So I really didn’t feel or face or maybe didn’t even have knowledge of what was going on. I am not the type of person to say it must be race or gender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with barriers</td>
<td>I found my way with everyone here, even with the gentleman who when we wanted to kill each other.</td>
<td>I gave it up and had them find someone else. I became very angry for a while but realized that I was hurting myself. I withdrew and I did what I had to do on the job and nothing extra. But now I just don’t allow these people to this type of control over me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>Shirley</td>
<td>April</td>
<td>Linda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact</td>
<td>The fact that my supervisor does not acknowledge that I have information and they don’t want to use it. My supervisor does not trust me and there is not communication between us. My job was taken away from me and given to one of my employees without any explanation. One supervisor tried to get me promoted but a black female kept me down.</td>
<td>How to get the job accomplished with half of the staff. I feel that we have so much work, more laws, more rules and more procedures. I need more people but they do not think so. They think we can do more with less.</td>
<td>Experiencing nepotism or someone not wanting you for a position. Someone like my last supervisor who makes you feel unappreciated, unworthy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>I experienced gender discrimination because we had a male supervisor who promoted a man who was here less than 3 months and he had no degree. We never saw the job posted.</td>
<td>When I am in meetings I am ignored, especially if you are the only female. For race, I sense the body language. I watch people’s reactions to me. They seem surprised to know that I know so much.</td>
<td>I have not encountered any racial or gender discrimination. You can win the Ku Klux Klan with kindness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with barriers</td>
<td>I just look at my 26 years and my pay and I just keep going.</td>
<td>I have to make do with what I have. And if it means doubling, tripling, I have to do it.</td>
<td>I am dependent on the Lord and I am so comfortable knowing that He knows what is best for me. I don’t fight it, I just let God deal with it. I am not going to fight obstacles because there will always be obstacles but I have always gotten around them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

This part presents the discussion of the themes that emerged from data. The themes are contact with barriers, discrimination and dealing with barriers.

Barriers to Career Advancement

The women faced some unique challenges and barriers in their career advancement. These include nepotism, competition from others, racism, their lack of motivation, lack of resources, lack of knowledge, lack of opportunity, and limitation of potential. Some of the women expressed they have not encountered any barriers.

Complacency. Nadine felt that she could have had more promotional opportunities if she was more assertive. She explains:

I think that the fact I was really aggressive. I got to the point where I was not doing much to improve my skills in terms of education. But at that I was more focused on the job and family and those types of things. So I think that I have to take some responsibility for that. Not really pursuing education and training.

Then there was the fact that I was quite discouraged by the way things were going. I said, Okay, I was have a job that does not pay bad money, but you have a family and you need the security...So it is not something that you dislike and maybe if you work hard you will be recognized for that (1/21/99, 548-555).

Nadine was also discouraged by the fact that the administration used her to fill a higher level position but did not compensate her nor offered her the position as a permanent one.
**Nepotism.** Linda felt that barriers for her included the nepotism by certain members of the management team and the unfair treatment by her previous supervisor. She expounds,

“I experienced nepotism or someone not wanting you for a position. Someone like my last supervisor, someone making you feel unappreciated, unworthy. Like you are not an achiever…” (2/22/99, 845-849).

**Lack of opportunities.** Shirley also experienced barriers due to the lack of opportunities by her supervisors who are usually other African-American females. She explains:

…All I know is the Black supervisors that I have worked for have not given me any opportunity to advance…the black females that I have worked for I have had more problems with than anybody…I think that because a black female knows that you don’t have any recourse through the law, you cannot file a discrimination based on race or sex, you could but they are a lot harder to prove. That they can just feel that they can do whatever they want. They can treat you any way they want to (1009-1015).

Shirley has not been promoted in over eighteen years working with the State and she attributes this to biases on the part of her African-American supervisors, especially the women. She was denied promotion because of internal conflict with a director which she explains was based on the lack of communication and personal differences.
Lack of resources. Rhonda finds that not having the resources such as books, equipment, and education as barriers, and interacting with other individuals. She explains:

Sometimes when you are dealing with personalities it can be an obstacle. It can be a challenge. Because you have to get through a particular personality to get perhaps materials something that you need. That sometimes is a major challenge. Also in terms of money. The limited money that is available to do certain things. To do research and studies that I believe is important to get a job done (838-843).

Competition. Rhonda also found that people could be the biggest barriers to advancement in the organization:

Well you have people who absolutely will discourage you from going and let it be known if you move on and I am under you that you are going to have problems because I am not going to do such and such and I disagree with this and so it is going to cause you problems. Then on the other end, you just have people who do not want to see you progress. So it is really unfortunate that you are going to find it in every organization that you have people that generally do not want to see you move on (859-871).

Lack of involvement from upper management. Nadine believes that the barrier she faced is management not recognizing her abilities and rewarding her accordingly. She explains:

Upper management is not recognizing my capability. Remember I told you I did my work and I am done. Nobody ever questions why is she done. What’s going
on? Nobody questioned that for years. It is now seven years. So it’s like nobody took time out to really analyze your capabilities. It like you’re in this spot. You should know everything; you should do everything. It’s like I can’t do anything unless you give me this extra responsibility. You allow me to do it. Give me a chance to do it (705-714).

Lack of training. June found that the lack of training and knowledge to do the job as she would have like is the greatest obstacle that she encountered. April found that the political climate and the control of the upper administration presented barriers for her to advance. April explains:

Some of the things that I have seen and heard would get me fired. My mouth would get me in trouble. I don’t want to get up that far to see my dreams and my goals shot down my reputation…I have done a good job but then to get up in that realm and that ugliness and all you have to do is make the right person mad and that’s the end of your career (891-896).

No barriers. Three of the women stated that they did not experience any barriers in their career advancement. One reason they give is the organization is structured to facilitate advancement based on one’s performance. Another reason was that the climate of the organization was such that barriers could not be tolerated. Susan states:

I think that I was very fortunate that I came to this agency at a time when there were people that said somebody works for us and they are willing to learn, when it is time for promotion, when the shoe fits, let them wear it. They did not look at anything else, except my experience and expertise. There were four people there
at the time when that happened to me and others including women and blacks. Now they are gone and it is a new day. Everyone knows that this is a new day.

People don’t look at that now (663-669).

Kia did not perceive any barriers in her advancement, she states, “I can’t think of any barriers because every time I applied for a job I got it” (885-886). Hope did not encounter any barriers in her career advancement. She states, “My reality is there may be barriers but that does not stop you from presenting your ideas and being persistent in trying to get your ideas implemented and I think with the new regime there is a greater possibility for that” (976-978). Joy also did not encounter any barriers in her advancement. She found that if you performed according to the standard set, and have seniority, a person would advance. May explains why she did not encounter any barriers:

The organization is pretty straightforward in terms of its promotional opportunities. It is the one area that is really black and white. There is not too much subjectivity involved. So, when you get to the higher management levels, yes there is subjectivity. But at the lower levels, it is pretty much black and white (919-923).

The barriers the women encountered were diverse and reflected the situation with each organization. There were not many incidents of racism and sexism, but the structure of the organization provided a channel where one could advance with relative facility.
Discrimination

Of the twelve women, four of them felt that they experienced some form of discrimination based on their gender or race. The other eight did not experience any form of discrimination based on their gender or race as they advanced in their careers. They might have had some setbacks but they were perceived as differences or biases rather than acts of discrimination:

For the women who did not encounter any form of discrimination, Margaret states,

I rarely feel discriminated against because I'm a woman. I probably am and may not be in touch with that. I've never felt that being a woman in terms of working has been a major impediment. But that could be because of the time that I grew up in. Where a woman's expectations were low and society's expectations were low. So I've never felt it but that doesn't mean it didn't happen...I have felt any impediments based on race. I think partially because I've never been one to aspire for a lot higher position. So because of that, I've never really challenged very many situations (927-947).

Linda explains why race and gender discriminations have never been an experience for her.

...When I was a college intern, this guy who was a recruiter, he was black, now he, you know what, you're going to get fired because of your personality. And I couldn't understand what he meant. I was like ah, I'm just a silly old happy all the time kind of girl, you're okay, or whatever. But now I see. My rapport with
people is positive, and I understand that it’s so (it cuts across race and gender).

You can win the Ku Klux Klan man king or whatever they call him if you smile in
his face and kill him with kindness, you know (903-911).

**Gender discrimination.** The women who experienced discrimination were
encountered in various situations. April states that she experienced an episode of gender
discrimination in a meeting. She explains:

Everyone in this room knew me. They knew my capacity, they knew what my job
field was, and they knew me. And this particular white male asked, “April, I
would like to hear your opinion.” Now when he asked me that, opinion neither
right nor wrong, in my book...I give my opinion, and after I give my opinion, we,
we didn’t really want to hear that anyway and its like a wave of the hand. And I
kind of sat there, and I was like well excuse me, you know, you did as me what
my opinion is, so all of a sudden I’ve give you my opinion and you brush me off
like that...I believed he treated me this way because of my gender (1387-1413).

Kia shares her experience with gender discrimination:

In the military there was a position that I could have gotten and I know I didn’t get
it because of my gender. It was always the same. There was this male who
wanted it. This male can get it-it happened was a male, not of color and in the
military the positions start down and the closer you get, everybody and their
grandma will want it. So you really have chance of getting it. So it got to the
point where I should have been in a position, a higher paid position two, three
years ago, and I wasn’t because of my gender. It wasn’t my blackness. It was the
fact that I was a woman and the person looked at me and said a woman shouldn’t be doing the job (918-928).

Shirley shares her encounter with gender discrimination, “A black male came in and I’m telling you he wasn’t her two, three months. He promoted this man. I never saw the job posted and he now in pay range 14. I’m in pay range 13. Which is a hurting thing. He has no degree…I have at least ten more years’ time than he does and for them to come and do that (910-914).

**Racial discrimination.** April also states that people act differently around her because of her race. She reads their reactions to her more so than what they say. She explains:

I watch people’s body reactions. And for years a lot of people never met me, never. Talked to me on the phone for a long time, years before they’d come face to face with me. A lot of people never got to meet me until we started having HR conferences. I watch body language. And the minute, the second I say I’m April, or if they read my nametag. ‘You are April? I watch the whole face change, especially when it’s a white male or female, to realize the lady, woman, they’ve talking to all these years is black. More so, they’re surprised that I know all I know. And they’re taken aback (1419-1428).

The women did not feel threatened by any episodes of gender or race discrimination in their career development. They were resourceful in their career planning and if experienced discrimination never acknowledge it. The women main focus is to perform
and excel in their job given any circumstances. The barriers encountered were more institutional and organizational rather than discriminatory.

