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Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Black Degrees Matter: A Phenomenological Study of Southern Californians with HBCU  
Bachelors' and Mainstream Institutional Graduate Degrees in California

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
Education in Leadership, Administration and Policy

by

Keyna Kirklen Cobb Boykin

July, 2017

Robert R. Barner, Ph.D.- Dissertation Chairman

This dissertation, written by

Keyna Kirklen Cobb Boykin

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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## DEDICATION

To every person who didn't fit the standard mold, wanted to give up,  
and was repeatedly told they would never accomplish a goal,  
with our Heavenly Father's grace and mercy,  
turned it all around and  
not only achieved their goal but flourished, this is for you.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Being the first in my bloodline to reach this level of education, I humbly acknowledge those that contributed to my success in completing this process. I give all my gratitude to God the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost for showing me perfect leadership, honorable administration and how to properly apply policy to my life.

My parents, Daryl E. Cobb and Jeane Kirklen, I am your legacy and I plan to always strive to be better each day. I live on this Earth, teaching others the righteousness that you taught me.

Dad, as I watched you do what it took to enjoy your days although you suffered from the ALS disease, I now know I can accomplish my dreams and aspirations despite what comes my way since I have watched you do the same. As you have said before, “you only get one life, so live it”, that is exactly what I did, and I will continue to do. May your example live forever with me. Rest well and I miss you already.

Mom, your youthful spirit is what I embody and share with others. I appreciate you consistently telling me to “keep accomplishing my educational goals early in life,” because it truly was better to get most of it done before marriage and children. Thank you very much for the wisdom and guidance that you provided to me, I love you.

This goes to my brothers, Tremayne E. Cobb and Naman V. Cobb, I appreciate the support, patience, and sibling love. I pray our children enjoy their sibling bond as much as we have. And to my Cobb and Kirklen extended family, thank you for being there for me through this entire process.

To my Boykin family in marriage, I thank you for the help, notes, books, gifts, and love during the latter part of my doctoral program. I could not have finished this degree without the support from you, laughs as well as prayers. Thank you, I love you.

Thank you, Brother Ammar Saheli, E.D. and Brother Robert Adams, Ph.D. of the Church of Christ in West Oakland, California for writing my letters of recommendation so that I could enter the doctoral program at Pepperdine University. To my Church of Christ family all over the country, I thank you for teaching me from the cradle about God's plan for us all and showing me how to identify my own spiritual gifts and use them. This is just the beginning, for now, I must go and disciple to the masses.

To the Ladies of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, in which I have been an active member since April 1996, I acknowledge you for teaching me how to use my leadership skills with class, grace, and poise. I admire so many ladies, including my committee member Dr. Jeri-Elayne Goosby Smith, who impresses me every day, who loves to serve others, and continues to break down the barriers and reshape the molds. I appreciate you, thank you for the support and love.

To my professors and staff at Pepperdine University, and committee member, Dr. Linda Purrington who has seen me through the entire process, from my entrance interview to graduation, I cannot thank you enough for holding my hand, letting me go so I can "swim on my own" and being there with open arms for when I returned.

To my committee chairman, Dr. Robert Barner who has shown me that my mind is indeed "brilliant" and to never compromise my integrity to get ahead. I thank you for your long suffering, as I moved at snail's pace to finish. You are an amazing person and your words and teachings will live with me throughout my entire life.

To all my teachers, coaches, and professors during my figure skating days in San Diego, Career Advancement (CA); my K-12 education in Fountain Valley and San Clemente, CA; Paul Quinn College found in Dallas, Texas; and, Howard University found in Washington, District of

Columbia, I thank you for the relationships developed, the touch feedback and the support to reach for something higher than I could have ever fathom as a young girl. I wouldn't have a story to tell or passion to write this without my lived experience, thank you a lot.

My little man, my son, Canaan Eugene Boykin who keeps my heart beating every day, I did this for you, for us and for my daughter Calvary Victoria Boykin who is on the way to join you in September 2017, so that many doors will open and my children will have the confidence to walk through those doors with ease. My love for you is endless; you two are my sunshine, *te amo*.

To my husband, Ruben Eugene Boykin Jr., it is because of your love, support, and encouragement that I am even here and finished with my doctoral program. You encouraged me to persevere, to keep fighting, to cry if I needed to, to have fun when I needed a break, and to do this while living in different countries, you said "don't stop" and I didn't because I know you had my back. You have taught me what unconditional love does every day for another person and I thank you. We did it! Now, the work truly begins. Thank you and I love you!

## VITA

**Education**

Pepperdine University, West Los Angeles Campus, California, Doctor of Education, 2017

Leadership, Administration & Education Policy

Pepperdine University, Encino Campus, California Masters of Arts, 2003 Education;

Howard University, Washington, District of Columbia Bachelor of Arts, 2000 Communications;

Journalism; Minor: Theatre Arts;

*Other Colleges Attended:* General Education, Fine Arts courses Paul Quinn College in Dallas,

Texas (SAT 4-year full academic scholarship recipient) & Graduate level teaching courses at

Bowie State University, Bowie, Maryland. Passed the California Basic Educational Skills Test

2001

**Career History**

VIPKID™- Virtual English Teacher Teach K-12 material to children in China online.

THE CHICAGO SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY-Admission's Counselor

KEY\* SERVICE MANAGEMENT™ -Founder & Executive Director \*Career, Business and

Educational Consulting (reference available upon request), \*Adult and Children etiquette

classes, \*Community Services, \*Event Planning, \*Beauty Consulting, \*Public

Speaking/Interview training, \*Business Management for professional athletes

BEVERLY HILLS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT -Classroom Instructional Assistant-Special

Education

PARADISE GENERAL INSURANCE SERVICES- Marketing/Business Representative

BRIGHT HORIZONS FAMILY SOLUTIONS- Center Director/Principal

KAPLAN CO. & WASHINGTON POST, Score Educational Centers- Senior Education  
Program Director

CAREER EDUCATION CORPORATION, California Culinary Academy-Admissions  
Representative

ICE TOWN- Director of Special Event /Figure Skating Instructor

WEST COAST UNIVERSITY- General Education Professor Adjunct College Professor,  
teaching the subjects of Communication and Critical Thinking.

PASADENA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT-English Teacher, Public Speaking & Dance  
Instructor

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS-Language Arts Teacher and Dance  
Instructor

### **Special Accomplishments**

- \*Spent three years in Japan and 1 year in Germany with husband who plays professional basketball
- \* Studied Spanish for 8 years
- \* NFL Oakland Raiderette; 2005-2006
- \* NFL San Diego Charger Girl; 2003-2004
- \* Howard University Marching Band Dancer & Co-Director, 1997-2000
- \* MISS LOS ANGELES COUNTY USA 2003
- \* MISS CALIFORNIA USA 2004 "California Main and Style" Award recipient
- \* Central Casting Movie/T.V. Actress 2001-2005
- \* United States Figure Skating Association: Competitively skated for ten years
- \* Paul Quinn College -Cheerleading Squad/Dance Team Captain, 1995-1997
- \* Paul Quinn College-Miss Freshman Class 1995
- \* Paul Quinn College-Miss Sophomore Class 1996

## ABSTRACT

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were established with the main objective of identifying and empowering people of African descent. Over the years, these institutions have grown, enrolling 16% of Black high school graduates and during graduation, almost 20% of African-American graduates. Using a qualitative study design, the main goal of this study was to identify the effectiveness of HBCUs' ability to serve the interests and needs of African-American students who chose to attend and graduate from HBCUs as undergraduate students then attend and graduate from graduate schools at predominantly White institutions (PWIs.) This study inquired about focusing on the factors influencing how undergraduate students make decisions on which college to attend, what factors influence their career selection, and the impact the university experience has on future careers and overall college experience. Data was gathered from African-American HBCU graduates who then attended and graduated from PWIs in California. Interviews and online surveys were conducted with participants to collect in-depth responses regarding their experiences, views, beliefs, and motivations. The sample comprised 100 respondents out of an original 200 who were selected. The study showed that many participants attended their chosen colleges because they preferred to associate with people who shared origins like their own. Family and friends were found to be influential in college selection and educational background influenced the types of careers study participants pursued after graduation from college. Implications for future research are discussed.

