

SPORT MANAGEMENT

Black Coaches and Their Perspectives on the Black Coaches and Administrators: A Qualitative Analysis

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyze Black male collegiate coaches' understandings and perspectives about building a coaching career in NCAA Division I athletics and the function of the Black Coaches and Administrators (BCA) as a mechanism to help facilitate more coaching opportunities. The participants were seven Black male assistant coaches from a flagship doctorate-granting university in the Midwest region of the United States. The research method was descriptive–qualitative. The primary data sources were face-to-face semistructured taped interviews and e-mail follow-ups. The data were analyzed using a descriptive coding strategy, which exposed the dominant theme of networking mechanism. The major findings in this study indicate that because they lack social capital resources, minority candidates are at a disadvantage compared to their White counterparts for attaining jobs and career advancement in NCAA Division I athletics. Implications from the findings of this

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study are that networking is critical to career advancement in athletics and that Black coaches should better understand the function of the BCA and how the association might support their career and advancement.

Statistically speaking, for the 2009–2010 academic year, the percentage of Black male head coaches at the Division I level was 6.6% and for assistant coaches 17.4% (Lapchick, 2012). This is important to recognize because Division I coaching represents the highest level of intercollegiate athletics in the United States (National Collegiate Athletic Association [NCAA], 2013). Moreover, the student-athlete population in Division I athletics contains an abundance of Black males who could continue their respective careers in athletics as coaches.

The most recent “Racial and Gender Report Card” by the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport indicates a decline in the percentage of Black males compared to the 2007–2008 season when Black males accounted for 7.2% of the head coaches at the Division I level (Lapchick, 2012). During the 2008–2009 academic year, Black males also accounted for 16.7% of the assistant coaches at the Division I level. Yet unlike head coaching trends, the percentages remained consistent compared to 2007–2008 as Black males accounted for 16.5% of the percentage of assistant coaches at the Division I level. The sports of basketball and football have shown the highest participation of Black males as assistant coaches compared to other sports. For basketball during the 2008–2009 academic year, Black males accounted for 39.5% of the assistant coaches (Lapchick, 2012). In comparison, 39.3% of assistant coaches during the 2007–2008 academic year were Black. For football at the Division I Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) level, Black males accounted for 17.6% of the assistant coaches during the 2008–2009 academic year. However, this percentage declined compared to 2007–2008, when 23.8% of the assistant football coaches at the Division I FBS level were Black males. Finally, the statistics show that of the 414 head coaching openings at the Division I FBS level (football) since 1982, only 4.8% have been filled by a Black coach (Lapchick, 2012). Furthermore, Black coaches of basketball represent only one quarter of the coaches in Division I (Lapchick, 2012).

NCAA Ethnicity and Gender Demographics

The NCAA (2010) research compiled in the “NCAA Race and Gender Demographics” report excludes HBCUs (historically black colleges and universities) and portrays a similar interpretation of the percentages concerning Black coaches in Division I athletics. Lapchick (2012) focused on 2-year intervals in the reporting of percentages, whereas the NCAA report was focused on a 10-year interval for comparison of percentages.

Within the statistics compiled in the “NCAA Race and Gender Demographics” report, the percentage of Black male head coaches at the Division I level in 2009–2010 was 6.7% (NCAA, 2010). In the NCAA research statistics, the percentage of Black head coaches in the 2009–2010 season was 9.1% of the head coaches at the Division I level. These figures are similar in Lapchick’s (2012) study and showcase a decrease in Black head coaches over 10 years. During the 2009–2010 academic year, Blacks accounted for 19.2% of the assistant coaches at the Division I level (NCAA, 2010). Unlike the percentages presented by Lapchick (2012), the percentages presented by the NCAA (2010) are on the rise compared to past years, such as in 2009–2010, when Blacks accounted for 17.2% of the assistant coaches at the Division I level.