**Strategies to Overcome Barriers**

*Sought alternatives.* The women utilized different strategies to deal with the barriers they faced in their careers. Some sought alternatives to the problem. Rhonda illustrates how she did this:

You don’t buy into their style because sooner or later unless there’s some kind of deep hatred, if you have a goal and you have to work with a person that goal must be accomplished. So you come to a point where you can agree to disagree or you can respect their position. Therefore you get it done. But I didn’t dwell on the things that bothered me about these individuals. What I tried to do was find something about these individuals that I found attractive and let them know and I noticed that started breaking al least to the point where I can get what I needed (979-985).

*Watch and see.* Sharon shares the strategy she used to deal with lack of opportunity and recognition. She states, “I just sat back and prayed one day they would recognize me. They’re starting to give me stuff like crazy and I like what’s going on now. I was hoping that they would recognize that I could handle a lot more than they were giving me” (726-729). Kia also learned to “sit back and watch”. She states, “I have learned to drain them by not doing anything and just kind of sitting back and watching them. I think that’s how you have to deal with adverse situations. You can’t fight everything (1242-1266).
Discussing problems. April used a more aggressive approach. She states, “I had to go in and clarify a few things; okay, let’s start over... We have to sit down and discuss things” (1324-1342). However, Nadine internalizes her anger when the administrator procrastinated in making a decision on a promotion in a job that she temporarily acted in as administrator. She explains:

I gave it up and had them find someone else. I also became angry for while. I internalized it and I really hurt myself than I did anyone else. I won’t do that again. I withdrew and I did what I had to do. Just don’t ask me to do anything extra... but that incident put out the fire in me. It impacted the people I work with, the teamwork. Now I just don’t allow these people to have this type of control over me (575-582).

The women were for the most part passive in their strategies. Their faith in God allowed them to wait on Him. Joy contends her strategy included, “a lot of prayer.” In the end they felt that they were ultimately vindicated.

Interpretation

The part discusses the interpretation based on the three main themes, contact with barriers, discrimination, and dealing with barriers.

Contact. Several themes emerged as factors serving as barriers. The lack of opportunity was determined by the structured career development and preparation process. This tended to limit them to certain levels of the organization.
Discrimination. Most of the women explained that they have not really encountered situations of discrimination based on race or gender. They agreed that they are more subject to gender discrimination. Sexual harassment was not an issue for them.

Dealing with discrimination. The women’s upbringing and background prepared them to deal with friction. The presented a non-combative attitude towards barriers. They were psychological prepared to manage problems and issues.

Facilitators in Participants’ Career Development Process

This section presents the influences in the participant’s career development process.

Influences in Career Development

This part is divided into three components. The first presents the data by themes. The second presents the discussion of the data. The third component presents the interpretation of the data.

Presentation of Data

Table 4.8 presents the data according to the main themes. The main themes are supporters, meaningful teachings, skills and knowledge, motivation, and being black.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Hope</th>
<th>Rhonda</th>
<th>Kia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>RP was the regional director who hired me. He spent 4-5 months showing me the steps of what to do and how to do it. He trained me well.</td>
<td>I really did not have a mentor. I had people who gave me advice along the way. At the agency I would give credit to R. She was a great influence in teaching and guiding but not a mentor.</td>
<td>My mom is my greatest influence. M is my mentor. She helped me in my professionalism. She helped stay focus on issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful Teachings</td>
<td>My mother taught me never to stop. My father taught me hard work and compassion.</td>
<td>My husband who told me to learn it myself. A friend who taught me to take control.</td>
<td>My mother who taught me that it was the common man who got things done, no the manager.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition of Skills and Knowledge</td>
<td>I applied the information I got from reading the books and manuals.</td>
<td>I talked to people and rolled up my sleeves and did it.</td>
<td>Through structured and formal training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Black</td>
<td>Given me the fortitude and a kind of honesty that a low of white females do not have.</td>
<td>I am used to working harder. You are used to put-downs. You are used to having to fight and knowing that you are on your own.</td>
<td>I don't take things for granted. I know that I have to work hard and always be prepared. Be yourself.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8: Influences on Career Development

Table 4.8 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>Faith</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>My office manager, MJ. She has given me direction and advice and guidance along the way.</td>
<td>None really. I just looked at someone and tried to model myself.</td>
<td>Her name is VH. She resigned. She was here 20-30 years and I ended up supervising her but she was respectful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful Teachings</td>
<td>My elementary school teacher. She taught me timeliness, respect and how to talk to people.</td>
<td>My mother taught me how to be considerate, detailed, and conscientious.</td>
<td>My step father taught me to love people, to work with people and look beyond color.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition of Skills and Knowledge</td>
<td>Through the school system and training opportunities.</td>
<td>From doing and being the leader.</td>
<td>By going to college and it was a great experience and applying knowledge to work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Black</td>
<td>It makes me more sensitive to race and gender issues.</td>
<td>To know our material well and be a role model for others.</td>
<td>Let me know that people are real, and people do hurt. Every day is important. I am aware of discrimination.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
### Table 4.8 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Susan</th>
<th>Nadine</th>
<th>Joy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>ND. When I first came to the agency she was a clerical supervisor. She would encourage me and we would have long talks. BS was also an influence. He is a white man.</td>
<td>I really did not have one. I was really kind of stand-alone. There is no one I could consider a mentor.</td>
<td>MJ helped me out a lot. She was a kind, softening voice when I was hearing loud voices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful Teachings</td>
<td>My mother taught me common courtesy, and not to gossip, patience and tidiness of office.</td>
<td>My sister taught me that regardless of the obstacles you can succeed.</td>
<td>My parents taught me to be pleasant and pre-judge others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition of Skills and Knowledge</td>
<td>I observed special workers and learned from them.</td>
<td>They developed along the way from my supervisor and others on the job.</td>
<td>I learn from interacting with different people. And through trial and error.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Black</td>
<td>To be strong.</td>
<td>Helped me to endure all the negative things along the way, and not to give up.</td>
<td>It has given me a lot of spirit and has build my character and being able to overcome some incredible things.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)

### Table 4.8 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Shirley</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>Linda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Two Black females, AR and MEW. They were my first supervisors and made me work very hard and learn work ethics. My mom and cousin were also good mentors.</td>
<td>My first supervisor. He knew it all. He saw a lot of potential in me and he opened the door and let me in (a white male). A Black women, C was another mentor. She gave me insight on people and the environment.</td>
<td>My first supervisor was definitely a mentor. She took me under her wings and gave me every opportunity to succeed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful Teachings</td>
<td>PH was not educated and did not finish high school. He taught me about politics and discipline. He was about working together.</td>
<td>My grandma taught me that I am somebody, you are not worthless, you are educated Also to treat people the way you want to be treated.</td>
<td>My last supervisor. She taught me to think before speaking, to schedule my work, prioritize and meet deadlines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills and Knowledge</td>
<td>Through college which was a wonderful experience.</td>
<td>By constant reading and referencing.</td>
<td>Through mentoring by my first supervisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Black</td>
<td>Helped me to set an example for other female first-line supervisors to be strong and be a survivor.</td>
<td>Not be afraid to explore other opportunities. To prove that I am capable of getting and doing a good job not because of Affirmative Action.</td>
<td>To take advantage of all opportunities and to be an achiever.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

This part presents the discussion of the themes support, meaningful teachings, acquisition of skills and knowledge, and being Black.

Support

The women declared that they had people who influenced them in their careers. They all gave credit to their parents for their love and support and understanding as they commenced their careers. The women also recognized colleagues or friends in the workplace who assisted them in making a transition and attaining some level of competence and success in their careers. Both men and women, black and white, assisted them.

Supervisors. April regarded her first supervisor, a white male as a mentor. She explicates, “He saw a lot of potential in me...He gave me an opportunity and showed me how to do it, how to accomplish it, and taught me a lot” (1631-1640). Nadine discusses the person who influenced early in her career, but she does not consider her a mentor:

I started out with Mame. She was a strong black female. The unfortunate part is that I did not get to spend enough time with her because I think she would have had a stronger impact on my development and me...She was the only woman in the Governor’s office at that level. There were a couple of black women at the clerical level. I started out in the clerical pool and then her secretary. I did not have many skills when I came in, but I think that things would have been different if I had spent more time with her. She was very supportive, encouraging, and she was very strong. She was a leader (620-634).
Susan gives credit to a white woman and a white man for influencing her in her career. She illustrates:

Pat Nane. When I first came to this agency. She was a clerical supervisor and a few months after I got here she became a fiscal officer and she was one of the two people who asked me to take the account clerk position…Pat Nane would encourage me. We would sit and talk quite a long time about the different things that I didn’t need to know yet, but she was priming me for it. I could not have done it without her…Rob, an administrator. He is a white man and people’s man. He could charm the pants off a man. He was very good (802-830).

Linda bestows credit on her former supervisor, a black woman, while an intern with the state. Linda elaborates, “She was definitely a mentor. She saw me as kid, you know. She took me under her wings as her child. And she was going to give me every opportunity to succeed. She gave me every insight to succeed. She told me what people did, what kind of money they make for doing their job, doing the jobs that they did. That was an inspiration” (930-933). Linda also recognizes her current supervisor, a black woman, as her current and second mentor.

**Colleagues.** Faith acknowledges a colleague as her mentor. Faith describes her “I also had to supervise her and I have never seen someone so humble and just respect me, knowing that she taught me everything. She was Caucasian and very respectful” (810-820). Kia identified her current supervisor, a black female, as her mentor. She explains why, “She has helped me with my professionalism. She’s helped me keep a focus on the real issues. She has shown me that under adversity you can still get things done…I have
seen her keep her nose to the grindstone and I've seen her do a good job and I've seen her not let stuff affect her. I've seen her deal with it and move on. And that's the way I want to be” (1178-1215). April also had an African-American woman as a mentor. April states, "She gave me insight on the people that were already on board. Their way of thinking and how, what, procedures, and what to expect.

Hope recognizes a black male as a mentor. She explains, "I truly pay homage to RP because he taught me what was important in a job. I already had work ethic but he is the first person who taught me what is important and why. And he opened my eyes to the politics of the game that are played. He taught me how to negotiate with big leagues negotiators, General Motors, Ford, Chrysler” (184-1294). Joy’s colleague, an African American woman, served as a mentor, “Early on when I was struggling at the agency, MJ helped me out a lot. She was the kind of a softening voice when I was hearing loud voices. And kind of evened me out a little bit and despite my low self-esteem she always encouraged me. She always had faith in me...She helped me build my self-confidence” (1027-1037).

Lack of mentors. Several of the women contended that they did not have a mentor or someone who helped them professionally. June contended, “Not really other than looking at someone and trying to model myself” (880). Nadine states she did not really have a mentor, “I was really kind of stand alone” (642-643). Rhonda states, “I really did not have a mentor. A mentor is someone who actually took me under his or her wings. I had people to give me advice along the way that was really good advice but not a person who really took me under their wings and nurtured me... (949-951).
Despite the mentoring or lack of the women may have received in their professional careers. They enthusiastically gave credit to their parents, especially their mothers for being their teachers, their nurturers, and inspirations. They also gave high praise to their close friends and to God.