## **Chapter I: Introduction**

### **Background to the Study**

The first major landmark in the “history” of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) was when the Civil War came to an end in 1865 (after the Emancipation Proclamation when several significant efforts were made to systematize educational facilities that would permit freed slaves to assimilate and participate freely in the society (Browning & Williams, 1978). However, the first colleges for Black students had already been established in the North before the Civil War such as Cheney in 1830, Lincoln in 1856 and Wilberforce in 1856. This happened under the sponsorship of Christian missionaries who were motivated by the apparent lack of educational opportunities for the freed slaves at the time (Branson, 1978). Comparable efforts were discouraged in the South, where it was unlawful for slaves to receive education. But with the collapse of the Confederacy activities by Northern missionaries struggled for many colleges to be built for freed men (Jencks & Riesman, 1968, Pifer, 1973). However, because of inadequate monetary backing, many of these colleges and universities ceased to function by 1900.

As was the tradition, African-Americans used to play a small role in managing, financing and establishing what was prepared to be their institutions of learning (Jencks & Riesman, 1968). Even with them being freed from slavery, the new students were still treated as second-rate persons since professors felt it incumbent on themselves to shape the actions and the principles of students. Additionally, the expectations of the freedmen mentally were significantly low as White Southerners continued to be unsympathetic to the idea of growth in education among African-Americans. According to Flemings (1984), the first students enrolled in HBCUs were perceived not to be the same as students from other colleges and universities. They were viewed as products



of slavery who were uneducated and who had not attained the qualifications for entry into the institutions of higher education.

Many of the colleges were designed to train Black preachers and other clergymen. It so happened that the number of clergy students who qualified was small and for that reason, most colleges became institutions of learning for teachers. Flemings (1984) reports that these institutions were just colleges by name; this is because they were comprised of secondary school and elementary school. A few of them developed complex curricula and started offering Bachelor of Arts degrees after 1865. The curriculum of liberal arts was also accessible in these colleges that helped African-Americans become citizens who were fully participating (Browning & Williams, 1978).

According to the senior vice president of the United Negro College Fund's, HBCUs account for about 28% of all degrees accredited to African-Americans in science and technology as well as engineering and mathematics. In addition, these institutions account for approximately 30% of degrees awarded in the fields of microbiology, mathematics and physics. These statistics underscore the importance of HBCUs in America's education system and job market.

Students attending HBCUs consider the institutions as ideal choices as they continue to provide essential services especially in motivating Black students (Benavides, 1996). Benavides (1996) notes that; over 34% of the students who are of Black origin who enroll in colleges consider HBCUs as ideal. However, many African-American students in California have shifted to local colleges and state universities (Kerr, 1999). Fleming (1984) noted that; some institutions of higher learning have failed to convince the world about their value mainly because of the challenges in documenting the somewhat intangible service they provide. Fleming further noted that, until recently, major studies of HBCUs have been concerned with endowment, educational

facilities (classrooms, laboratories & libraries), faculty and administrative salaries and student services. For this reason, most HBCUs have failed to compete effectively with the predominantly White institutions (PWIs), including those in California.

According to Shropshire (2011), Black students have not realized how important HBCUs are in educating Black students in the disciplines of mathematics and the sciences. Even though these institutions record low enrollment rates, they exhibit higher graduation rates than their White counterparts. Thus, the main issue that needs to be addressed is whether HBCUs are relevant to African-American students. Fleming (1984) says that; the impact of college environment on student performance (especially African-American college environments) has not received adequate attention from the research community. This might occur because the strengths of HBCUs may be too restrained or too subtle to be captured by the qualitative data. An existing belief is that the phenomenon can only be looked at qualitatively.

### **Problem Statement**

Historically Black Colleges and Universities were established with the primary objective of identifying and empowering the people of African origin. Over the years, these institutions have grown in importance and enroll 16% of Black people and graduate approximately 20% of African-Americans who had enrolled. The main reason HBCUs draw many African-American students is the empowering, family-like environment of small classes, close faculty-student relationships, and life without the daily racial tensions experienced off-campus (Gasman & Bowman, 2011b). Gasman and Bowman (2011b) further note that the growth in college enrollments of HBCUs has leveled off in recent years as HBCUs compete for students who are better-funded historically White institutions.

Per Gasman and Bowman (2011), HBCUs lack good marketing strategies for their courses and consequently face stiff competition from historically White institutions. This is also possible due to the lack of awareness which comes through research on HBCUs' ability to serve the needs and interests of the Blacks in this country. This kind of information would bolster marketing of the HBCUs and the role they play, thus fostering more enrollments to serve more Blacks in California where there is no HBCU.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of HBCUs in serving the interests and needs of Black native Californians who chose to attend and graduate from HBCUs as undergraduates. A comparison with Black native Californians who attended other colleges in California, such as the California State Universities and University of California intuitions for their undergraduate studies, is required to achieve the objective of this study, which analyzed variables such as undergraduate student experiences, career preparation, career advancement and the post graduate advantages of native Southern Californian Black students who attended HBCUs before proceeding to other institutions in their home state.

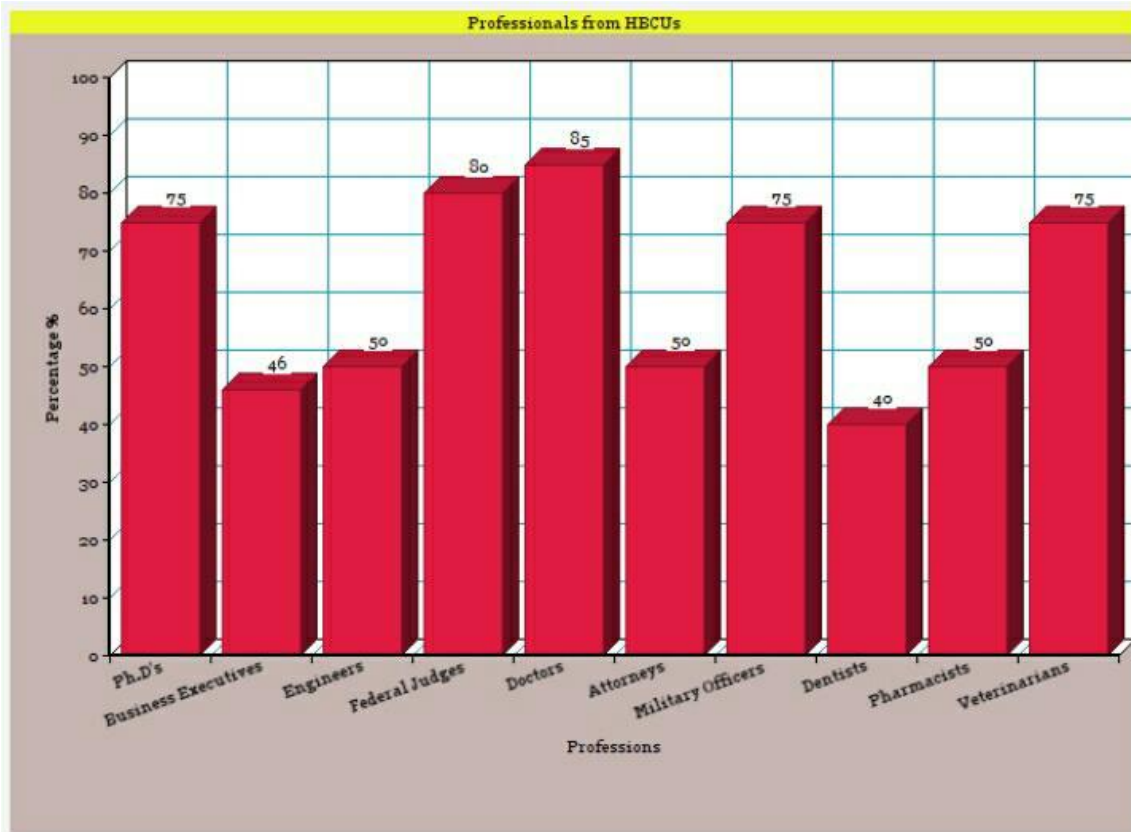
### **Importance of Study**

This research study is potentially significant to many constituents in the United States society. HBCUs' presidents as well as administrators may benefit from the results of the study; enhancing the quality of education that impacts fulfillment for their HBCU's mission and purpose. The findings from the research may be useful as a marketing tool for these institutions.