However, within the Lapchick (2012) study, the following figures are on the decline in comparison, but the NCAA study shows these percentages are in favor of an increase in the percentage of Black male and female coaches in Division I athletics. During the 2009–2010 season, Black head coaches accounted for 25.2% of the coaches in Division I basketball (NCAA, 2010). In comparison to the 2009–2010 season, the percentage of Black head coaches increased to 22.2%. During the 2009–2010 academic year, Blacks accounted for 19.2% of the assistant coaches. The percentage was up in comparison with the 1995–1996 academic year, when 17.2% of the assistant coaches were Black. For Division IA football, Blacks accounted for 26.6% of the assistant coaches. Once again, the percentage increased compared to 2009–2010, when 21.7% of the assistant football coaches at the Division IA level were Black.

Collectively, this information indicates additional research is needed to ascertain and interpret the perspectives of Black males seeking to become head coaches at the Division I level. Thus, the

purpose of this study was to analyze Black male collegiate coaches' understandings and perspectives about building a coaching career in Division I athletics and the function of the Black Coaches and Administrators (BCA) as a mechanism to help facilitate more coaching opportunities. In this study, we sought to ascertain and analyze the perspectives of Black male coaches about the BCA, particularly in regard to their career aspirations, through semistructured interviews of seven Black assistant coaches in what should be described as a descriptive–qualitative approach.

Black Coaches and Administrators

The BCA (2013) was created in 1987 as an organization “committed to creating a positive enlightened environment where issues can be examined closely, debated sincerely and resolved honestly” (para. 1). The current BCA mission statement is

to address significant issues pertaining to the participation and employment of ethnic minorities in sport in general and intercollegiate athletics in particular. To assist ethnic minorities aspiring to have a career in athletics through educational and professional development programming and scholarships. To provide youth and diverse communities the opportunity to interact positively with the BCA as a corporate citizen and community builder through a variety of alliances. (BCA, 2013, para. 1)

The organization has been at “the forefront of the effort to enhance the employment opportunities and professional development of the ethnic minority professional” (BCA, 2013, para. 2). The BCA was created to serve as a nationwide networking entity for Blacks to increase the opportunities for coaching at all levels of athletics. The BCA also serves as a professional training and preparation resource for Blacks interested in the coaching profession. The BCA operates as a private nonprofit organization operating for the benefit of enhancing the opportunities for qualified Black coaches in athletics (BCA, 2013).

The BCA has pledged within its mission to serve as a social capital alternative to the current system for minority coaches seeking to increase and improve their opportunities for finding jobs and career

advancement. *Social capital* is the term used to describe the value of networking relationships toward finding jobs and advancing careers (Fernandez & Weinberg, 1997; Granovetter, 1973; Lin, 2001). The effect of progressively enhancing social capital has a direct correlation toward pre- and posthiring outcomes (Burt, 1992; Castilla, 2005; Kanter, 1977; Kmec, 2007; Lin, 2001; Marsden & Gorman, 2001). Overall, minority candidates have a distinct disadvantage in regard to securing jobs and career advancement, although their performance has been higher rated than their White counterparts (Ibarra, 1995; S. Smith, 2000).

The process of inequity toward minorities uses a multipronged approach. For example, the established network initially serves as a database of available opportunities in the marketplace. Next, the network positively influences decision makers in the marketplace to influence hiring. Last, the network invokes confidence on behalf of their members toward attaining the end goal, which is job attainment (Lin, 2001). Overall, a lack of social capital has been linked to the disadvantage Black males experience, for they are outside of the in-group. Members of the out-group (e.g., Black male coaches) have been unable to compete with the in-group because of a general lack of access to social capital resources (Lin, 2001). The BCA as an organization seeks to serve as a social capital network for minority coaching candidates as they seek to advance their careers in athletics. The influence of the BCA toward establishing a network for jobs and career advancement is a fundamental premise of the organization and a means of leveling the playing field for minority candidates as they seek to compete for job opportunities (BCA, 2013).