**Meaningful Teachings**

The women expressed that there were people who were most influential in their lives. These people’s teachings were meaningful and have helped them to maintain their values and integrity. They have made profound impacts on the women and have consequently affected their careers. Most of these people were their mothers, relatives, or co-workers.

**Relatives.** Nadine found that her sister to be most influential. She gained her admiration and respect because:

She did not have the opportunity I had to attend college, but she had the aggressiveness and the go-get-it kind of attitude. She started out in city government as a secretary and ended up, which is a total shock to us, going to the Police Academy and she became a police officer. She is now teaching law enforcement at the high school level… She taught me that regardless of the obstacles that were put in her way, she went out and did it, and succeeded (319-328).
Susan also attributed the most important teachings of her life to her mother:

   My mother taught me the most because everything that my mother does and says you can take to the workplace. Things such as common courtesy, no gossiping, organizational skills, and basic, fundamental interaction (390-397).

Nadine felt that her mother’s teachings were carried over to her professional life. This teachings include caring for others and good work ethics.

   Colleagues and Supervisors. The other women felt that their colleagues or supervisors’ teachings made a profound impact on their lives. Linda relates how her previous supervisor by her negative actions taught the most meaningful circumstances in her career:

   My last supervisor was the worst person I ever worked for. I took everything negative and turned it into a positive. I am in her position now...She taught me to have good communication, how to schedule my work, prioritize my work, and meet deadlines. I was doing her job and mine so she taught me how to manage multiple tasks and achieve my goals (276-297).

Shirley also gives some of the credit to her former supervisor:

   My supervisor put me to the test and he required me ten times as much out of me as he did the other employees. But it really helped me and he would not put up with any whining. If he gives me something to do, I am to get it done. He showed me how to network through the political structure and things that you should do. He encouraged me to get my masters (725-729).
Value of teachings. The teachings that were of value to these women were self-respect, compassion for their fellowwomen, work ethics, independence, understanding of others, encouragement to others, surrounding self with positive people, the culture of the organization, networking, the politics, certain skills, and respect for others. However, with all the good teachings they had acquired from other professionals, family and the church, there were issues that were not taught that would have been helpful. These were fortitudes against disrespect and negotiation to win. Hope explains:

They didn’t teach you how to deal with blatant disrespect for who you are as a person or for the work that you do. They didn’t teach you how to negotiate situations for win-win. Initially they taught you that you either won or lost. There was not middle ground. Well there is a middle ground. It is called compromise. And some of us have difficulty with compromise. When I first started out, part of what was important to me was winning. And winning meant you got what you wanted. Along the way however, because I didn’t get what I wanted it made me very angry. Along the way, I learned you don’t always get what you want but you can get something that is okay, which of course, I saw as “selling out.” But it wasn’t selling out. It was about getting as much as you could get within reason for the particular situation (399-410).

The women had relevant teachings from family, church, colleagues and friends. They also learned from their experiences in the workplace. They have incorporated these teachings into their lives and utilized them as principles for success.
Acquisition of Skills and Knowledge

The acquisition of skills and knowledge helped to facilitate the women’s career development. The women acquired their skills and knowledge through learning opportunities that were cognitive, experiential, and collaborative. Cognitive learning is a combination of formal education and training, and on-the-job training. Experiential learning is that which occurs through experiences in the organization, such as observations, assignments, and on-the-job challenges. Collaborative learning is that which occurs through relationships with others.

Experiential learning. Joys states:

I learn from doing it. We are based on the law and the laws are changing all the time. So that’s an ongoing process. Some of the things have still been the same but some things have changed and you just have to keep abreast of what’s going on around you. You have to read up and keep up and constantly refer back to the law to make sure it sticks in your head. And basically just trial and error (690-694).

Cognitive Learning. Kia’s tenure with the military and the state organization has allowed her to receive training from two sources:

The military trained me a lot. A lot more structured and formalized training because their training gets college credits. You go to school for eight hours a day learning how to manage people. I have also taken courses from college… I also read a lot. I get a lot of information about HR and EEO. So even though I get it on place or somewhere else, then I always keep an open door to any information.
People call me and give me a lot of stuff. I get a lot of information from different sources and I try to remember it and I try to hold onto it as long as I can before the next change because it moves so fast (638-646).

Nadine states:

The job takes training when you come here. Our training was extensive because they hired a bunch of people who didn’t know what they were doing. They really worked with us. They sat with us, answered a lot of questions. They were very supportive...I also consulted a tenured worker. We sat next to each other. I listened to everything she did all day long and I also would go to her for questioning. She would answer every question I had. I felt she was my trainer, after the initial training. I thought she was great (541-556).

Collaborative learning. April states:

I got my information from supervisors and other people who might have direct involvement or indirect involvement. I may touch base with a person if she used to do what I am doing now. I tap into them and they may give me information. I have learned more by just actually sitting down, talking, and speaking with that person. My supervisor at that time knew it all...I would ask questions, a lot of people are afraid to ask questions, but I was taught to ask. Even though you may not get the answer but ask. And I kept pushing. I kept asking (1125-1139).

The women used the resources available for them to enhance their skills and abilities. They benefited from the programs offered by the agency and sought out information they needed to become more effective workers.
Benefits of being an African-American Woman

The women discussed the benefits of being African-American as facilitators. They concluded that they have benefited in some way from being African-American. It essentially has made them more assiduous, more determined, more flexible and better prepared.

More assiduous. April discusses how being an African-American woman has helped her to become more assiduous:

Because here when I noticed not too many African-American females would apply for different job, it’s like they were all afraid. I don’t know I can do this. But here I was, I was going for it. This is what I want. And everybody said, ‘Well it’s probably only going to b given to you because you’re black.’ Well that might be one reason, but I’m going to show them I can do it. So that might have been the opportunity when that door opened. I got it because I got the knowledge and experience, that’s why I got it. They want to throw that in there. Or that helped me fine. But I want them to know I got this job with knowledge and experience and I’m going to show them I can do it. I’ve got work a little bit harder (1680-1696).

Appreciating heritage. Joy explains her ethnic identity, “I think it’s has given me a lot of goals. A lot of spirit. Just seeing the struggle that black period have been through, let alone black females. And I just think it’s given us a lot of character. And just being able to overcome things that people never thought we’d be able to overcome and I’m part of that group (1067-1070). Nadine has internalized being an African-
American woman and it has given her a sense of inner strength to withstand the pressures of society. She states, “It has helped me to endure this and all the things that have happened along the way here, and it has helped me not to give up” (667-669). Kia concurs, “I don’t take things for granted. I know I’ve got to work hard. It’s helped me to know that you’d better always prepared. You’d better stay in a (the military calls it) a state of readiness. Be in a continual state of readiness for the next opportunity” (1289-1293).

Fortitude and empathy. Hope believes, “It has given me a kind of fortitude and a kind of honesty that a lot of white women don’t have. I think it’s the result of the cultural experience of being a black female” (1448-1450). Sharon is more empathetic, “It has let me know that people are real. And people hurt. And everyday is important. Every day it weighs heavily...So I think that’s keeps me on my toes every minute. I’m aware of discrimination. I know what it feels like to hurt, to be harmed. That has helped me on the job (826-832). For Shirley, it has helped her to survive and be strong, “I just know that we have to strong. These things just help make you stronger and gives you determination that you need...We have to continue to endure and to set the example of our future generations” (1601-1604).

The women in essence found that being African-American women made them more sensitive and more aware of race and gender discrimination. They acknowledge that there can be a lot of hurt to everyone on acts of discrimination. They perceived themselves as role models and mentors for younger African-American women.
consequently making them strive harder for excellence and take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves in the workplace.

**Interpretation**

This part presents the interpretation of the data based on the emergent themes. The themes are support, meaningful teachings, acquisition of skills and knowledge, and being Black.

**Support.** Mentoring is important to the development of the women and their advancement in the organization. Not only does it support, but challenges and provides much needed education, experience, and influence in the quest for management jobs. Most of the women had mentor-type relationships that encouraged and supported them. The mentors imparted information on the culture of the organization. They also shared experiences with the participants. They taught them how to manage and organize their work. The mentors were individuals who they trusted, respected, and a high level of integrity. The mentors were diverse, males, females, whites and blacks.

**Meaningful teachings.** The women were highly motivated and their dispositions were shaped by the teachings of their parents, relatives, and friends. Among their teachings were good work ethics, respect for others, and basic human values for life.

**Skills and knowledge** The women possessed strong work ethic and relevant experience that assisted them in their career development. Their high self-esteem and perseverance were also key factors. They also believed that their interpersonal and communication skills such as the ability to work as a team. They acquire the skills by on-the-job training, listening, and asking questions.
**Being Black.** Several attributes were associated with the women’s blackness.

They were fortitude, independence, and assiduity.
CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION OF A CAREER DEVELOPMENT MODEL FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN

This chapter responds to the research question, “What are the stages of career development for African-American women? This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part presents a background of the model. Part two introduces a model of career development process for African-American women. Part three presents the discussion on the model.

Background of the Model

I carefully analyzed the data on the career development of the first-line supervisors in public organizations. The data were presented in the previous chapters and used to develop a model of career development. The analysis revealed consistent patterns of career development for the women. Although no two supervisors followed exactly the same path, there were identifiable phases of career development and progression. Five distinct stages are identified (see Figure 5.1).

The career development model uses a systems approach to career development. Jacobs (1988) explains that the system approach is, “systematic and relational. Systematic refers to its nature for being methodical, coherent, and intentional. Relational
accounts for the connections, interactions, and influences that impinge upon all system” (p. 2). Hence, the systems approach is an “iterative and interactive process” (Jacobs, 1988, p. 5). According to Jacobs (1988) the systems approach consists of inputs, processes, and outputs and is utilized to develop innovative and efficient systems. This model has five stages, self-reflection, identification, achievement, maintenance, and zenith. Each stage has three components, inputs, processes and outputs. Inputs are the interests, values and expectations of the women for their career development. Processes refer to the activities and behaviors of the women. Outputs refer to the goals and consequences that result from their activities and behaviors. The components are interactive and relational to each other. Table 5.1 presents the synthesis of the components of the model.

Each stage is different in the inputs that the women used for career advancement, the processes that were involved, and the outputs that occurred as a result of the interaction. The performance and the expectations of the participants are different in each stage. The women are expected to complete less challenging tasks at the first level. However, the tasks become more challenging as they move from stage to stage. They also acquire more responsibilities and autonomy as they progress. Thus the women are developing their managerial styles, technical competencies, and leadership skills. The women are also dealing with changes in relationships and demands on their time.

There is neither age requirement nor tenure associated with the stages. The factors are associated with the specific organizations such as opportunities and performance evaluations. Therefore the women tended to move quickly through the first
three stages and slow or plateau at the fourth stage. It is not unusual to find one in the same first-line supervisory position for more than twenty years.