The executives of HBCUs can make use of the research results to advocate for new funding mechanisms that will contribute to the aspirations of HBCUs. This research will also provide vital information that will help students make accurate assessments of HBCUs and the benefits

that they may gain by attending them as an undergraduate as well as the benefits of returning to their home state for their graduate studies. Thus, the findings are useful in the decision-making process for native-Californian Black students together with their guardians in terms of the college or university of choice and generally on the quality of education they would want to acquire. It is thus important that such a study is carried out that it may be beneficial to the society and potentially advocate for the HBCUs and California colleges and universities.

The study findings can impact higher education's role in policy-making in the education of the Black students and thus, help promote the quality of education. The findings can inform national debates surrounding Black colleges as well as the social constructs that continue to devalue their status within the American society. The findings may also be a strong basis for decision making on whether to retain the HBCUs, restructure them, or abolish them based on the evidence or lack thereof of their effectiveness in addressing the needs and interests of the Black students and the society at large. The findings may also show what the final results are, of what careers HBCU graduates ultimately do for a living. The figure highlights some professions that HBCU graduates choose to pursue post-graduation from college.



*Figure 1.* From a representation of the percentage of “Individuals and Different Professions,” attained from HBCU created with data from HBCU Digest, 2013, adapted with permission.

## Definition of Terms

Several important terms as used in the study are:

**African-American (Black):** Are a group of people or persons having the origin as Black Africans (Allen, 1992).

**Historically Black College and University (HBCUs):** Constantine (1995) defines HBCUs as institutions of higher learning established with a primary mission of educating African-Americans.

**Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs):** According to Gibbs (1974), PWIs are institutions of higher learning where the student body is majority Caucasian American.

School Experiences: Are the events or activities in which one takes part in at school and help shape individuality (Allen, 1988).

Career Preparation: Encompasses all the activities which prepare college students for the job market or job-related requirements (Kerr, 1999).

Career Advancement: Includes all the activities which lead to promotion in the work place or the expansion of roles and responsibilities (Kerr, 1999).

Post-Graduate Opportunities: These are the job markets or openings available for post-graduates (Thompson, 1978).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The current study utilizes the institutional effectiveness model (Kim, 1995, 2001), for examining whether there is a difference in relations to students' outcomes of completing a degree in attending HBCUs or not. In her dissertation research, Kim (1995) used and expanded input on the environmental outcome model by studying the effectiveness of colleges for women only on several intellectual as well as ethical outcomes. Using a multi-level modeling perspective, the author tried to systematically distinguish the characteristics of a global college from those of an internal college but placed emphasis on the concurrent effect of college-level culture, structure, and opportunities, together with individual-level actions and experiences. The blended design of these two models that is the institutional effectiveness model as well as the multi-level model is useful in examining the effectiveness of HBCUs on the development and achievement of the student (Kim, 2002). Kim's institutional effectiveness model will be explored further in the following sections (literature review and methods sections).

### **Research Questions**

The following four research questions guided this study:

1. What are the school-related experiences of the graduates at a HBCU as an undergraduate compared to the same graduates that experienced graduating from a public or private university graduate program in California?
2. How did the perceptions of Black graduates of HBCUs regarding their undergraduate college program career preparation compare with the perceptions of the same Black graduates of public or private colleges and universities in California for their graduate school program?
3. How do the perceptions of Black graduates of HBCUs and those of Black graduates of public or private colleges and universities in California compare regarding the post-graduation advantages associated with their graduate and undergraduate program experience?
4. How do the perceptions of Black graduates of HBCUs regarding post-graduation advantages associated with their undergraduate program experience compare with their perceptions of their experience in California regarding their graduate program experience?

### **Delimitations**

This study is delimited to Black Californians who are (a) graduates from HBCUs (b) in four-year colleges (c) in the state of California for their graduate studies (d) and their experiences, career preparation, career advancement and postgraduate advantages. Students who are not California natives or those who are in other states were not included in the study. Two-year universities or colleges and those outside CA were not included in the study. Therefore, focusing only on the Black students who meet the study specifications is a major delimitation because the findings cannot be applied to the other demographic categories within the population.

## **Limitations**

This section highlights the external conditions which restricted the scope of the study. The research study was impacted by its quality of sample composition. The study sample was not heterogeneous since the study concentrated on students who were of Black race graduating from Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The limited heterogeneity may affect the outcomes of predictor variables because some White students attend HBCUs and vice versa. Great care was taken to minimize the impact of these limitations on the validity and reliability of the research. The other major limitations of the study were time and financial constraints which prevented the study from being carried out in other states. Despite these limitations, the study is necessary as it attempts to determine the indicators of career advancement that are unique to HBCUs.

## **Assumptions**

Educational quality is a subjective concept that is based partly on the opinions of those assessing it. In this regard, certain assumptions were made to ensure that this research study is a true reflection of the reality. The first assumption is that quality education can only be offered in an institution with abundant resource endowment, which has the resources to market what they offer. The second assumption is that HBCUs provide student experiences, career preparation, and postgraduate opportunities that are particularly valuable for Black individuals. The third assumption is that participants in the study will respond as openly and accurately as possible. These assumptions are the key pillars upon which the research design is based.

## **Organization of the Study**

The current study is organized into five chapters. Chapter I is a critical overview of a research phenomenon study. This chapter also discusses the reasons for studying this



phenomenon as well as its significance. Chapter II contains an extensive review of literature relevant to the study. This chapter discusses four major areas: career preparation of Blacks in HBCUs as an undergraduate versus Black students at a predominantly White institution (PWI); the career advancement of Black graduates from HBCUs as an undergraduate versus Black students at a PWI; post-graduation advantages of Black graduates of HBCUs as an undergraduate versus Black students at a PWI and the school experiences for Black undergraduates in HBCUs versus Black students at a PWI. Chapter III discusses the research design and the methods that were used to conduct the research. Chapter IV presents the findings of the study. Chapter V will be a study summary as well as a discussion of the implications of the study.

## **Chapter II: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

The primary objective of this study is to establish the effectiveness of Historically Black Colleges and Universities in serving the interests and needs of Black native Californians who choose to attend and graduate from a HBCUs as an undergraduate compared to Black students from other colleges in California such as the California State Universities and University of California institutions for their undergraduate school studies.

This study is guided by an institutional effectiveness model which is a theoretical framework that aims to connect institutional effectiveness with the assessment of the intended outcomes for the students. There are many studies currently comparing HBCUs with Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs). As the basis for this study, the focus is on establishing the effectiveness of HBCUs in relation to the outcomes of the Black students born and raised in California. Institutional characteristics are the main point of focus for the study. These are the main variables examined throughout the study, with this section examining the literature on various areas of effectiveness of the institutions such as undergraduate student experiences, career preparation, career advancement and postgraduate advantages of native Californian Black students from attending HBCUs, before proceeding to other institutions in the state.

The following key variables were also explored: career preparation of Blacks in HBCUs and traditional CA institutions, school experiences of Black undergraduates in HBCUs and traditional CA institutions, the career advancement of Black graduates from HBCUs and from traditional CA institutions, the post-graduation advantages of Black graduates in HBCUs and traditional institutions as a graduate student.

Before proceeding with a literature review on the various identified variables, it is important to begin with a description of the historical happenings that HBCUs experienced through the years of their existence. Current statistics reveal that there are over 100 HBCUs in the country today. According to Gasman and Bowman (2011a), these are institutions of Higher learning with a primary aim of educating Blacks in the country. These institutions were first developed in 1837, with their main goal of educating freed slaves to be able to read and write. As the world enters the 21<sup>st</sup> century, alongside other higher educational institutions, HBCUs are still providing African-American students with a place to acquire a sense of heritage, identity, and community (Lenhart, Moore, & Parker, 2011).

Before these Black colleges were founded and for a long time afterward, African-Americans have faced a high level of segregation and discrimination denying them the chance for quality education (Turner & Bound, 2003). Admission to traditionally White institutions has always been a problem for Black students according to the authors. This led to HBCUs becoming the main channel for the provision of post-secondary education to African-Americans. Presently, HBCUs must achieve their educational objective far more successfully than the ones initially set. The unique mission of HBCUs was described by former President Bush as, “At a time when many schools barred their doors to Black Americans, these colleges offered the best and the only opportunity for a higher education” (Malhotra & Vlahovic, 2011, p. 444).