The BCA's charge is to serve as a social capital mechanism for minority candidates as researchers have examined the dearth of Black coaches retaining and matriculating in collegiate athletics compared to their White counterparts (Anderson, 1993; Sagas & Cunningham, 2005). Social capital has been regarded as a factor in many aspects of collegiate athletics, most notably football (R. Smith, 1983; R. Smith & Abbott, 1983). Researchers have linked a positive correlation of access to social capital to job attainment and career advancement because of the value of relationships (Cunningham & Sagas, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2005; Sagas & Cunningham, 2004, 2005). The existence of social capital serves as a major effect on the hiring of col-

legiate coaches, but the true ability of the network to be resourceful affects the effectiveness of the in-groups (Lin, 2001).

Prominent scholar George Sage (2007) stated,

The higher the levels in an organization of all kinds, where the greatest power, prestige, and material rewards reside, are more insulated from direct scrutiny, so those who control access to higher levels tend to employ subtle strategies of maintaining discriminatory practices. (p. 1)

Racial and ethnic minorities who choose to access executive positions are left out of the in-group because they lack the social capital necessary to compete on a level playing field (Sage, 2007). Chelladurai (2006) believes in a similar phenomenon of social capital, arguing the in-group to the out-group comparison is relevant because the cost of hiring new employees is expensive and the importance of personal connections toward the crucial role within the hiring process. This in-group has also been noted by scholars as the “old boys’ network,” which is a community of social capitalism in which racial minorities are kept out of positions that have been held by White males (Chelladurai, 2006; Shropshire, 1996).

Method

Sampling and Participants

Criterion sampling was used for this study (Patton, 1990). The criteria used for selecting participants were those who were (a) male, (b) Black, and (c) employed by a Division I athletic program as an assistant coach at a doctorate-granting university (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2008). The participants were seven Black assistant coaches purposefully selected from a nationally recognized Division I men’s athletic program. The athletic department’s official Internet site was used to gather contact information about the Black male coaches at this institution. A university located in a large metropolitan area was chosen and for purposes of this study was referred to as Champion University. At the time of this study, the athletic department employed seven Black coaches in the head or assistant coach capacity (one head coach, seven assistant coaches). This athletic department was chosen because of the signifi-

cant number of Black assistant coaches employed in it. A decision was made to include assistant coaches only in the study because they represent the largest number of Black coaches ($n = 7$) compared to head coaches ($n = 1$) at this institution.

In the sample, the representation of assistant coaches from revenue- ($n = 4$) and nonrevenue-producing ($n = 3$) sports was fairly equal. The demographic information of the participants is detailed in Table 1, including whether a participant coached a revenue- (football or basketball) or nonrevenue-producing sport (men’s track, women’s track, or fencing), age, and number of years coaching. Pseudonyms were used for participants (i.e., Williams, Smith, Green, Brown, Jones, Harris, and Thomas) as well as for all colleges and universities mentioned in the study. The lead researcher obtained approval from the Office of Responsible Research Practices of the university under study to conduct this study, and before the data collection process was initiated, each participant signed an informed consent form.

Table 1
Participant Demographic Information

Name	Age	Years	Sport (Revenue/Nonrevenue)
Coach Williams	29	9	Fencing (Nonrevenue-producing sport)
Coach Smith	52	30	Track/Field (Nonrevenue-producing sport)
Coach Green	38	16	Track/Field (Nonrevenue-producing sport)
Coach Brown	36	14	Football (Revenue-producing sport)
Coach Jones	38	16	Basketball (Revenue-producing sport)
Coach Harris	39	17	Football (Revenue-producing sport)
Coach Thomas	36	14	Football (Revenue-producing sport)

Note. Years = number of years coaching sports.

Descriptive Qualitative Research

We followed a descriptive–qualitative methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) with an interviewing approach (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Gay, 1996). According to Gay (1996), “Interview studies have a unique purpose, that is, to ascertain data not obtainable in any other way” (p. 223). Certain things simply cannot be observed, including past events (e.g., a coach’s previous experiences working with collegiate athletes), events that occur outside of the researcher’s sphere of observation (e.g., a coach’s reflection on and recall of past events), and mental processes (e.g., a coach’s perspectives about his or her career aspirations). Typically in descriptive–qualitative studies open-ended interviews are used (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Gay, 1996). We used open-ended interviews that involved individual, face-to-face verbal interchange with the coaches. Interviewing was an excellent medium for the coaches to reflect on and speak about specific situations and to share their perspectives about the BCA.