The double arrows between each stage demonstrate the dynamism of the stages. The women can move forward with each promotion or return to the previous stage in the case of lateral assignments where they may start at their previous stage. Before each movement, the women undergo self-reflection. It is possible for the women to complete the cycle and restart from the first, or it is possible for the women to stop mid-way and restart from the first stage depending on their progression.

Some of the stages of the career development model are similar to the four-stage model proposed by Dalton, Thompson, and Price (1977). Their model depicts four stages, apprentice, colleagues, mentor, and sponsor. Their research was conducted on a group of professionals. Comparisons will be made between the four-stage model and this model.

Model of Career Development for African-American Women

This section is divided into five parts. Part one presents the first stage of the model, self-reflection. Part two presents the identification stage. Part three presents the achievement stage. Part four presents the maintenance stage. Part five presents the zenith stage.
Figure 5.1: Career Development Model of African-American Women

Self Reflection

The self-reflection stage consists of the women meditating deeply on who they are and the goals that they want to achieve in their careers. They are aware of the social pressure and society’s expectations of them as African-American women. They endeavor to conform to the rules, that is, obtaining education, exploring career options, and choosing the routes that are acceptable.

Inputs

The women began to examine their interests and values. They searched for information from family, colleagues and friends pertaining to their career choices. They discussed these options with families and friends. Some of the women attended college leaving without completing, while others completed college. Some completed internships
while others worked at various blue-collar jobs. Their initial interests were in finding gainful employment and job security.

**Processes**

The women established priorities. They reflected on what would best be agreeable to them as careers options. Shirley underwent self-examination and discovered, “I wanted to help people, especially African-Americans and minority groups...people who were victims of the system and have not received good opportunities (320-322). Mary knew what kind of job would interest her based on her husband’s experience in the workplace and felt that she needed a clear understanding. She got involved in work that addressed discrimination issues. Mary states, “So his experiences caused me to enter a field that would relate to his experiences and would give me a better understanding on what he was experiencing and feeling (409-416).

**Outputs**

The women underwent self-transformation. They became more adept at setting goals and outlining plans for their career. They pursued their goals and interest with zeal. They became more determined to succeed. April states, “Believe in yourself. You know what you are capable of. You know pretty much what you mean to do and whom you want to do it. Have the determination to get in there and do it (956-970).

**Identification**

The identification stage consists of the women verifying the type of work that would most interest them. The women had some idea on what they would like to do upon finishing high school and/or college but were not sure. Once in the job market the
women attempted to find a job that would sustain them financially. If the job meets their values, interests and intents they will remain there for a while. If the job did not meet their expectations they would change jobs, usually within the first year.

Inputs

The women entered the organization and determined that the new job is interesting. They underwent training, usually on-the-job training to learn the tasks involved in that position and also to learn about the organization. They worked closely with their supervisors. Linda asserts, “We do one-day seminars. Actually it’s a lot of hands-on experience working directly with supervisors” (1196-1202).

Along with the training and orientation programs provided by the organizations, the women engaged in their job tasks. For some, the tasks were challenging and they had to maintain a full caseload of clients. Rhonda states, “I really learned how to really work under pressure and really when you have an objective to achieve it.” A few of the women like Susan did not become bogged down with boring tasks. She took the initiative to find more challenging tasks.

The new worker is considered an apprentice and she seeks guidance and assistance from her supervisor and coworkers to meet the organization’s goals. Because of their lack of experience they may be given routine tasks. For most of the women in this study, they were given challenging and sometimes difficult tasks (Dalton, Thompson, & Price, 1977).
Processes

The primary relationship for the employee is that of being a subordinate. The employee uses her skills to develop effective relationships that can help to build her career. Having a mentor would be a good relationship to establish within the organization.

The women established relationships with others who served in mentor-type capacities early in their careers. Mentors can help to prepare employees for career progression at a faster rate. Susan states, “When I first came to this agency she [my mentor] was a clerical supervisor and few months after I got here she became a fiscal officer and she was one of the two people who asked me to take the clerk position. Pat Nane would encourage me. We would sit and talk quite a long time about the different things that I didn’t need to know yet, but she was priming me for it” (802-830).

The women for the most part established relationships with supervisors or co-workers who served in mentoring capacities for them. These mentors encouraged the women in their career development by sponsoring them for promotions. The mentors helped the women learned the “ropes” and prepared them for career advancement, coached them, and gave them feedback, and served as role models. The women who did not have mentors took a longer time to achieve supervisory status.

Outputs

The social adjustments the women make in the identification stage are important to their performance and the maintenance of successful relationships. One adjustment that these women had to make was the fact that they were African-American working in a
predominantly white organization. African-Americans are affected by negative perceptions about their abilities (Smith, 1981).

The women felt that they did not experience any racism but are cognizant that racism exists. They know that they may be excluded from certain positions because of their race. Susan explains why she will not resubmit her application for the director of the agency, “The reason is I don’t think that they will ever hire a black or female. If they hire a female it will be a white female” (1248-1249).

The women’s interests and values at the beginning of their careers were essentially survival. They needed steady income and job security. Kia states, “My values were most importantly that you have to eat, you have to live” (532-538). Susan states her values and interest were, “It was mainly surviving and doing what I needed for my family.” (594-598). Joy explained that being gainfully employed was important for her at the time, “Money was a concern because at the time I got a new apartment and a new car. Money was very important. Security was very important.” (1108-1188).

The women are motivated and want to remain with the organization because of the challenging nature of the job. May states, “I really like this work... I like analyzing cases” (1121-1125). Some women expressed the intrinsic reward from the job, “I love people, i know I’ve made a difference” (June, 943-944).

The social issues the women faced were accepting that they are African-Americans and that others might have negative perceptions about their capabilities. Their values affect how they view the job and motivate them to remain with the organization.
Achievement

The achievement stage finds the women more secured in the organizations. They are now being recognized for their skills and abilities. They have been promoted at least once and now have the potential to become managers. They are given more responsibilities and autonomy in their work. They are more involved in extra-curricular activities for the organization.

Inputs

The women concentrated on developing their skills and seeking opportunities for development. June asserts, “It is important to have people skills because it is a form of communication and you have to have open forms of communications” (390-394). The women are involved in goal setting. They found it important to have realistic goals. Rhonda comments, “You have to take control. And you have to demonstrate that you are the person that can get the job done. You have to take the leadership early on (539-544). The women are also involved in learning activities. Joy is involved in developing skills, “I learn from doing it…You have to keep abreast of what’s going on around you.” (690-694). Linda gets involved in training activities, “There’s lot of training seminars available. All you have to do is go. I do recommend it, I mean if you are not good at computers, you need to have that. You must have computer skills. But writing business letters, you can go to a class for how to write business letters (1233-1237).

The women have contributed individually to the success of the organization. These involved several activities such as outreach, “I do outreach. I think that is very important because if we didn’t do outreach and didn’t make people aware of their rights
and what our agency does then they are not coming to us. That’s our job security. So without outreach and without going out to the public our jobs wouldn’t be there” (Joy, 1564-1568). Rhonda teaches others, “Some of the stuff that I learned I end up teaching others, not only in this office but throughout the organization…has made a difference in the way we investigate cases. In the way we process cases and get cases moved out. Some of the things have made a difference here” (875-878). The women also become involved in special projects outside of their jurisdiction.

Process

The women becoming more independent in their work and relying less on their supervisors characterize this stage. They are developing expertise and competencies in their work. Their supervisors recognize the women’s competencies and allow them greater freedom for decision making involving their work. The women are gaining the respect of their peers.

Susan illustrates the reaction of her supervisor when she accepted a lateral move, “So, I left the section which made my supervisor extremely angry…They kept promoting me because they saw someone who wanted to learn, and I worked.” (314-317)

The women have established working relationships with their peers. They consider themselves team players and respectful to each other’s opinions and ideas. While gaining more independence in their job they have maintained respect for the authority of their supervisors. Hope illustrates her relationship with her supervisor, “SH and I used to argue down to the wire. We argued all the time. But SH was cool. He was knowledgeable. He was fair. And we got along well. We would argue and fight but we
got along well in here and when we left that was it. So there wasn’t any grudge carrying” (882-888).

Outputs

As the women moved into the commitment stage they are less anxious about their racial identity. Racism is not considered a problem because they see other African-Americans in positions of power. They are less doubtful about their skills and abilities. They are achieving promotions and are respected for their work by their peers and supervisors.

Hope shared her story where she was harassed and humiliated because she was an African-American woman who did not “suck up.” She ended up moving from $53,000 a year job to $5,000 a year job in two months because of false charges against her. She explains the effect it had on her, “So it woke me up and took me back to the values that brought me to that point and helped me to refocus and that’s why at 50 I have the outlook on life that I have. I’ve made mistakes. I’ve paid for my mistakes. I have proven myself professionally (1150-1154).

It is important to develop confidence in one’s abilities in this stage. This is obtained with the assistance of other colleagues. It is important to spend sufficient time in this stage to develop the technical and administrative skills. These well-developed skills will prepare the women for greater responsibilities and more complex tasks. If this development is not done the women will foster uncertainty and frustrations possible resulting in low morale for the women. Faith illustrates the this point.
I talked to supervisors about my problems with transition. From being a subordinate to management. Their response to me is always I’ve been there, done it. I don’t believe I can remember how they’ve done it to the speed that I went through. I was at the third level for maybe three, four months. At level 3, you do fact finding, sexual harassment cases. I probably did one...And if I didn’t become that knowledgeable at the level 3 I cannot answer their questions. That is to my detriment (953-972).

**Maintenance Stage**

The women moving into their first managerial jobs, usually first-line supervisory positions characterize this stage. They tend to have at least ten years of experience working with the organization except for two who progressed at a more rapid rate. The women are perceived as having the knowledge, skills, and experience in a specific job area. It is not unusual for women to plateau at this level.

**Inputs**

The women would take on the activities of being mentors and trainers to others. They are approached for their input into issues affecting the organization. They are now responsible for overseeing the work of others.

The women have mentored new employees and helped them to develop the skills necessary to succeed in the organization. June mentored a new employee and has watched her grow into a supervisor. Faith states that she reaches out to others and gives the information they need to facilitate their progress. May has been approached by a new supervisor for guidance and advice.
The women moved into first-line management position in this stage. They attributed their success to hard work and perseverance. Linda explains, “Hard work. Every time I saw the chance available to learn more I took it.”

Linda explains how to progress to management as an African-American woman, “Definitely you have to learn how to play the game. You have to learn the game better than most people who play the game” (34-37).

Faith believes that she possessed certain qualities that assisted her into supervisory positions, “I am very organized and that plays a major role in being a productive employee.” (56-61).

The women are solicited for their opinions regarding issues and decisions affecting the organization. Others approach them outside of the organization who recognized their expertise. They are approached by their supervisors and administrators to advise on problems, decisions, or for information.