There has always been a dilemma in the educational sector that has affected the American society mirroring a testimony of under-representation of students from minority communities in colleges as well as universities in the country (Malhotra & Vlahovic, 2011). African-American students have historically encountered significant impediments in their pursuit of education, particularly from high school level to college. In this context, it is imperative to reflect on the

contributions of (HBCUs) to the career progression of African-Americans in California. At the same time, HBCUs represent a very important component of higher education in the United States.

According to Turner and Bound (2003), in the advancement of higher education in America, significant developments in legislation have ventured towards the promotion of African-American access to and achievement in higher education. For instance, the 1890 Morrill Land-Grant College Act initiated the establishment of Black colleges where African-Americans would access undergraduate education mainly in the southern states. This Act strictly barred the allocation of federal resources to states that failed to offer separate room for African-Americans, if the main state institution deprived African-Americans the right of admission (Gasman & Bowman, 2011b).

In the past, HBCUs epitomized fledgling institutions that had a mandate to educate the most excellent and brightest African-American students in the United States. (Gasman & Bowman, 2011a). In the present day, HBCUs embody a wide-range of institutions of higher learning that bring together scores of the top African-American high school graduates, prepare them for college, and groom them to take up positions of great responsibility in the society upon college graduation (Gasman & Bowman, 2011b).

### **Overview of the 1890 Morrill Land-Grant College Act**

In the current age, as argued by Malhotra and Vlahovic (2011), major barriers to the provision of education to Blacks through HBCUs have been eliminated by the law. Per the National Center for Education Statistics (2011), the 1890 Morrill Land-Grant College Act discontinued funding for all established land grants that utilized color as a fundamental requisite for admission, with no separate college for students of African-American descent.

Consequently, a few colleges which were mainly annex campuses of the formerly established land grants of 1860 were founded. The norm was that the main campus kept approximately 95 % of the federal support and the 1890 land grant school received an allocation of the outstanding 5%. This contributed significantly towards the several shortcomings these schools faced mainly regarding the allocation of federal resources.

Milakovich and Gordon (2001) assert that a key element of the 1890 Morrill Land-Grant Act stipulated that a school established under the state's land grant should not exhibit prejudice against students of African-American descent. On the other hand, the Act stipulated that a state had an option to set up two land-grant schools where one would cater for students of African-American descent and the other would cater for White students and still be consistent with the law (Gasman & Bowman, 2011b).

Since the Southern law and practice necessitated separate educational facilities, border and southern states embarked on the establishment of Black land-grant schools. The rationale, in this case was to enhance federal support for Whites rather than the promotion of educational prospects for African-American students (Ibarra, 2000). This led to a scenario where White schools received more support for classical studies, while Black schools continued being inclined towards remaining as vocational schools. Consequently, this contributed significantly to the higher educational division between the African-American students and their White counterparts (Ibarra, 2000).

### **Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)**

HBCUs epitomize the sole institutions in the United States that were established primarily for the exclusive rationale of educating African-American citizens. Further, they argue that in the present day, several policymakers continue to challenge the significance of HBCUs on the

premise that these institutions of learning are ineffective in the contemporary integrated system of higher learning. However, this has been common practice since the conventional 'White only' colleges and universities started admitting minority students.

The Freedmen's Bureau under the federal government was instrumental in the establishment of the HBCUs with backing from mainly White abolitionist missionaries as well as Northern philanthropists, who either intended to convert the Blacks into Christians or train them to work in their industrial ventures. However, under the African Methodist Episcopal Church, African-Americans could establish HBCUs (Turner & Bound, 2003), such as schools the likes of Paul Quinn College.

Studies conducted by Gasman and Bowman (2011a), currently there are approximately 100 HBCUs that enroll above 11 % of African-American students in the United States, yet HBCUs represent less than 3% of universities and colleges in the country. Currently, HBCUs present vigorous academic curriculums, culture and a rich history. They also train scholars for leadership to prepare them for their life after graduation (Ibarra, 2000). Consequently, HBCUs are in the modern day regarded to be among the top educational systems where students of African-American descent or any other race can be able to obtain a high-quality education (Gasman & Bowman, 2011a).

HBCUs signify roughly 3% of the country's higher learning institutions and the majority of African-Americans who enroll in these institutions acquire undergraduate degrees successfully. As Lenhart et al. (2011) assert, over 50% of Black professionals' graduate from HBCUs as well as public school educators. Studies have demonstrated that HBCUs maintain a distinctive legacy to the explicit needs of youthful African-American minds (Turner & Bound, 2003). This is demonstrated by the effective capacity of the HBCUs to help graduate Black students who are

equipped to engage competitively in the academic, corporate, military, research, and governmental fields.

It can be noted for the readers' understanding that the first major landmark in the history of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) began to be developed in 1865. This was a time when several significant efforts were made to develop educational facilities that would permit freed slaves to assimilate and participate freely in the society (Browning & Williams, 1978). However, the first colleges for Black students had already been established in the North before the Civil War such as Cheney in 1830, Lincoln in 1856, and Wilberforce in 1856. This happened under the sponsorship of Christian missionaries who were motivated by the apparent lack of educational opportunities for the freed slaves at the time (Branson, 1978). Comparable efforts were discouraged in the South where it was unlawful for slaves to receive an education. However, the collapse of the Confederacy caused Northern missionaries to campaign for more and more colleges for freedmen (Jencks & Riesman, 1968, Pifer, 1973;). By 1900, many of these colleges and universities ceased to function because of inadequate monetary backing from the federal government.

Although they were free citizens, new students were treated as inferior to their White counterparts, as professors felt it was their responsibility to shape students' principles and actions. In addition, the intellectual anticipations of the freed slaves were significantly small as White Southerners remained opposed to the idea of learning growth among African-Americans. According to Flemings (1984), the first students enrolled in HBCUs were perceived to be dissimilar from learners in other universities and colleges. Apparently, they were deemed as the illiterate creations of slavery that had not qualified for attendance into a higher education institution.

Many of the colleges were designed to train Black preachers and other clergymen. Liberal arts curricula were accessible in these colleges to help African-Americans become fully participating citizens (Browning & Williams, 1978). According to the United Negro College Fund's senior vice president Dr. Karl Reid, HBCUs account for about 28% of all degrees accredited to African-Americans in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (Pifer, 1973). In addition, these institutions account for 34% of the degrees awarded in the fields of microbiology, mathematics, and physics. These statistics underscore the importance of HBCUs in America's education system and job market. Although most Black students performed poorer than their White counterparts, it was a step in the right direction. This aspect is because prior to the introduction of HBCUs, very little was being done to educate the Black race.

Learners in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) considered these institutions ideal choices as they continued to provide essential services, especially in motivating Black students (Benavides, 1996). Benavides notes that over 30% of Black students who enroll in colleges consider HBCUs as ideal. However, many African-American students in California have shifted to local colleges and state universities (Kerr, 1999). Fleming (1984), noted that some institutions of higher learning have failed to convince the world about their value, mainly because of challenges in documenting the intangible service they provide. Fleming further noted that, until recently, major studies of HBCUs have been concerned with endowment, educational facilities (classrooms, laboratories, and libraries), faculty and administrative salaries and student services. For this reason, most HBCUs have failed to compete effectively with the predominantly White institutions (PWIs) including those in California.

According to Shropshire (2011), Black students have not realized how important HBCUs are in educating Black students in the disciplines of mathematics and the sciences. Although these



institutions record low enrollment rates, they exhibit higher graduation rates than their White counterparts. Therefore, the core issue that needs to be addressed is whether HBCUs are relevant to African-American students in California. Fleming (1984), says that the impact of college environments on student performance (especially African-American college environments) has not received adequate attention from the research community. This situation could partly be due to the strengths of HBCUs, which may be too slanted or too subtle to be captured by data. An existing belief is that the phenomenon can only be looked at using anecdotes.

As a minority racial group in America, African-American students could have made a lot of academic and professional progress by harnessing the availability of HBCUs. It is the focus of this study to establish the importance of HBCUs in the learning process at the undergraduate level and then evaluate the undergraduate experience and graduate experience. Like most important careers in life, academics have a great impact on the ability of a given community to access social amenities. The trend has changed though, and many African-Americans seem to be appreciating HBCUs at the undergraduate level and education in general.