Data Collection

Prior to the taping of the initial interviews, we collected demographic information from the participants. From this point, the one-on-one semistructured interviews were completed by the lead researcher, audiotaped, and transcribed in depth with each participant. During the study, each participant participated in an information session and two interview sessions. In this phase of the study, demographic data were collected from each participant during an informal information session. The information session entailed dialogue with each participant about the purpose of the study and the exchange of the interview guide and instructions about the first interview session.

A funnel approach was chosen as the format for the face-to-face semistructured interview sessions. These interviews were audiotaped and conducted in the coaches’ office or a reserved conference room within the athletic department at Champion University. The funnel approach is a format for greeting the participant and gaining comfort and resolve within the interview session (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The funnel approach was chosen because it allows the researcher flexibility in the interview. The approach also allowed for the researcher to find the root of the topic without interrupting the

flow of the dialogue. Furthermore, the funnel approach served this study well because it allowed the participants and lead researcher to commence dialogue unique to the study and flow of the conversation. These interviews lasted approximately 45 min to 1 hr depending on the fullness of the coaches' responses to the interview questions. Each interview had a different and dynamic dialogue, which went a long way to obtaining data from the participants.

To avoid narrowing the viewpoint of the participants, open-ended questions were used to allow the participants a broad foundation during the dialogue. From this perspective, the interview questions allowed the lead researcher the autonomy to choose which topics or areas may have needed increased information (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). To properly format the interview guide, the lead researcher focused more on the questions he felt were of major importance than the other questions, which were used to build comfort between the participants and the lead researcher. This process occurred prior to each interview in an attempt to prepare for the session properly as well as review and update the lead researcher's personal reflective journal.

For this study, a digital recorder was used. The digital recorder was a valuable tool for interview conversations and played a pivotal role in the documentation of the real-time dialogue of the interview (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The lead researcher made sure his taking of notes did not interrupt the flow of the dialogue. In an effort to comply with the trustworthiness provisions in the research study, careful documentation of notes was chronicled along with the interview transcriptions. The follow-up was conducted via e-mail (McCoyd & Kerson, 2006). For the follow-up, the participants were sent additional questions based on their responses from the first interview and asked to respond. The participants were given 2 weeks to respond to the questions from the e-mail follow-up.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involved coding and synthesizing of the data to look for exposed or reoccurring themes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Specifically, after the interviews were transcribed, the coding aspect of the study commenced as we sought to use a generative coding approach to identify themes from the data. Descriptive coding was the format of organizing the data into groups or segments for clas-

sification (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Using the descriptive coding strategy, we analyzed each transcription first for groups of common trends. First, each interview transcription was uploaded into a software program called N6 (formerly known as NU*DIST) and properly formatted and analyzed electronically from codes generated through the preexisting data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). As the codes were created, recurrent trends were also uncovered and reintroduced as codes to be included (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Moreover, the lead researcher used the reflective journaling notes to refine the trends before proceeding to the final step of synthesizing the trends, which generated a major recurrent theme.

Results

Description of Coaches

Each coach came from a unique and different background. Coach Williams was a member of the International Olympic fencing program and an alternate for the 2000 games in Sydney, Australia. Coach Williams started out as a fencing instructor at the high school level in Missouri for 2 years prior to beginning his career for the past 7 years at Champion University. Coach Williams' experience is with the saber weapon in fencing. Coach Williams recently left the collegiate coaching ranks and currently works as a fencing instructor within a large urban school district in the southeastern United States.

Coach Smith is a former student assistant coach with the St. Jordan University track and field team, from which many of his male athletes competed in the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games. Coach Smith has worked as the men's national track and field coach for many nations such as Tanzania, Kenya, and Ghana. Coach Smith is a 30-year veteran of "distance" track and field programs. Coach Smith is the former men's head coach of the University of Bryant, the Kennedy Institute of Tech, and the University of Southern Garnett. Currently, Coach Smith is employed as the assistant coach for women's track and field, specializing in distance events, for Champion University.