Processes

In the maintenance stage the women learn how to be responsible for the work of others. They learn how to deal with the changes in relationships from their transition from the commitment stage to the maintenance stage. They experience the change in relationship with former peers and former supervisors and adapted to these changes.

The women now have employees who they supervise. They assign tasks to the employees, review and monitor their work. They conduct staff meetings to discuss their workload and other relevant issues. They offer training and feedback to the employees.
June states, “I give them guidance and teach them the proper way to convey information they gather for a report and make that concise and thorough.” (180-184).

The women had to learn about themselves as supervisors. May discusses some lessons she learned as a supervisor, “You are reviewing the work of your subordinates and things like that. I learned and am still learning to separate friendships and relationships from decisions that have to be made.” (144-156).

Most of the women declared that they did not have an easy transition into management in respect to their relationships. They found that accompanying their advancement were feelings of resentment, hurt, and jealousy by others. Susan describes her experience, “It caused hurt feelings and resentment. I came up through the ranks and I passed people and became those people’s manager” (415-420). There was also a change in the relationships with previous supervisors.

The women faced some challenges in their relationships when they achieved management status. This was a time that tested their communication and interpersonal skills. It also tested their ability to separate their personal relationships from their professional relationships.

Outputs

In this stage the women displayed a preparedness to confront the challenges that come with supervising others and to deal with the complexity of the work. The women are gaining managerial skills to handle employee issues and concerns. For example, April believes her employees see her as dependable and sensitive to their needs. The women believe their colleagues see them as knowledgeable, cooperative, and respectful.
The women in this stage have worked for a number of years within the organization, possibly in a number of different positions. They felt that they have made satisfactory progress based on their education and tenure with the organization. The women are satisfied in their current positions. Most do not rule out applying for other positions in the agency, but have no desire to leave the state employment. Susan explains why, “Fear, the security is not there. I am more secured with the state and I have nothing to fall back on. I am ten years away from retirement and I would not want to rock the boat” (947-950). There are others like May who is fearful of reliving the traumatic experience when she first became a supervisor. May explains, “I don’t want to go anywhere from here. This was such a tough transition going from investigator to supervisor” (444-446).

The women are motivated at the job. They see providing services as a motivating factor. They still find their jobs challenging. May states, “I like analyzing cases, I like getting the whole story” (1121-1122).

The women in this stage believe that they are successful. Their work performance is being recognized as good. Their employees and supervisors respect them. The women acknowledged that they still face challenges in the workplace because of their race, gender, and educational levels. However, these challenges do not hinder them from pursuing their goals. Susan examines her challenges, “I always looked at the fact that people applying for jobs have some degree. I have education in high school, but things always worked out” (744-746).
Zenith

This stage represents the culminating part of the women’s career. In this stage the women would have attained the highest level in the organization that they are most satisfied. One woman in the study identified her zenith at the achievement stage, while the others are still trying to achieve it by gaining promotions into positions such as directorship of the organization.

Inputs

The women invested at least 15 years in the organization. They have honed their skills and knowledge of the work and of the organization. They have achieved recognition for their contribution to the organization. Linda declares, “I have spent so much time with the state…. So I can be in there seventeen more years. My goal is to be a director of a state agency” (306-310). While for Faith, “I enjoy being a worker, it’s in my blood. I do not want to progress to the next level. I am even thinking of going back to being a worker (444-449).

Processes

The women sought opportunities where they could continue to learn and to be challenged. They attended training to enhance their skills and knowledge. They also collaborated with others on the job and learned on the job. The women developed confidence and self-esteem. One woman states:

Just never give up. I think it is never easy. It is never easy, but I think if you build your self-esteem and see yourself as marketable, you will see yourself as
definitely being able to do your job, and somebody is going to see that in you too...Be secure in what you do. And learn. Learn. (5576-565).

**Outputs**

The women would have surpassed their expectations. They would have continued to enjoy their jobs and be duly compensated. The women in this stage would have been tested, tenacious, and played the game. The women have achieved their ultimate goals for their careers. These goals vary from individual to individual.

**Summary**

Table 5.1 presents a summary of the career development model for African-American women.

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<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Self-Reflection</th>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>Achievement</th>
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Table 5.1

**Discussion**

This section discusses the model of African-American women career development. The career development model was characterized by five stages: self-reflection, identification, achievement, and maintenance, and zenith. Each stage will be
discussed in details. The career development model is similar to the findings of Dalton, Thompson and Price (1977). The stages of career development will be compared to Dalton et al.’s (1977) model.

Self-reflection

The women thinking deeply about who they are and what they want out of life characterize the self-reflection stage. They considered the realities of being African-American and females. Therefore, the opportunities afforded them in the workplace could be extremely limited. The women in this stage investigated their career options based on their educational achievement and work experiences. They set goals and made plans on how to achieve success.

Identification

Identification is essentially the women successfully obtaining their jobs. This is a critical period for them because it helps the women establish their self worth and helps them receive feedback from the work environment thus helping to shape their careers. The women are beginning to learn about the organization and themselves as employees.

The identification stage shares similarities with Dalton et. al’s (1977) stage 1 level. One of the major characteristics of Dalton et. al’s model is that the individual is newly hired in the organization and her work is closely supervised by others. The findings are similar in this study. The women through fact-finding identified the organization and type of job of interest to them. Their fact-finding activities included seeking information from workers, schools, friends, and family members.
Once the women obtained the job, they are assigned to tasks under close supervision because they are unprepared to perform the tasks independently. The women sought assistance from other co-workers and did not hesitate to ask questions about specific tasks. Dalton et al. (1977) suggested that close supervision is necessary to observe indications of competence and future potential.

The women in the study indicated that they had some mentor-type relationships. These mentors were usually supervisors of different ethnic identities and gender. Dalton et al suggested that establishing mentoring relationships in this stage is very important. Dalton et. al believed that a good mentor is important to “know the ropes in a complex organization” (p. 24). A mentor is someone an employee can go to for guidance on solving problems.

In this study, the women established professional and personal relationships with other co-workers. They expressed feelings of connectivness to African-American women in the organization. The women were aware of racial issues but did not to let these issues allow them to lose focus of their goals. Dalton et al. (1977) suggested that the psychological relationship a person makes in this stage is a critical as her work performance.

Achievement

The women becoming more independent workers, gaining responsibilities, and making more independent contributions to the organizations characterize the achieving stage. The women in the study were achieving minor successes in the form of promotions. According to Dalton et. al (1977) individuals in their Stage II should “hone
professional skills to a high level” (p. 26). The women in this study demonstrated a willingness to work hard at their jobs and take the necessary steps to accomplish their tasks. They are focused on performing their jobs well to obtain intrinsic satisfaction and meet the standards they have set for themselves.

The women’s determination to become more competent find them learning as much as they can from mentors, supervisors, and other coworkers. At the same time they are working more independently and contributing to special projects and community service. Dalton et. al (1977) posits that as a professional develops independence she needs to set a standard of performance. They also posit that “developing confidence in one’s own judgment is a difficult but necessary process” (p. 25). Dalton et. al (1977) suggested that a person must be established as competent in his or her skills and knowledge in this stage before moving into the next one. They posit that in their study they found first-line supervisors who were ineffective because they did not understand the technical aspects of the work. A lack of confidence undermined the supervisors’ self-confidence and her employees.

Dalton (1989) postulates that:

For many individuals, organizational work life not only permits individuals to exercise and expand their capabilities and skills, but also facilitates and rewards such activity and growth. Working in organizations often involves learning to deal more effectively with materials, information, customers, colleagues, and organizational processes. It involves the management of oneself and one’s time capably enough that others entrust you to work independently to carry off a
project, operate sophisticated equipment, handle a territory, or make a loan.

Successful work experience engenders self-respect and the respect of others (p. 101).

**Maintenance**

The women achieving their first management positions, first-line supervisors characterize this stage. The women are interested in directing and developing other people. Others in and outside of the organization perceive them as experts in their area.

All except one woman in the study expressed positive feelings and attitudes about taking leadership roles. They expressed their desire to see others succeed in the workplace. Thus the women assumed mentoring-type responsibilities. They placed strong emphasis on education and training in relevant areas such as computers and communication skills. They believe it is important to have high good interpersonal skills and a high level of integrity. In the role of supervisor, interdependent relationships are formed. These relationships have their basis in reciprocity and trust. Therefore, each person brings something and derives something from the relationship (Dalton, 1989).

The women in the study were satisfied with their levels of achievement. They were not actively searching for higher positions, although most voiced that they would apply for such positions if they became available. This is similar to Dalton et. al’s (1977) stage III where there is long-term satisfaction. There are challenges that help to broaden the individual’s thinking, increase knowledge by moving into new areas, or apply skills to new problems. Dalton et. al. (1977) posits that satisfaction also comes from adequate
social involvement and recognition for work and financial rewards. All except one of the women was satisfied with their level of achievement.

There is also the potential for employees to become plateaued at this level, thus becoming frustrated and disengaging themselves from the organization. In the study, one woman was in this position. The woman felt disengaged from the organization and her relationships with her supervisors and coworkers became more routine and trivial. This woman however was actively engaged in extra-curricular activities.

Zenith

The women achieving the highest position in the organization that they feel the most satisfied characterize the zenith stage. One woman in the study attained zenith. Thus achieving zenith depends on the individual and their goals. Several of the women are satisfied with their positions as first-line supervisors and do not wish to progress any further in the organization and are looking forward to retirement in that capacity. For these women, zenith is at the maintenance stage.

According to Dalton et al. (1977) very few people reach this stage. For the women reaching this level is based upon the opportunities and vacancies provided by the organization. For the most part mobility rates in state organizations tend to be stable so very little mobility is found at top management. Most of the vacancies are as a result of voluntary leavings, retirements and terminations. Therefore, the opportunity for attaining the level of directorship in an agency is limited and highly competitive.
Additional Data

This section presents the data from the observation of the women and from the document analysis. Six women granted me permission to observe them in their work environments. The human resource departments of the agencies gave me access to personnel documents to analyze.

Observations

The women were observed performing their regular job duties. I observed them interacting with their employees, in scheduling meetings, and interacting with their clients. The observations were from one to three hours.

The employees approached their supervisors mainly with questions concerning their cases. The women would listen, would ask more specific questions and would then supply an answer. For example, one of Mary employees had a question on a difficult case and had apparently covered all the areas that he could. He kept running into dead ends and was frustrated. Mary went over the case with him asking more specific questions. She then made some recommendations and explained to her employee why she was making these recommendations. The employee seemed relieved and pleased when he left her office.

I was fortunate to sit in a couple of meeting with Kia and her staff. Kia was preparing to leave to attend her military duty for six weeks. She called a meeting to discuss with her staff the arrangement she has made and the plan to operate while in her absence. There was one employee, an African-American male, who challenged her authority on a couple of factors. Kia told him what he needed to do and why she wants it
done a certain way, and not his way. They went back and forth on this issue for a few minutes, but ended with the employee consenting to her request. This caused some tension, but Kia quickly moved on to other items on the agenda.