**At a Small Number of Prestigious Colleges and Universities, the Black Student Graduation Rate Is Higher Than the Rate for Whites. But at Most Selective Colleges and Universities, the Black Graduation Rate Continues to Remain Well Below the Rate for Whites.**

*(Colleges and Universities Are Ranked by the Smallest Gap in Black-White Graduation Rates, 2006)*

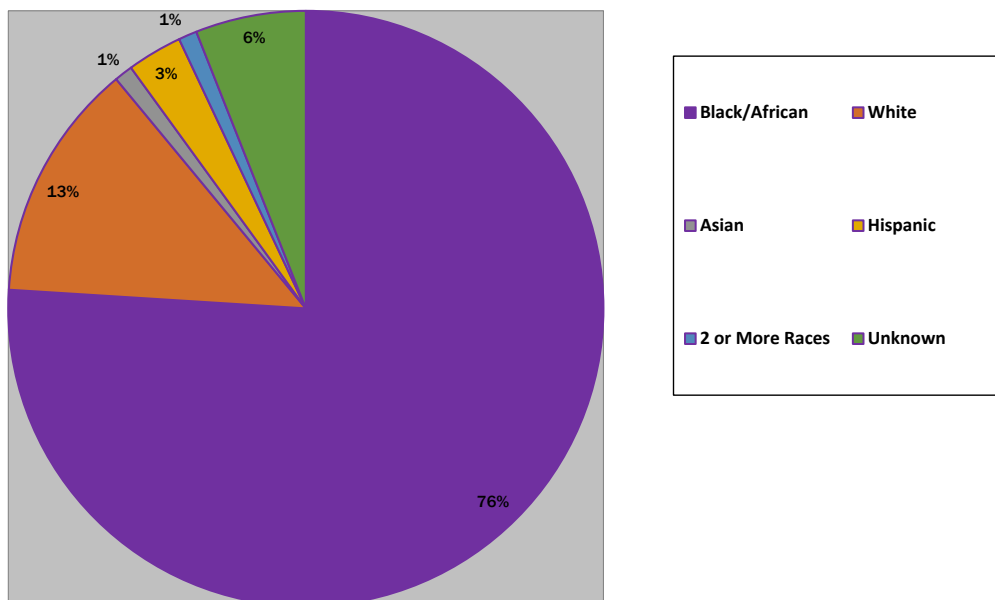
Institution	White Rate*	Black Rate	% Point Difference	Institution	White Rate*	Black Rate	% Point Difference
Mount Holyoke College	79%	85%	-6	University of Chicago	88%	82%	+6
Smith College	84	88	-4	University of Virginia	93	87	+6
Wellesley College	91	94	-3	Swarthmore College	93	86	+7
Pomona College	81	83	-2	University of Pennsylvania	93	86	+7
Macalester College	83	84	-1	Vassar College	89	82	+7
Washington University	91	91	0	Bucknell University	90	82	+8
Hamilton College	87	86	+1	Dartmouth College	95	87	+8
Vanderbilt University	86	85	+1	Duke University	94	86	+8
Wake Forest University	87	86	+1	Bowdoin College	92	83	+9
Amherst College	96	94	+2	Colgate University	91	82	+9
Bryn Mawr College	84	82	+2	Georgetown University	94	85	+9
Grinnell College	87	85	+2	Univ. of Southern California	81	72	+9
Harvard University	97	95	+2	Claremont-McKenna College	84	74	+10
Oberlin College	81	78	+3	Cornell University	93	83	+10
Williams College	97	94	+3	Haverford College	92	81	+11
Brown University	96	92	+4	Tufts University	92	80	+12
Columbia University	91	87	+4	Univ. of N. Car.-Chapel Hill	84	72	+12
Emory University	87	83	+4	University of Notre Dame	96	84	+12
Princeton University	98	94	+4	Mass. Inst. of Technology	95	82	+13
Wesleyan University	91	87	+4	Univ. of Calif.-Los Angeles	88	73	+15
Yale University	96	92	+4	Washington and Lee Univ.	89	74	+15
Calif. Inst. of Technology	88	83	+5	Univ. of Calif.-Berkeley	86	70	+16
Davidson College	90	85	+5	Carnegie Mellon University	84	67	+17
Johns Hopkins University	88	83	+5	Colby College	89	72	+17
Northwestern University	94	89	+5	Bates College	88	70	+18
Stanford University	95	90	+5	Middlebury College	92	72	+20
Rice University	92	86	+6	University of Michigan	89	68	+21
Trinity College	86	80	+6	Carleton College	90	66	+24

Note: The graduation rate is defined as all enrolled students who earn a degree within six years.  
\*The white graduation rate is for Caucasians only and does not include Asians, Hispanics, or any other minority group.  
Source: JBHE analysis based on statistics provided by the National Collegiate Athletic Association. Table © The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education.

Figure 2. From information presented on “Rate of Black Graduates,” 2007, retrieved from <http://Blackoncampus.com/2007/02/12/Black-graduation-rates-reach-historic-high>

Although HBCUs were established to support Black students, they are no longer exclusively inclined towards admitting African-American students only (Lenhart et al. 2011). This according to the authors is because the American society has become overly diverse and there is a need to promote multiculturalism in society and inclusion in education. This argument is also supported by the fact that the increasing prevalence of Historical Spanish-serving Institutions (HSI) originally meant to cater for the scholarly interests of Hispanic students has over the past few years seen admission increments of White students. This has been quite unexpected and has thus resulted into decreased enrolments in predominantly White institutions.

To explain the phenomenon, contends that globalization and the increasing echelons of diversity in America have prompted White students to seek erudition on foreign languages (Gasman & Bowman, 2011a). Studies reveal that HBCUs in the present day have continued to draw a substantial percentage of student populations that include Asian, Hispanic, and White American students, as well as international students. Because of increased diversity, approximately 25% of HBCUs in the country have non-African-American students. Per studies carried out by the National Center for Education Statistics (2011), this diversity has led to shifting perceptions regarding policy making and in several academic platforms. Some hold that the shifting composition in the HBCUs jeopardizes the fundamental distinctiveness of institutions that establishes their uniqueness. On the other hand, others hold that by embracing diversity, these institutions become increasingly stronger through nurturing, mutual respect, as well as appreciation for African-American culture amongst a wider population (Kerr, 1999). This shifting composition in the HBCUs is demonstrated by the graphical representation shows undergraduate enrollment in HBCUs according to race or ethnicity.

**HBCU Undergrad Enrollment by Ethnicity**

*Figure 3.* From Data representing the “Undergraduate Enrollment based on Ethnicity in HBCU” accessed from NCES, 2011, adapted with permission.

### **Student Demographics and Institutional Characteristics**

Research carried out on HBCUs reveals that those matriculating at these institutions usually have backgrounds that are far different to those studying at PWIs. According to Kim (2002), even on undergraduate admission tests, Blacks score worse than their White counterparts even after controlling the level of education of parents and their family income. Also, African-American students at HBCUs have been shown to have lower high school GPAs as well as SAT scores when compared to their Black counterparts studying at PWIs, as well as with all students in the country. African-American students studying in HBCUs have also been revealed to come from families with lower socio-economic status compared to their peers studying in White institutions (Kim, 2002).

Not much research has been carried out in relation to the major differences in terms of institutional resources as well as the characteristics between HBCUs and PWIs. However, it has been suggested by Kim (2004) that; in the same way as PWIs conventionally enroll students

from more affluent backgrounds compared to HBCUs, their resources are also expected to be greater. Further, the quality of facilities that are available, academic programs, and the chances for advanced study is also expected to be poorer at HBCUs. Nevertheless, as shown in a study by Albritton (2012), while most Black students can successfully adjust to PWIs which tend to have far superior resources at the institutions as compared to HBCUs, they are less likely to perceive the institutions as addressing their needs and serving their interests even at the graduate level.

On the other hand, HBCUs appear to compensate for what is lacking in terms of resources by offering a learning environment that is more collegial and supportive to Black students. At all institutions, retention studies of students (such as Lenhart et al 2011; Kim, 2002) have revealed that the rate of student-faculty contacts is positively linked to the academic growth of the students. Student-faculty research partnerships have been revealed by Evans, Evans, and Evans (2002), to positively affect the persistence of students in the institution. Their study revealed that the impact appeared strongest for Black students particularly sophomores.

Milakovich and Gordon (2001) also reported that there are major benefits for African-American students at institutions where they get more instructors' mentoring and this is more likely to happen in HBCUs. In research related specifically to African-American students, Lenhart et al. (2011) suggest that academic achievement is better for the students at the undergraduate level at HBCUs due to a higher level of faculty staff and development of programs customized to their needs.