Coach Green started his career as a graduate assistant coach with the men's track and field program at Allen State University. Coach Green's specialty is sprints and hurdles. Coach Green spent the past

10 years with Pierce University working with their men's track and field program. Currently, Coach Green is the associate head coach for the men's track and field program at Champion University.

Coach Brown is a former Division III football all-American linebacker for Duncan University. Coach Brown started his career at Duncan as the defensive line coach. Coach Brown spent 6 years with Parker University as the defensive coordinator. Currently, Coach Brown is the assistant coach, specializing in cornerbacks, at Champion University.

Coach Jones started his coaching career as an assistant basketball coach for Division III Jackson University. Afterwards, Coach Brown spent 5 years at the University of Popovich and 3 years at Tomjanovich University working as an assistant coach. Currently, Coach Jones is the assistant men's basketball coach at Champion University.

Coach Harris began his career as the offensive coordinator for Division III Phippen College. Coach Harris has worked for the University of Grant (3 years), Western Rodman University (2 years), Laurence O'Brien University (2 years), West Unseld University (2 years), and Chamberlain University (3 years). Coach Harris has extensive experience coaching football on the offensive side of the ball, as he has worked with running backs, receivers, and tight ends. Coach Harris is currently the assistant head coach and wide receivers coach at Champion University.

Coach Thomas began his coaching career as a graduate assistant for football with Ewing University. Since then, Coach Thomas has coached with Starks-Oakley College as their quality control coach as well as Riley University and the University of Shaquille as their secondary coach. Currently, Coach Thomas is the safeties coach for Champion University.

Emergent Theme: Networking Mechanisms

The coaches in this study have different opinions on the effectiveness of networking and the proper means of developing and sustaining professional relationships. The theme that emerged from the results was labeled networking mechanisms, which describes how the management or mismanagement of networking in sports is personal and plays a role in the success of those who choose to participate. This theme exposes how networking and potential strategies

and resources available to Black coaches in Division I athletics have become necessary networking mechanisms.

A reoccurring conversation among the coaches revolved around the effectiveness of the Black Coaches and Administrators (BCA). The BCA is at the forefront of networking for Black professionals within collegiate athletics as a bonding and bridging tool and serves as the epicenter for communication and resources pertaining to Black and other ethnic minority coaches in intercollegiate athletics (BCA, 2013). Many coaches had opinions pertaining to the ideal of networking and the effect the BCA has on the career trajectory of Black coaches in Division I athletics.

Coach Williams “believes the BCA [is] about encouragement and networking opportunities.” However, he wishes the BCA “was more about paying your dues and [understanding] the importance of patience” (Initial Interview). Coach Williams would like the BCA to be a teaching mechanism for how to succeed in Division I coaching. When prompted for more details on his viewpoint during the e-mail follow-up, Coach Williams stated, “I am more interested in training strategies than networking; social events are not really what I care about” (E-Mail Follow-Up). Coach Thomas had similar sentiments as Coach Williams on the current purpose of the BCA. Coach Thomas believes the BCA serves as an arena to “meet the right people by allowing Black coaches [the avenue] to increase their networks and contacts with ADs [athletic directors]” (Initial Interview). Coach Thomas continued and said, “The BCA does not have enough influence to secure jobs for its constituents” (E-Mail Follow-Up).

Coach Jones believes the BCA has the potential to be the instrument for networking in college athletics. Coach Jones would like for the BCA to “gather information about the hiring practices and priorities of each institution and their respective job searches, this information would be invaluable for Black coaches competing in the national market” (Initial Interview). Coach Jones added, “It would be nice if the BCA could build in-roads and relationships with the institutions in order to aid in the placement of minority coaches, because currently we are lacking” (E-Mail Follow-Up).

Coach Harris had similar sentiments as Coach Jones and believes “the BCA is a bank of resources for Black coaches by storing résumés and contact information for potential jobs” (Initial Interview).