In another situation I was able to sit in on a sexual harassment hearing. The case belonged to one of Mary’s workers. The case was presented and the worker presented the case appropriately. The client lost the case. Mary followed the client out of the hearing and listened patiently as the woman retold her story. The woman started crying. Mary comforted her but also explained why she lost the case. They sat for a while talking allowing the woman to regain her composure. Mary made some suggestions to the woman and followed her to the door. The woman thanked Mary and left.

I was able to observe Diane with her employees. The employee was her secretary and they had a friendly relationship but the respect was there for Diane’s position. They had a friendly banter about what to have for lunch and just general light conversation. Diane exhibited an informal and relaxed management style with her employees. When communicating with the clients she was professional.

Four of the women worked in the same agency and I was able to observe them interact in a staff meeting with their supervisor. Each supervisor exhibited their expertise in their special areas. They were courteous and respectful to each other. The women were professional in their approach to each other. Their supervisor showed respect to each of them by providing them with the opportunity to give input in the discussion.

Overall, I found that the women worked in modern and pleasant conditions. Their employees respected their authority. The supervisors were professional in their dress and
attitude. They appeared to enjoy their job. There were two instances where I felt that two supervisors were having conflict and misunderstanding. This seemed to have been a problem for some time but nothing has been done to address it. The supervisors treated their employees with courtesy and respect.

**Document Analysis**

I had the opportunity to conduct an analysis of the one department’s *Equal Opportunity Plan*, and personnel documents from the database. I was given copies of these documents and was told to destroy them after I was done because they contain personal information. This I promised to do.

The *Equal Opportunity Plan* identifies concern areas within the agency’s employment process, sets actions necessary to correct them, assigns specific people to oversee each task, and establishes a deadline for the completion of the action items. The plan presented information on the recruitment, selection, placement, performance appraisal, training and upward mobility, disciplinary action, and separation of minority employees. The report displayed the categories of job and the number of minorities and women who were hired to fill those positions in 1997. Of the seven official and managerial positions filled, five were by women and two by minorities.

An analysis of a sample of personnel reports for one agency revealed that the employees have worked over twelve years with the agency. The employees have a structure career path where they move up the hierarchy within their area of work. They progressed through a series of steps before promoted to supervisor. Each level reflected a change in title and in salary levels. The average years worked as supervisors was nine.
Employees were included from across racial backgrounds. This process was similar to the career paths taken by the women in the study.

The second agency presented documents of all their first-line supervisors from the different regional offices. The data showed that supervisors begun working with the agency from 1967 to the 1993. The analysis also showed the employees progressed through a structured career path in the organization. The employees underwent a probation period of one year, after which they were promoted. A series of promotion followed until the employees reached the supervisory level. The data are consistent with the data from the interviews.

The observation and document analysis confirmed the information shared by the women on their career development process. The women followed a structured approach to their career development.

This chapter presented and discussed the model of career development for African-American at the first-line supervisory level. It highlighted the significance of the findings and related it to the relevant literature. This chapter also presented the document analysis and observation. The next chapter will discuss the conclusions and recommendations.
CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to describe the career development process of African-American first-line supervisors. The following questions guided this study:

1. What is the career path taken by African-American women?
2. What are the measures of success in African-American women's career?
3. What are the challenges and limitations to achievement?
4. What are the influences on the career development process?
5. What are the stages of career development used by African-American women?

This chapter is divided into three sections. Section one discusses the summary of the study based on the research questions. Section two presents the conclusions of the study. Section three presents the implications and recommendations for future research.

Summary

This section presents the summary of the findings of the study:

- The career paths taken by the African-American supervisors are structured according to the organizations in which they work.
- The women measure their success based on the satisfaction they derive from doing their job.
• The women’s major challenges are those that are related to personnel and organizational issues such as worker conflict and financial resources.

• African-American women’s mentoring relationships with their supervisors, the support from their family, and their churches are major influences on their career development process.

• The career development for African-American women is fundamentally distinct because of their unique views and backgrounds.

Conclusions

This section has four parts. Part one presents the conclusions of the career paths of the women in the study and the related literature. Part two presents the conclusions of the challenges and limitations experienced by the women in the study and the related literature. Part three presents the conclusions of the facilitators and influences experienced by the women in the study and the related literature. Part four presents the conclusions of the success of the women and the related literature.

Career Paths of African-American Women

A career path is an organizational process identifying promotional possibilities and sequences (Simonsen, 1986). Thus, a career path offers the individual a series of jobs involving different skills that help them progress through the organization (Noe et. al, 1994). The women in this study chose various career paths. The women represented various educational and professional backgrounds, which contributed to their career paths. They had backgrounds in banking, the automobile industry, hospital, teaching, the
current state agencies, and other service agencies. They were typically found working as teachers, secretaries, and administrative assistants. Once they acquired state jobs they mapped out their individual career paths in the organizations.

Gilley and Eggland (1989) posit that there are three types of career paths in organizations: (a) historical, (b) organizational, and (c) behavioral. The historical career paths are informal paths that have always existed in organizations and are represented by past paths used by the current senior manager. This approach uses promotions and transfers as means for upward mobility. It represents the conventional approach to career development, but most managers fail to see that their current positions represent a formal career path approach.

The organizational career path is an approach defined by management. The paths are practical and are reflected in business plans, needs, and the structure of the organization. These paths represent the values of the management. The job description, evaluation, and compensation activities are represented in this form of career pathing. The organizational career path was utilized by five of the women in this study. Their agency had a structured approach to career progression. Once these women had satisfactorily completed a specified period in a certain position, they were reviewed for potential promotions. The first two promotions were almost guaranteed because of the demand for these upgraded level workers. The promotions became more competitive at the third level and beyond. The agency specified the criteria for the promotion of these employees. The criteria were established by their supervisors’ performance appraisal. African-American are promoted less frequently than whites (Woody, 1992).
Behavioral career paths represent a logical sequence of the positions that could be held by an employee based on an analysis of what people actually do in the organization. This approach matches the needs of the employee to the goals of the organization. It allows for mobility across functions, geographic lines, and organizational lines in an effort to obtain a logical basis for career pathing as well as career development. The other seven women's career paths closely correspond to the behavioral career paths. The women remained within the state organization but determined what positions and agencies would contribute to their career mobility. The women had lateral promotions and vertical promotions within the state to enhance their career mobility.

According to Cox and Harquail (1991), four dimensions of career paths are important to career development and success to promotion frequency and salary increases. The first is line versus staff job assignments. Salaries for line assignments are generally higher than those for staff assignments at comparable hierarchical levels. Line positions have led to faster promotions and salary increases. The women in study were employed in staff positions, which decreased their chances of promotions within the agencies.

Second, organizational mobility, defined as single versus multiple-employer careers, also has been shown to affect career success. A multiple-employer career path can lead to higher salaries and faster promotions since changing employers is a tactic often used to achieve an increase in salary or a promotion that might not be forthcoming within an organization. Some research has shown that women tend to have single-employer careers (Hennig & Jardim, 1977). Others (Sehgal, 1984) found that
organizational mobility is closely linked with occupational stability. The women in this study tended to have a single-employer. Some women might begin their careers working with different organizations for a short period of time. One woman left the state employment after she started. This woman returned to state government after a series of organizational downsizing and harassment by other organizations.

Third, the degree of functional specialization has been found to influence career success. The women in this study demonstrated competence in specialized areas of the organization. These levels of specialization have led to promotions for the women. Fourth, job mobility tends to increase career success when job changes are interpreted as developing relevant experience. Also, past a certain point, the time spent in a current grade or in a particular job has been shown to indicate poor promotion prospects (Kanter, 1977). The women in the study were assertive in acquiring the relevant skills and competencies to achieve first-line management positions and were recognized for their tenacity. However, eleven of the women have worked with the state for over fifteen years and have recently assumed first-line supervisory positions. Three of these women have held first-line supervisory positions for over ten years, and one woman has repeatedly been denied middle and upper management status. Previous research has shown that the progression paths of employees in organizations tend to become less stabilized with time (Martin & Strauss, 1956). The patterns of vertical career progression in the organization evolve to become various forms of career lines that terminate at various levels of the management echelon. Therefore, certain career paths have different directions and organizations offer different paths to the employees. The study revealed that most of the
women in this study have worked long and hard at the operational level before moving into first-line supervisory levels, but have plateaued at this level. Research has shown that African-American women have held steady and have lagged behind white women in moving into middle-management positions (Howard-Vital, 1993).

According to White (1970) the mobility of employees within the organization depends on opportunities. The creation of one opportunity usually triggers a series of opportunities, with a new position emerging as each person progresses. Anderson, Milkovich, and Tsui (1981) posit that the organization's structure and technology and the organization's workforce mainly determine opportunities. The study suggests that the opportunities for career progression for the women were contingent upon the availability of positions in the organizations. The women could not move into first-line management or higher management positions unless someone retired or resigned from those positions. The higher the management opportunities, the more competitive career progression becomes. Several of the women applied for higher management positions within their agencies but they were competing with colleagues with the same tenure, knowledge and abilities as they have. Also these opportunities are very rare and may occur once in five to ten years depending on the tenure of the person who currently holds that management position.

Organizations usually lack well-delineated criteria for career progression. The organizations should better articulate requirements for moving front-line workers to positions of leaderships. Training and development efforts were not considered important factors in assisting the career progression of this group of women. Some of the women
perceived that the career development efforts of the organization have failed to address their needs. The women viewed the organization as being uncommitted to the growth and development of their employees. Research has shown that when African-American women feel a part of the social structure, or feel supported, they tend to have better employment experiences. For example, Burke (1991) found that 81 minority managers and professionals employed in organizations that were supportive of minorities were more satisfied with their jobs and committed to their organizations. These minority managers also participated in more useful development and training activities and had more optimistic career aspirations.

Age, gender, education, and tenure of employment are factors that are have been closely linked to career progression (Anderson, Milkovich, & Tsui, 1981). Five of the women in this study do not have college degrees and have expressed satisfaction with their career paths. They acknowledge that it would be harder for them to achieve higher management positions because of their limited education. Research has shown that level of education is important to career progression (Stamp, 1986). Eight of the women are between the ages of forty-five years and sixty years. They are now looking towards retirement from the state. Research has shown that individual mobility tends to diminish with age (Anderson, Milkovich, & Tsui, 1981). Race is an also an important factor in career progression. Research has shown that African-Americans are promoted less frequently than whites (Betters-Reed & Moore, 1995).
Challenges and Limitations

Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Wormley (1988) found differences in career success based on gender and race, with African-American women having more negative experiences than any other group. This study suggests that barriers still exist for African-American women even at the low end of the organizational hierarchy. The women in this study encountered challenges in the forms of sexism, lack of motivation, lack of training, lack of opportunities for advancement, and lack of resources.