Black students are reported to access more frequently as well as have meaningful interactions with faculty (both White and Black) at HBCUs as opposed to PWIs. Kim (2004, p. 120) also suggested that African-American students at HBCUs are more actively and deeply involved in

the academic community at the undergraduate level compared to Blacks at PWIs. This practice continues after graduation into their graduate studies where the California intuition the student is studying at benefits.

### **Effectiveness of HBCUs**

The literature review for this section is based on the already identified theoretical framework. It is also based on the adult learning theory to show the effectiveness of HBCUs in terms of apprentice erudition (Albritton, 2012). The institutional effectiveness model (Kim, 1995, 2001) is the model that informs this study.

### **Selected Variables**

There are several variables used in the measurement of this effectiveness as already identified: undergraduate school student experiences, career preparation, career advancement and post-graduate advantages. However, to date there is still limited research related to the impact of studying at HBCUs as opposed to PWIs on the academic success of Black students and the little research done has presented mixed findings.

A study by Kim (2002), revealed no momentous differences in terms of the academic and cognitive abilities related to studying in either of the two types of institutions. With the use of a national data set, Kim (2002) revealed that there are no noteworthy differences between PWIs and HBCUs in their capacity to influence the general academic capability, writing capability and mathematics capability of the students. However, Gasman and Bowman (2011b) revealed a greater level of cognitive ability particularly among Black females in HBCUs. Furthermore, Turner and Bound (2003) reported that students at PWIs tend to perform well or even better compared to their Black peers at PWIs in terms of the standardized measures of science reasoning and writing skills. There are various other studies that have revealed that Black

students at HBCUs tend to get higher grades and tend to have greater aspirations compared to their Black peers at PWIs (Kim, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, Rhoades & Woodard).

According to Lenhart et al. (2011), pioneer American colleges and universities such as Yale and Harvard did not create opportunities for universal access to higher education. Most of these institutions were established with the principle mission of producing a stable upper-class society (for the Whites) to maintain a stratified social order (Lenhart et al. 2011). Thus, members of the Black community could not attain any meaningful education which could equip them with necessary skills and knowledge to take up mainstream careers (Banks, 1972).

Nevertheless, the persistent increase in enrollment rates for African-American students in predominantly White colleges in the 1960s marked a turning point for these historical colleges. Until then, racial segregation barriers made it impossible for African-Americans to attend White schools in the South. Few Northern state institutions were enthusiastic about enrolling African-American students, partially because of the White society's stereotypical ideas about African-Americans' inability to benefit from higher education and partially because of the social stigma attached to the African-American presence in White society (Gurin & Epps, 1975).

With so many African-American students exercising their right to attend predominantly White schools, especially in California, the discussions over the role of HBCUs has transformed itself once more this time with the question, do historically Black colleges and universities provide a valuable purpose in a society that strives for integration in educational environments? (Gurin & Epps, 1975), and if so, is one needed in the West?

HBCUs possess increasingly diverse faculties that provide their students a high-quality education and teachers with wide-ranging backgrounds. It follows that the faculty members are fundamental to the institutional culture. However, despite several impediments, faculty

members at HBCUs exhibit exemplary mentorship and hold a long-standing reputation for empowering and encouraging African-American students who demonstrate an interest in graduating as well as professional programs that are mainly but not restricted to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, which are commonly referred to as the STEM fields (Gurin & Epps, 1975).

Studies conducted by Kim (2002) endeavored to inform educators, the students and the policymakers concerning the outcomes of African-American students attending HBCUs on degree completion. The study revealed that attending a PWI or an HBCU may lead to a similar likelihood of acquiring a Bachelor of Art degree. The preliminary analysis demonstrated that the average rate of degree completion was not substantially different between PWIs and HBCUs. The study also demonstrated that the GPAs of college of Black students were not different when comparing two categories of institutions. It is also evident from the study that a higher percentage of Black students present at HBCUs worked in collaboration with the faculty in relation to their studies. This implies that HBCUs may present increased academic prospects to Black students.

The findings are consistent with studies conducted by Turner and Bound (2003), who also demonstrated that institutional educational support is significantly prevalent at PWIs and leads to a higher degree of students' scholarly preparation. Moreover, interactions between faculty and students that engage in African-American students academically for instance, involvement in research projects can be increasingly significant and influential for Black students' degree achievement. According to Ibarra (2000), this contrasts with the case in traditional California institutions, specifically regarding the career preparation of African-American students where the interactions between faculty and student are less purposeful.



Consequently, Black students' opportunities for participation in research projects as well as career preparation are increasing productivity on HBCU campuses where they are still increasingly liable to be marginalized in contrast to students in traditional California institutions. It is essential to mention that presently, African-American students are adjusting to traditional California institutions in a better manner than over the past decade. This is informed by the changing discriminatory environment often linked with PWIs (Turner & Bound, 2003).

Studies conducted by Cole and Barber (2003), demonstrated that a majority of African-American students attending HBCUs have reported the attainment of cross-cultural skills in communication, the nurturing of care for other disadvantaged groups, and the pursuance of social justice through leadership as well as membership in student organizations. While the majority of students can obtain opportunities for this form of cultural identity advancement in the traditional and common White student organizations, the principal African-American groups offer them a substitute platform to deal with African-American issues, interact with other Black students, and instigate dialogue and networking devoid of the sentiment of tokenism.

From the point of view of retention, as well as graduation from college, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) revealed that studying at HBCUs is positively related to the chances of these students to remain in school and getting a bachelor's degree. The National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972's data was used by Kim (2002), which revealed that African-American students attending HBCUs are more likely as compared to those PWIs to attain a bachelor's degree and move on to a graduate degree. Various other researches on HBCUs have just cited the affirmative results of the few studies done in this area.

## **Adult Learning Theory**

Per this theory, the literature review indicates the fact that this theory is an effective platform for measuring the effectiveness of HBCU's because of its ability to demonstrate various aspects underlying the capacity of adults to learn best under specific circumstances (Albritton, 2012). HBCUs have been effective because of their ability to offer internal motivation and self-direction to students. The literature review indicates that the lone fact of appreciation of people of the same color by these institutions acts as a driving force to admitted students; consequently, this makes them more focused on their erudition endeavors because they seldom spend time trying to fit into a disapproving society.

Moreover, the theory also argues that learners do better in environments where they feel respected. As such, the institutions have constantly provided Black and African-American students their due respect, thus increasing their feeling of relevance and in turn making them more goal-oriented in terms of academic pursuits.

The review of literature also indicates that HBCUs have achieved one of the most ignored aspects of education by the predominantly White institutions; that is, the provisions of resources such as libraries, journals and the internet to apprentices (Banks, 1972). HBCUs have thus been more effective in equipping people of color with modern erudition resources and opportunities and this explains their prevalence over the past few years.

## **History of the California Institutions Higher Education System**

Governor Fredrick Low merged the College of California with the state university, consequently developing University of California, Berkeley in 1867. The University of Berkeley is the first university formed under the umbrella of the system of higher education in California. The state of California urbanized a three-tiered higher learning school system,

including University of California (UC), California State University (CSU) and California Community College System. In addition, California is home to many private higher education institutions such as Stanford University, the University of Southern California and Pepperdine University (CAL.EDC. CODE § 66010: California Code – Section 66010).

The University of California system was established with the primary objective of enrolling the top-performing 12-13% of high school students and ensuring that the universities are run by administrators appointed by the University of California Regents. The UC Regents is a group of educators appointed by the Governor who is serving during their appointment. The Education Board allows one student to serve for a year's term and the governor sits on the board as an ex-officio member. The California Community College System is a group of higher education institutions developed, where lower the level, developmental classes and job training are provided at a pace in the hope of an easy transition to one of the California colleges or universities. Graduate programs were added to schools as the school saw the need.

Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science is reportedly the only predominately Black College in California, according to the school's website and named in honor of the Black physician, who is well-known for his revolutionary work in blood preservation. The Postgraduate Medical School that Charles Drew in the University was incorporated in August 1966.

To make the transition a real success, several initiatives were launched in California. For instance, a group selected by the UC Regents and the State Board of Education established the *California Master Plan for Higher Education* in 1960, when Pat Brown was governor and Clark Kerr was the President of the University of California organization. The plan was not racially

motivated as a reason for the establishment, but rather focused on the success of students of every race.