However, Coach Harris continued, "The BCA has not done enough to bridge the gap between what the White networks are doing and what we are doing" (E-Mail Follow-Up). Coaches Williams, Thomas, Jones, and Harris appear to have a basic understanding of the purpose of the BCA. Although each coach has a concrete understanding, they wish the organization would operate differently as a means of being more efficient and effective.

Coach Smith believes the BCA is not a true instrument for networking because the system is flawed. According to Coach Smith, "The BCA needs to reach out more to nonrevenue coaches [because] until I read the website, I had no idea they were for all coaches and not just football" (Initial Interview). Coach Smith asserted, "The BCA needs to do a better job of advertising to the nonrevenue sports" (Initial Interview). Coach Smith would like the BCA to market itself better and take on the role of a true Black network for all sports, not just revenue sports.

Coach Smith was prompted to expand upon his insights for networking during the e-mail follow-up interview. He stated he "wanted the BCA to become a true instrument for not only Black coaches in America but also bridge the gap between coaches in America and their counterparts in the many nations of Africa" (E-Mail Follow-Up). Coach Smith wants the BCA to be a true Black network and embody the ideals of all coaches, whether they are revenue or non-revenue, domestic or international. Coach Smith believes the only way to combat White hegemony and institutional racism is through the solidarity of Black coaches.

Coach Green and Coach Smith had concerns about the perceived deficiencies of the BCA and networking. Coach Green believes the BCA needs to "be the foundation of nationwide networking for Black coaches in America, to be the [Black equivalent] to the 'good old boys club'" (Initial Interview). Coach Green added during the e-mail follow-up interview, "Blacks do not have a strong network for jobs nationwide." He exclaimed, "BCA has tried unsuccessfully to be that network." "Networking is the key to success in this field," insisted Coach Green (E-Mail Follow-Up). Coach Green's point of emphasis was that by establishing a Black counterpart to the White "good old boys" network, Black coaches could combat White hegemony and institutional racism. Last, Coach Brown represented another improvement for the BCA.

During the initial interview, Coach Brown claimed he had “no intimate knowledge of the BCA, but knows of their efforts.” Nonetheless, Coach Brown offered suggestions for improvements to the effectiveness of networking mechanisms and the BCA by stating, “They could work toward creating a Rooney rule for the NCAA. It helped pro football and could do the same for the nondiverse programs in the NCAA” (Initial Interview). When probed during the e-mail follow-up interview about the “Rooney rule” for the NCAA, Coach Brown stated, “If the Rooney rule is good for the goose [NFL], then it should be good for the gander [NCAA].”

Discussion

In the history of Division I FBS football, there have been 33 Black head coaches (Lapchick, 2012). The statistical percentages show that since 1996, Black coaches have represented 6.3% of coaches in Division I FBS (Harrison & Lawrence, 2003). The numbers indicate a Black coach has been employed as the leader of a Division I FBS football program only on 39 occasions. The major findings in this study likely indicate a reaffirmation of those statistics will continue and networking is critical to the potential career advancement in collegiate athletics for Black coaches. Next, Black coaches should acquire useful understanding of the function of the BCA and how the association may support their career advancement. Within this investigation, networking mechanisms emerged as the dominant theme. The participants had varying viewpoints about the mission statement of the BCA. The inconsistency in their understandings may have led to missed opportunities for networking that may have affected their career trajectory. Coaches Williams, Jones, Harris, and Thomas viewed the BCA as ineffective and inefficient for networking in the field of Division I coaching; however, none of them were members of the BCA. Specifically, Coaches Jones and Harris believe the BCA is meant to be a Black network of resources for potential job searches; however, neither coach has committed to the organization to take full advantage of the resources or opportunities available. Coaches Williams and Thomas have attended events, but similar to Jones and Harris, they have not joined the BCA. Arguably, they have squandered opportunities to enhance their career trajectory by not committing to resources that could have aided them.