Previous research (Almquist 1975; Carter & Cook, 1992) postulates that African-American women are confronted by discrimination in the forms racism and sexism. Fulbright (1985) found that African-American women are limited in their career mobility because of their race. This study found the contrary. The women in this study acknowledged the existence of racism and may have encountered episodes in their daily lives. However, they expressed that they did not encounter racism in their career development within the organizations. The women felt that the organizations hire and promote minorities fairly. The women felt that they were supported by their supervisors and by the administration. Most of the women work in agencies that address the needs of minorities or the injustices of employees in the workplace. This study suggests that the women have made choices to be actively involved in correcting and ending the forces of racism in the workplace.

The women felt that because of their race they had to work longer and harder to prove themselves. They became involved in special projects that benefited the organizations, they are also active in community-based programs that are geared toward
minorities. The women felt that once attaining supervisory positions the burden was on them to prove that they can be successful supervisors. They believed that their success would open the door for other minorities.

The women in this study are employees in public sector organizations. Research has shown that the majority of African-Americans career advancement occur in the not-for-profit and government organizations (Collins, 1983). Pomer (1986) found that non-financial services is one of the occupations in which African-Americans find the easiest access and greatest career advancement. Research also suggests that African-American women may not list discrimination as a career barrier because they have limited their primary areas of interest to fields that are perceived as bias free (Slaney, 1980). The women indicated in this study that they feel a high level of employment security within the state agencies. They are not eager to seek employment outside of the public sector.

Sexism has limited the advancement opportunities for women in the workplace, and African-American women have been found to be significantly affected (Bell, 1986; Devanna, 198; Fulbright, 1985). Several of the women in this study felt that they were denied opportunities for advancement because of their gender. The women felt that the "good old boy network" exists in the organization that favors males for certain managerial jobs. They felt that white and African-American males are preferred for higher positions than women.

The women felt that the challenges that they face in their career development are more personal and organizational. Some of the women felt that they were not aggressive in their career development. They did not have the confidence to seek out opportunities
as they should because of a lack of confidence. This lack of confidence was seen in the women who do not have college degrees. The organization does not support them with the resources needed to accomplish their tasks. There were challenges in supervising others because of jealousy.

Training is considered an important factor in career advancement (Cannings, 1988, Lewis & Fagenson, 1995). Training is an effective strategy for improving the position of women in management (Fore & Fisher, 1995). Thus training can develop the knowledge, skills, and credibility of women to support their career advancement. Some of the women in this study did receive the training necessary to deal with issues involved as first-line supervisors. They felt that they were not receiving the necessary feedback and coaching to help them to improve their abilities.

Larwood and Wood (1995) posit that communication is important to career advancement and this has not been addressed in training programs. The skills that are necessary for first-line supervisors include planning, team building, motivation, performance evaluation and the building of supervisor’s influence and should be addressed in the organization’s training program (Alpander, 1986). The women in this study have not had training in these categories and have thus created challenges in their work environments.

The organizations do not encourage participation in educational and training programs. The organizations can take a more active approach to career development by promoting opportunities for advancement and encouraging full use of educational and training benefits. Seeking opportunities should be a shared responsibility between the
organization and the supervisor (Noe et al., 1994). The first-line supervisor faces a multifaceted learning experience. The embedded intergroup theory is displayed here that the organization supports the values of the larger population, and this sends a message of how the organization communicates with minorities (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1990). According to Crandall (1988), organizations must develop an environment that will provide different formal and informal experiences, group sessions, and individual counseling for employees.

Facilitators and Influences in Career Development

The study revealed that the sources of motivation for the women were external to the work environment. The women relied upon their families, the church, and community organizations, such as the Urban League for motivation. Research has shown that influences for African-Americans’ career development and vocational behaviors are the family including the extended family, the church and similar community organizations (Bingham & Ward, 1994; Carter & Cook, 1992). Thus, this study supports previous literature.

The women were found to be primarily motivated by the intrinsic ambition to excel in their jobs. They are committed to the people they serve and found gratification in knowing that their skills are assisting others. The women are committed to the people they supervise and found that working with them is rewarding.

Melamed (1995) found that for a woman to feel successful she must rely on a meritocratic opportunity structure that favors skills, and able and educated individuals. Therefore African-American women gravitate towards large public sector organizations.
Sonnenfeld (1989) suggests that women are more successful in close, noncompetitive organizations, such as having a narrow product or market domains that prioritize retention, continuity, and reliability. The women in this study reflect these characteristics and most have been employed with the public sector for over fifteen years.

The women have a need for challenging and interesting work. This need was motivating the need for promotion or financial rewards. These motivational factors displayed by the women are intrinsic and are defined as the “extent to which workers are motivated for reasons other than financial rewards” (Lawler, 1973, p. 50). The women have a passion for helping the people who seek their services. They are cognizant of the discrimination and injustices of society and are tenacious in alleviating some of these injustices. The results showed that the women still found their jobs interesting and challenging, and were willing to remain in their current job roles.

The women agreed that they had some mentor-type relationships that facilitated their careers. The literature suggests there is a lack of mentors for African-American women because their numbers are still few in management positions (Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990). According to Howard-Vital (1993), mentors tend to select protégés who are of the same gender and who share with themselves a number of social and cultural attributes or backgrounds such as race, ethnicity, religion, and social class.

The literature suggests that mentoring relationships are needed for the successful advancement of women in organizations (Ragins, 1989; Fagenson, 1993). The literature also suggests that same gender and same race mentoring is more effective than cross-gender and cross-race mentoring (Thomas, 1989). When race and gender factors are
considered, a different set of consequences often emerged. It has also been found that
cross-race relationships take longer to initiate, are more likely to end in an unfriendly
fashion, and provide less psycho-social support than same race relationships (Thomas,
1989). One of the dilemmas for African-American women is that there are few of them
in management (Ragins, 1989). Therefore, African-American women experience taboos
across gender and race, and cross-race mentoring relationships are the most difficult to
sustain (Thomas, 1989).

The women in study had white male mentors, white female mentors, African-
American male mentors, and African-American female mentors. The women spoke
highly of their cross-gender and cross-race mentoring experiences. They described their
experiences as rewarding and fulfilling. However, the women who had same-race and
same-gender mentoring experiences felt a tremendous amount of attachment, trust, and
acceptance in the relationships. Even though they had positive experiences with cross-
race mentoring there was a lack of trust that was felt by both the mentor and the mentee.
Thomas (1989) found that white mentors who had more progressive views on race
relations saw the need to market black mentees differently than white ones. The white
mentors believed that they had to increase the exposure the minority mentee at the next
level prior to submitting her for promotion in order to break down what they perceived be
race-induced anxiety felt by other whites concerning the minority’s manager’s ability to
perform and manage white employees.

The women employed strategies to cope with challenges they faced in their career
development. Previous research suggests that African-American women employ distinct
and various coping strategies than whites (Ramseur, 1989). Gibson (1982) posits that African-Americans use multiple informal helpers in their social networks and more flexible responses to stress. Studies also show that African-Americans use prayer as a coping strategies (Ramseur, 1989). Barbarian (1983) found that African-Americans have a great connection to religion. Barbarian (1983) suggests that faith allows African-Americans to appraise a situation, assess circumstances with optimism, and that the church community expands the person’s social network, and that prayer is an effective and widely used coping strategy within the African-American community. This study supports the literature, as the women in this study were intimately involved with the church. They offered that when faced with challenges that they cannot directly correct, they say a prayer and leave it to God.

Evans and Herr (1991) posit that African-American women have developed a coping system to survive the effects of discrimination in the workplace. A factor of that coping system is the avoidance of potentially harmful working environments. Therefore, African-American women have avoided careers and organizations where they anticipate discrimination against them because of their gender and race. The women in this study have elected to work and remain working with a state agency. They felt that they were more secure and treated more fairly in this organization. They felt less pressure and discrimination than with the private sector.

Another coping factor postulated by Evans and Herr (1991) is the process of lowing or altering career goals. The identification of goals is affected by the attainment possibility. As African-American women assess their opportunity structure in a specified
area, they may modify goals to avoid prejudice, and discrimination. The women in this study claimed satisfaction with their level of achievement and career development. Some experienced hostility and disappointments when they became first-line supervisors and do not wish for higher management opportunities. Others recognized the formidable task of achieving higher management status and have mentally prepared themselves to remain at their current level of management.

**Success**

Success no longer commensurates with the number of promotions employees attain (Simosen, 1997). Thus success needs to be defined differently by the individual and acted upon by her values and needs (Simosen, 1997). According to Simosen (1997), success may mean a balanced lifestyle with enough income for basic comfort. For others, it may mean acclaim, or at least peer recognition for one’s expertise. For still others, success is achieving and maintaining a high level of accomplishment. For many, success is a sense of control of their destiny. Therefore, success means different things for different people and has replaced the consistent expectation that everyone will move up.

The women in this study perceive themselves as successful and believe that they are maintaining some level of success. For them, success is being content with who they are. All except one of the women are satisfied with their career development and the positions they hold in the organization. Some of the women defined success as achieving the goals they have set for themselves. They believed that they are have achieved most of these goals. The women discussed that they feel successful because of the contributions
they are making to the agencies. They feel successful because of the difference they are making in the lives of their employees.

Derr (1986) defines success as being able to achieve the subjective and personal values one believes in and to make a contribution to a job. The women in this study feel successful because they have established a balance between their work, family, and community endeavors. Many feel supported and appreciated by their families, co-workers, and supervisors. Their independent contributions are being recognized by their organizations and some have received awards for their efforts. They feel that are participating in some of the decisions that affect their lives. They are planning for future success or maintaining their success by honing their skills through the appropriate training and development programs. They are also prepared to keep abreast of the changes in policies and technology in the workplace. This suggests that the women are ambitious and are preparing for future responsibility.

The women state that being African-American has made them more assiduous, more determined and better prepared than their white counterparts. Their ethnicity has made them appreciative of self and their environment. The have developed a sense of fortitude that protects them against the negativity they face in their environments. The women in this study have displayed a degree of strength and determination in their career development. Although they have experienced disappointment at opportunities for advancement, they remained resolute in their goals. They are dedicated and committed workers to their clients, employees, and to their organization.
This section discussed the findings in relation to the research questions. It highlighted the significance of the findings to the career development of African-American women and related them to the relevant literature. The implications for human resource development will be discussed in the next section.

Implications for Theory and Practice

This study has implications for human resource development research and practice. In terms of human resource development theory, this study has demonstrated that for African-American women contemplating managerial status there are key elements of which to be aware. First, the career development of African-American women does occur in at least five identifiable stages. These stages demonstrate the importance of the intertwining of the women's personal and professional lives. Events and circumstances in their personal lives affect their place in their careers.

Important to each stage is the role of self-reflection. Self-reflection is the glue that holds their career stages together. They use self-reflection to decide what to do, to examine their now, and contemplate their future. Self-reflection is utilized as a tool to learn from their past and write up the goals and objectives. Self-reflection offers critical analysis of one’s self image therefore important decisions as to whether one should advance or remain in their current position and/or organization.