In the early 1950s, California's leaders and academic administrators planned for the educational future of the baby boomer group approaching high school graduation. The aim of this Master Plan for Education was to:

- i. Form a system of education that is all students accessible regardless of their families' and/or personal economic means.
- ii. Ensure that a student's educational progress would be influenced only by individual educational ability (Kerr, 1999).

To this end, UC and the CSU were expected to make the plan and avail adequate spaces that will take care of all resident students of California who were eligible and had interest to apply to get enrolled within the system of education. The California State also reaffirms its commitment to ensure that they avail resources that make this expansion to be possible and shall give resources just to make sure that [eligible] students are all taken care of within the system (CA Education Code 66202.5).

The primary foundation was organized so that the top performing students (12.5%) would have the opportunity to attend a University of California campus, the top third performing high school seniors would have the option to attend a California State University whereas the Community Colleges System would accept all that would apply. The plan took the percentages from equating the scores of each student's SAT, G.P.A., or ACT scores. Students from the California Community Colleges System had the opportunity to relocate to a California State and/or UC system to finish their Bachelor's degree.

This plan was seen as a sizeable surge in advance in California higher education. Currently, people give credit to the California universities for its grasp in the world's financial system as well as bolstering its own fiscal makeup with a great venture in technology areas like for instance, Biotechnology, Silicon Valley as well as Pharmaceuticals. These and other sectors are the backbone of the knowledge worker financial system which needs knowledgeable personnel to survive (Kerr, 1999).

The college participation rate for Black Americans has fluctuated significantly over the past 25 years (Fleming 1984). After getting to the lowest point in 1984, Black Americans accomplished a stable enrollment increase of 34.6% over the next decade according to Freeman. Even though the progress that Black Americans posted especially since around 1990 seemed notable, it is perceived that they continued to trail Whites in their college involvement by 1994. Statistically, roughly 43% of graduates in White high school in California aged 18 to 24 usually enroll and learn in colleges compared with 35% of Black Americans.

After demonstrating increases in attendance over the decade in 1994, Black Americans reported the smallest percentage gains in undergraduate, graduate and professional attendance among the four major ethnic minority groups and may have increased some 20 years later (Fleming 1984). Some studies showed that Black Americans also continued to fall behind Whites in overall graduation rates at California's top performing universities. As a matter of fact, the gap in graduation rates among Black Americans and Whites was more than 20% in 1994.

### **School Experiences for Black Undergraduates in HBCUs and in Traditional CA Institutions**

In the studies by the National Center for Education Statistics (2011), demonstrate that HBCUs have a rate of graduating of approximately 30%. This statistic has led to increased

criticism of the significance of the HBCUs. When taking into consideration the graduation rates, it is imperative to realize that the many of HBCU students are from Pell-Grant-eligible, low-income and the first-generation social clusters students that exhibit these attributes and are increasingly less liable to graduate regardless of where they go to college. It also follows that the traditional CA institutions with similar institutional attributes as well as similar student populations to HBCUs, exhibit parallel graduation rates (Turner & Bound, 2003). It should also be noted that most HBCUs admit students with inferior SAT scores.

While newer studies consistently demonstrate that academic preparation is fundamental in envisaging enrollment and accomplishment in college, it is evident in older studies that institutions that serve students from low socio-economic and minority backgrounds are less probable to concentrate on meticulous standard-based education. Consequently, these economically-underprivileged African-American students in college preparation usually exhibit low self-esteem with reference to their academics (Banks, 1972).

In response to these trends, some HBCUs and traditional California institutions of higher education especially at the graduate level, have embarked on investing a substantial amount of time as well as funding, towards the development of a pipeline or pre-college and programs. These programs are intended to offer students with opportunities to prepare for the social and academic life experiences as an undergraduate. While services offered by pre-college outreach programs differ, almost all programs incorporate services that match one or more universal aspects.

Per Turner and Bound (2003) said that it is evident that when students view their educational setting as being inclusive and encouraging to their social and academic advancement regarding their performance opportunities, they are increasingly liable to succeed. The studies imply that

African-American students pursue vigorous out of class education experiences and achieve more or the same as White students who engage in similar forms of activities.

Lenhart et al. (2011) conducted a study in an endeavor to evaluate whether racial composition in college campuses resulted in any disparity in or impact on what Black students acquired from their collegiate experiences. The study involved 1200 students enrolled in HBCUs as well as Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs). The study revealed that participation in academic activities held a greater influence on the general experience of the students who attended HBCUs as an undergraduate, whereas social engagement emerged as more significant for the African-American students who attended the PWI as undergraduates. Consequently, it is essential to note that the use of out-of-class and peer interactions have a positive influence on African-American student learning as well as personal advancement at any level of study.

Another point of view to review is that about 60 to 75% of African-American students are currently enrolled in institutions that are dominated by White American students (Provasnik & Linda, 2004). Yet, African-Americans are still under-represented in higher education, predominantly in private and four-year public universities and one-half of all African-American students are enrolled in two-year colleges (Institute for the Study of Educational Policy, 1976).

### **The Social Sector**

Furthermore, as an NAACP *Tract for the Times* (Gallagher, 1971) puts it:

Prior to the 60's, most African-American students on White campuses had been content to be seen, not heard (except within their own peer group). They were rarely involved deeply in campus social life, were generally excluded from membership in social fraternities and sororities and from many of the honor societies, often discriminated against in off-campus housing (p. 13).

But at the same time, African-American students being products of their times and increasing in number, were motivated by activists in civil rights movements, only to be disillusioned by a lack of progress and the subsequent martyrdom of African-American leaders. Six of the nine fraternities and sororities established by African-Americans for African-Americans were started at a HBCU.

While predominately White campuses were accompanied by a propagation of African-American student-run organizations that expressed a desire for a political and racial identity within their culture. These organizations were influential in mobilizing the recruitment efforts that radically increased both the numbers and diversity of students attending predominantly White institutions in that decade.

### **The Faculty/Student Relationship**

From research dating back to the 1970s, Gibbs (1975) found that faculty and staff members expected African-American students to be incorporated into the college environment, without allowing considerable time to adapt to the academic structure or programs. Staff and faculty also expected African-American students to compete academically with their counterparts although many had known deficiencies in their high school years. Gibbs (1975) explains that faculty and staff expected African-Americans to incorporate themselves into the socio-cultural life of the campus environment and to be thankful for the opportunity to receive an integrated education.

Later, an in-depth study validated the assumptions reported by Gibbs, reporting that while administrators expected some adjustments to follow the new African-American students, they expected the changes to take place effortlessly and without conflicts. The inappropriateness of these thoughts became apparent only after racial strains, interpersonal conflict and a lack of



corrective help or support services led to widespread protest and transferal to HBCUs. Because of campus unrest, it became clear to many researchers at least that African-American students came to PWIs after receiving their undergraduate degree, expecting a level of flexibility in responding to their requests that would be equivalent to the flexibility with which many were accepted in the first place.

Although there is an increasing acceptance of the legitimacy of African-American students' expectations, an older study by McDaniel and McKee (1971) shows that most PWIs have been unable or unwilling to respond, whereas a newer study has been found. From a sample set of 1,168 PWIs, these authors report an unendorsed list of findings. For instance, while over 81% of the reporting colleges had either modified open admission policies or made special modifications for African-American in admission requirements, 50% had agreed to academic support programs and several had made no attempt to revise their curriculum.

McDaniel and McKee (1971) reported that only 44% were engaged in efforts to recruit minority faculty since it is a way they can meet the needs of African-American students. Also, as little as 8% of the institutions were making efforts to provide housing patterns that promoted good cultural relations and only a quarter were providing fiscal programs for African-Americans, despite the overwhelming financial barriers facing them. While the common mood was one of indifference toward minority tribulations, the Western states seemed to be the most responsive; for instance, the establishment of the California *Master Plan for Higher Education*.

Despite these problems, African-American students are on PWI campuses to stay. The fact that better services are offered and the prospects of greater elite standing will surely not be lost on students who are just as willing to compete for graduate and professional college slots as their ethnic counterparts. There can be no question that PWIs represent the new challenge for

today's African-American students. Traditionally, the task of African-American students has been to achieve distinguished intellectual achievement in the face of inadequate, segregated institutions and low standards.

The existing task for African-American students in California is not only to enter colleges but to perform at a high academic level and adjust well. So, the hope is that when African-Americans master the integrated educational experience, they will gain the ability to cope with a rapidly growing California college system (Solórzano, 1995).