Coach Smith spoke about adding an international function to the BCA, whereas Coach Green asserted the BCA is not a successful organization because it has not been the Black equivalent to the White “good old boys” club. Coaches Smith and Green focused their perspectives on aspects of the BCA that were not in line with the mission of the organization. Some of the coaches appear to have expectations of the BCA to be the answer to all issues and concerns for Black coaches in athletics. In that vein, although both Coaches Smith and Green are not members of the BCA, they have expectations of the organization when they do not have vested interests as members likely would. Last, Coach Brown spoke about the limitations of the current national networking system and wanted to switch the entire focus of the BCA in an effort to improve the opportunities for Black coaches. As with the other participants in the study, Coach Brown was not a member of the BCA. Nonetheless, he had a negative opinion about the organization.

Conclusion

Each coach had a slightly different understanding of the purpose of the BCA. This inconsistency is likely due to none of the coaches having intimate knowledge of the BCA via membership. The coaches’ perspectives in the study were merely opinions articulated from an outsider’s viewpoint and thus uninformed at best because of limited access to the organization. Again, the BCA seeks to serve as a mechanism for breaking down the barriers of power, prestige, and material rewards and aid minorities in accessing jobs and career advancement (BCA, 2013). Notably, Putnam (2000) described two forms of social capital (i.e., bonding and bridging). Bonding emerges when a strong homogeneous group is successful at promoting their social exclusion (Clopton & Finch, 2011). Bonding assists group members and their ability to maintain their membership with a group through difficult times/realities by reinforcing a collective group identity of supporting figures (Clopton & Finch, 2011). Bridging, on the other hand, provides opportunities for community members to establish and maintain strong relationships through the creation of connecting branches (Putnam, 2000).

Examples of bridging and bonding occur within the BCA as that association aims to add greatly to the establishment of a shared social capital through interconnectedness. The BCA seeks to serve as

an instrument of social capital networking for minority coaches as they seek employment in NCAA athletics. The effect of social capital networking on the hiring and career advancement of coaches has had a profound effect on the coaching landscape in NCAA athletics as “many football programs are continuing to pitch a shutout when it comes to hiring black coaches, therefore nullifying any semblance of colorblindness” (Forde, 2003, para. 1). The need for social capital resources to compete makes the value of the BCA more important when it comes to the future prospects for minority hiring and career advancement.

Social capital is a resource that could greatly benefit the participants in the study as they seek to build their coaching careers in NCAA Division I athletics. The BCA offers many opportunities for the bridging and bonding of social capital, which was identified as the main inefficiency between the White networks and the networks available to minorities. Proactive action on behalf of the participants toward using available networks such as the BCA could inherently improve the social capital of minority coaches.

Implications

The implication of the emergent theme, networking mechanisms, is Black coaches in Division I athletics need to learn and understand the true nature of the BCA and of other strategies (e.g., networking) available to them for career advancement. Black coaches owe it to themselves to seek out networking opportunities with the BCA and to research the current resources and strategies available to them as professionals in college athletics. Many programs and training sessions are offered at the BCA’s annual convention to ethnic minorities seeking access to coaching jobs and career advancement (BCA, 2013). In the end, it is up to the coaches to use the resources proactively to benefit the advancement of their respective careers.

All of the coaches had either incorrect or incomplete understandings of the BCA and through the interview process learned of the opportunities and strategies available to them. The implication of this finding is most likely more Black coaches around the nation are misinformed about the BCA networking strategies available to them. Knowledge of these strategies and the effect of properly using the BCA as a tool for success could aid in career advancement. The BCA is an instrument of networking, and all Black coaches should

be aware of its purpose and existence so they can make a choice if they want to use the organization for their respective careers.

Limitations

The two major limitations of this study are (a) the participants in the study were from the same institution and (b) none of the participants were active members of the BCA. In regard to the participants being from the same institution, Champion University has one of the largest athletic departments in the nation for Division I athletics and possesses the most diverse athletics staff. The opportunity to conduct a qualitative analysis with seven participants who meet the criteria of the study was seen as risk worth taking. The coaches were not members of the BCA, and as such, they had no connection to the association and therefore no direct knowledge of its functions. Therefore, at best, they could offer only opinions as outsiders to the association, which appeared to be largely uninformed.

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