The model is useful because it helps management to understand the African-American woman's experience on it's own term. It provides an explanation of their career mobility, and the challenges and constraints they face in organization. The model sheds
light on how the organization may influence the career development of African-Americans women and the coping strategies of the effect race and gender.

The model is also important to the theoretical base of gender, race, and management. African-American women who work in public organizations and perceive that minorities are treated fairly and equitably will have decreased sensitivity to race and gender issues. The model shows that while the women are very aware of their race and the effects of racism they are more apt to concentrate on non-race related issues or skills and competence.

In terms of human resource development practice, the criteria that which supports individuals of different backgrounds may need different means to help them in their career development progress if they chose to. For instance, if a group of African-American women are attending a training class, this model could assist human resource development practitioners structure their programs to address the trepidation these women endure when contemplating changes.

This model is important because it presents how important it is for organizations to recognize that achieving one’s career goals and success is defined differently by each individual. An individual might find that she enjoys and is satisfied with a non-managerial position and excels in that position. Organizations should not promote an individual solely on her performance but her expectations should be considered. If not, it is conceivable that the individual could be promoted to her level of incompetence. Thus organizations would be able to identify and develop deserving women. The next section will make recommendations for future research.
Recommendations for Future Research

It is clear that additional research is required to clarify the concerns of African-American first-line supervisors. Research is needed to address the African-American experiences and career development that will help us understand the different experiences of women in various aspects of management. I therefore propose a research agenda that will expound on the career development of first-line supervisors. I recommend that this study be expanded to explore different questions.

Career Development

• Are the career development stages for African-American women, white women and other minority groups similar?

• Are the career development processes different for private sector, public sector and non-profits?

• How are the career development experiences different for women at the first-, mid-, and senior-level of management in the organizations?

• Are the career development experiences of African-Americans different in public sector organizations versus private sector organizations?

Gender and Race in Organizations

• Are the career development experiences of male first-line supervisors different from female first-line supervisors?
• Are there gender differences in attitudes of white male employees toward female supervisors?

• Are there racial difference in the attitudes of African-American woman managers toward male employees?

• Are there gender differences in attitudes of African-American woman managers toward her employees?

    **Human Resource Development**

• What career development programs are successful in facilitating the career development of minorities? Women?

• What organization culture supports career development programs?

• What measures are used to evaluate the career development programs?

    **Conclusion**

This study extends the current knowledge about the career development process of African-American women in the organization. This study benefits human resource development practice, as we better understand how to attract and retain women. Such information is valuable to researchers, student, counselors, and practitioners alike in the quest to develop qualified employees.
Appendix A
Proposal
Proposal and Timeline

A Qualitative Inquiry into the Career Development Process of African-American Women serving as First-Line Supervisors

Michele Cushnie
June 3, 1998
Statement of the Problem

The career development process is critical to the success of organizations. The implicit assumption is that career development models are generalized across gender and race. Research shows women experience career development differently from men (Rose & Larwood, 1988). Consequently, models of career development do not sufficiently address the realities and process of women’s careers.

African-American women are becoming more prevalent in organizations, most notably at the first-line supervisory levels (US Department of Labor, 1991). The increase in the number of African-American women in managerial roles is often perceived as good by presenting new opportunities and challenges (Cox & Blake, 1991). Research suggests that a person engages in career development activities based on their experience. In particular, African-American women’s career development process may differ from others and that race and gender may account for some of these differences (Diamond, 1987; Marshall, 1994; Betters-Reed & Moore, 1995).

The career development process can be fundamentally distinct for each employee. Because of their unique background and views, African-American women could be perceived to view their career development process differently than their white counterparts. More needs to be known about the career development process of African-American women who are first-line supervisors, because knowing this will help organizations and researchers develop appropriate theory, research and intervention.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe the career development process of African-American women who are first-line supervisors. Specifically, the research questions are:

1. What is the career path that led to the current position?
2. What are the stages of career development used by African-American women?
3. What are the challenges and limitations to achievement?
4. What are the influences on the career development process?
5. What are the measures of success in African-American women’s career?

Methodology

The participants in the study will consist of twelve African-American women who are currently employed in state agencies. The researcher will also require data from the organization on the tenure, gender and race of the employees of the organization.

The researcher chose a descriptive case study using qualitative techniques. The main data-gathering tool that the researcher will utilize is face-to-face interviews. This will require the researcher traveling to the participants work sites in different cities of Ohio. Each interview will be tape-recorded and transcribed with the permission of the interviewee and will range from one to two hours. The researcher will also observe the interviewee’s workplace, their colleagues, and behaviors. The researcher will observe their interaction with others, their expressions to questions and their reactions to problems. Notes will be taken during the interviews and observation to note the environment, the interaction of the interviewees with others, their attitudes at work, their
mannerisms well as the researcher’s hunches and reflections. The field notes will be used to confirm or disconfirm primary sources of data.

**Time-line**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Task Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 1998</td>
<td>Schedule meetings with participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 3, 1999 – March 1, 1999</td>
<td>Conduct interviews with participants depending on their schedules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1999</td>
<td>Complete transcription of tapes and send copies to participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1999</td>
<td>Complete dissertation and send copies to participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
September 8, 1998

Columbus, OH 43328

Dear:

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for my study on African-American women who serve as first-line supervisors.

The interview will focus on your perceptions, motivations, barriers, facilitators of career development. As you undoubtedly realize, we know very little about the career development experience of African-American women. With your participation, along with the involvement of other African-American women supervisors I should be able to glean new insights into the experience of African-American women. The knowledge will be helpful to ourselves and women following similar paths.

I hope to start interviewing by mid-October. Please be prepared to allocate at least two hours for our first meeting. I will contact you as soon as I have clearance from my committee and the university.

Sincerely,

Michele Cushnie
Ph.D. Candidate
The Ohio State University
Appendix C
Release Form
RESEARCH PROJECT RELEASE FORM

I hereby grant permission to Michele Cushnie to use the information provided to her through observations, interviews, document analysis, and audio tapes for a research study being conducted in conjunction with her dissertation research regarding career development, especially in the area of experiences of first-line supervisors.

I reserve the right to, at any time, discontinue involvement, withdraw endorsement and restrict our limit the use of data gathered to that point.

I understand anonymity will be granted for me and my organization.

I understand the written research will be shown to me before being printed in dissertation form.

I understand that I may review the project at any time and will have access to a finished copy of the dissertation.

I understand that the interview will be audio-taped, and the tapes will be destroyed by Michele Cushnie or given to me.

__________________________________________  ____________________________
Michele Cushnie                                     Ronald Jacobs
Ph.D. Candidate                                    Associate Professor
Human Resource Development                        Human Resource Development
The Ohio State University                          The Ohio State University
614-292-5037                                       614-292-5037

__________________________________________  ____________________________
Signature                                      Date
Appendix D
Interview Guide
Research Questions

1. What is the career path that led to current position?
2. What are the stages of career development used by African-American women?
3. What are the challenges and limitations to achievement?
4. What are the influences on the career development process?
5. What are the measures of success in African-American women’s career?

Questions

1. Give a brief history of your career (mobility) b. Within the organization
2. What was your first job? What did you learn from it?
3. How did you get there to here? (qualifications)
4. What do you consider to be the most important aspect in your career progression?
5. What challenges did you face in the progression?
6. Describe your present position?
7. How would your colleagues describe you?
8. How would your subordinates describe you?
9. How would you describe yourself?
10. What information did you use to move from first job to here?
11. Where did you get your information?
12. What information was not useful to you? Most useful?
13. Who has taught you the most during your career?
23. What were your interests, values, thoughts at that time?

24. Is your interest the same today?

25. If not, what prompted you to change? If no, what prompted you to remain the same?

26. Where did you go from there?

22. What happened next?

27. Where did you get the information about your career interest, jobs (friends, family members, co-workers)?

28. How did you acquire the skills and knowledge?

29. Are you experiencing growth and some level of job security in the organization (career)?

30. Do you feel that your independent contributions are important to the success of the organization?

31. How has your relationship to other employees changed over time (apprentice, colleague, mentor)?

32. Are you interested in keeping your skills up to date? How do plan to do it?

33. Are you involved in any special projects outside of your area?

34. Are your opinions solicited concerning work process, problems, other issues?

35. What factors acted as barriers for you getting this far in the organization?

36. How have you dealt with them?

37. Have you encountered a situation in which you were discriminated because of your gender/race?

38. How do other women treat you? Men?

39. How does your superior treat you? Subordinates?

40. What/Who helped you to get to where you are today?

41. Have you had a mentor? Who was your mentor (gender)? Were you satisfied with the mentoring? How have these relationships affected your career?
42. What strategies do you use to overcome barriers?

43. How as being an African-American woman helped you?

44. What kind of relationship do you have with your supervisor?

45. What level of support have you received from your subordinates?

46. What level of support do you receive from your superior?

47. What motivates you on your job?

48. Are they the same factors that motivated you in the past?

49. How have things changed?

50. What has helped?

51. Who has helped?

52. What formal learning activities did the organization use to assist you in reaching this position?

53. What informal learning activities did the company use to assist you in reaching this position?

54. Of the formal and informal activities, which did you prefer and why?

55. Does the company need to do more or less of the other?

56. What formal learning activities did the company use once you achieved this present position?

57. What informal activities did they use?

58. What advice do you have for your company to improve it’s career development program?

59. Are you where you want to be in your career?

60. How do you define success?

61. Do you consider yourself successful?

62. How do you measure your success?
Appendix E
Demographic Information
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

I am examining the career development experiences of African-American women who serve as first-line supervisors in this organization. Will you please take a few minutes to complete the following questions:

1. Age: ________________

2. Martial Status:
   Single, never married ________________
   Single, sharing household ________________
   Married ________________
   Separated ________________
   Divorced ________________

3. Number of Dependents and ages:
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

4. What is your highest level of education?
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

5. If completed college, what was your major area of focus?
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

6. What is your current position?
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

7. What is your annual salary?
   $10,000-$20,000 ________________
   $21,000-$40,000 ________________
   $41,000-$60,000 ________________
   Above $60,000 ________________

8. How long have you been in your current position?
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
9. What was your previous position?

10. How long did you work before in that position before being promoted to supervisor?

11. How many people do you currently supervise?
Appendix F
Timeline
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 3, 1998</td>
<td>Acceptance of research proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 5, 1999</td>
<td>Approval from Human Subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1999</td>
<td>Schedule interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1999</td>
<td>Begin interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1999</td>
<td>Complete interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1999 to May 1999</td>
<td>Transcribe interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1999</td>
<td>Verify interview transcripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1999</td>
<td>Begin coding and analysis of data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1999 to August 1999</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1999 to October 1999</td>
<td>Writing up of data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1999</td>
<td>Dissertation Defense</td>
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</table>
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