The historical overview of African-American student participation in higher education paints a period of vibrant growth and change—growth in the numbers of Blacks participating in a college education and transition from attending Black universities as undergraduates to California's PWIs as a graduate student. However, the image is mixed. The percentage of Blacks participating in HBCU education relative to those attending California schools may still not be what it could or should be, and the rate of Black graduations from colleges and universities is particularly challenging.

### **Affirmative Action and California**

An incidence of the times was the decline of civil rights and current legal dispute of California's affirmative action laws, which were not by chance connected to the Reagan/Bush administrations. The Reagan and Bush administrations tried to either take apart or abandon proposals intended to empower minority people and sub-groups. For instance, the Reagan Justice Department considered superseding in approximately 51 affirmative action policies to overturn them, even though they had been entered voluntarily (Orfield, 1989).

Socioeconomic and demographic factors have also affected the involvement of Blacks in higher education at all levels, including the following: (a) there are more Blacks under the

poverty line today than there were 25 years ago; (b) unemployment rates in California amongst African-Americans are two and one-half times higher than for Whites; (c) the gap in life expectancy between Blacks and their counterparts has grown wider for Blacks in the past 25 years; and (d) infant mortality for Blacks has increased in the past 20 years. Despite these disturbing occurrences, Blacks have shown an increase at the level of master's degree (Orfield, 1989).

Several older studies of experiences of Black American student at their colleges and PWIs including some in California indicate that many students have experiences which are negative at PWIs and that they suffer lower achievement and higher attrition rates than their White counterparts (Allen, 1992; Nettles, 1988). However, this older research suggests that Black American students who attend Black American colleges have high intellectual gains and a more constructive psychosocial adjustment, a more optimistic self-image, stronger cultural aspirations and pride that are higher than those who do not (Fleming, 1984; Gurin & Epps, 1975). Even though the 1980s had more Blacks elected to attend California schools, in the 2000s, many Black American students consider Black American colleges due to their interest in embracing and conserving the past and tradition (Benavides, 1996).

It has not been forgotten from aged studies, that HBCUs assumed responsibility for cultivating the Black community and thus were fundamentally responsible for the creation of a Black middle class (Gurin & Epps, 1975). Certainly, by 1947, almost 90% of the college degrees held by African-Americans were earned therein. By 1967, 80% of the Bachelor degrees were still earned at HBCUs and as recently as 1984, over a half of HBCU graduates were from Black colleges. Black colleges and universities have given the United States approximately 75% of all African-Americans holding Ph.D. degrees, 75 % of all African-American army

officers, 80% of all African-American federal judges and 85% of all African-American doctors (Jordan, 1975).

No one would question that most of the African-American teachers—through whom teachings have passed from generation to generation—have been trained at HBCUs (Meyers, 1978). It is obvious that, through the review of these historical studies, nearly all the leaders instrumental in solving the troubles of race relations in America go back to their roots, which are the HBCUs (Mays, 1978).

Even though many African-American students in California are now attending White colleges (Sink, 1995), there is a conviction that a considerable 75% of African-American students have continued to have a preference of Black universities for more “personal” reasons. As HBCUs have a good idea of the problems which are faced by African-Americans, they have already established patterns to deal with them (Goldman, 1963). Later studies show that, in addition to economics and geography, McGrath (1965) suggests that strong psychological and social factors will cause many African-American students to move toward HBCUs as an undergraduate. Pifer (1973) observes that some African-Americans simply seem happier at HBCUs as an undergraduate. Similarly, Gurin and Epps (1975) maintain their view that many of the African-American students will still prefer to attend a university of which the campus environment supports their personal growth without the intensity of conflict and seclusion which is faced by many predominantly White campuses.

In addition to the societal acceptance and support that are significant aspects of young adults’ development, HBCUs still offer an ambiance in which the concerns of social consciousness are active. Research indicates that even today, African-American students at HBCUs are distinguished by their heightened sense of Black consciousness (Orfield, 1989). Gurin and Epps

(1975) found the amount of political activism among African-American students to be underestimated by many researchers who have focused their studies on the actions of White students during the civil rights era.

Additionally, some scholars report that the temperament of Black activism has been misinterpreted as an expression of separation and powerlessness rather than a look of a collective ideology that places the accountability for inequality on the social and financial order.

### **Career Advancement of Black Graduates from HBCUs and From Traditional CA Institutions**

The enrollment of African-Americans in a majority of America's highest-ranking universities and colleges has demonstrated substantial improvement over the previous centuries. However, a more significant statistical assessment of the career advancement of African students in America in terms of higher education is demonstrated by how many African students in America who graduated through the academic pipeline and attained a college degree. According to Gasman and Bowman (2011a), this origin of students who obtain degree college degree after studying for four years earn higher incomes than their contemporaries who have not acquired a degree but have gone through college. Primarily, African-American graduate students hold a mean income that is almost at par with equally educated students from traditional California institutions.

Studies by Kim (2002), demonstrate that there is no substantial disparity in academic and cognitive abilities related to attending at either HBCUs or the California institutions. Through the utilization of a countrywide data set, the studies demonstrated that there wasn't substantial difference that is, between PWIs and HBCUs in terms of their capacity to influence general academics, ability to write or mathematics talent. Other studies demonstrate that African

students in America found at HBCUs get higher grades and more advanced aspirations of the degree than their contemporaries at PWIs.

Regarding retention and graduation, Lenhart et al. (2011) asserted that, attending HBCUs is positively linked with students' pursuance of college and obtaining a bachelor's degree. These studies as well demonstrate that, African students at America who attend HBCUs are increasingly likely to have a bachelor degree in comparison with African-American students at California institutions. These findings have also been collaborated by several studies that talk about HBCUs.

### **Post-Graduation Advantages Black Graduates of HBCUs and of California Institutions**

Graduate education continues to be one of the fundamental pointers of access to high income and prestigious professions, as well as the precondition of a quality of life that is high for African-Americans. In the era of lawful segregation, academically qualified African-American students who desired to pursue university degrees usually opted to go to HBCUs due to the few options available to them.

Since the beginning, HBCUs have evolved as vehicles for economic, social, and political advancement for African-Americans. Their historical effectiveness is demonstrated by the uneven number of graduates who comprise the African-American university professors, judges, business elite, and congressmen, as well as the activists and religious leaders who wage the triumphant struggle for civil rights (Barton, 2003). It is also evident that HBCUs bear a positive influence on the social capital of its graduates, which is also a critical determinant of economic accomplishment. HBCUs also bear a positive influence on the rate of development of rural counties (Cole & Barber, 2003).

According to studies conducted by Feltovich and Papageorgiou (2004), despite being efficient institutions, HBCUs have recently been perceived critically as interventions in a labor market that influence the wages of its graduates. Ordinarily, the focus has been to explore how HBCU graduates fare on in the labor market compared with African-American graduates from non-HBCUs. HBCUs epitomize the attributes of institutions with a total or comparative advantage in producing elementary as well as secondary school teachers.

Originally, due to racial segregation, these institutions were the main source of educators because of an increasing African-American population in the US that needs to be educated. The resultant escalating demand for African-American teachers presented the HBCUs with a chance to increase their production of qualified educators, as well as to develop the modus operandi for producing first-class educators on a 'learning through doing' basis. There was no apparent economic inducement for African-American teachers to demonstrate professional eminence, but professional satisfaction provided the impetus to drive this outcome.

Per Milakovich and Gordon (2001), stated that, schools may be perceived as institutions that hold social goals. These social goals entail the impartation to their graduates with distinct identities that mirror behavioral traits. Consequently, HBCUs may be perceived as institutions that impart more than skills to African-American students. It is evident that Black American graduates of HBCUs show an identity of self-esteem that resonates with the institution's social goals. However, this was not the case a few decades ago as depicted in Jackson-Bailey's case of debatable loss of racial identity owing to surgeries, which meant altering his Black appearance to identify with Whites in order to gain equal opportunities and respect.

Previously, the representation of Black interest in erudition institutions was not a common thing. Nevertheless, things have taken a different turn over the years. The overrepresentation of

African-American HBCU graduates in professions that are conceivably positively associated with confidence that is high such as university professors, congressman, civil rights activists, and court judges, imply that HBCUs have shown an advantage in nurturing of the self-esteem identities, as well as character, among African-American students.

### **The GI Bill**

The two revolutions in the initiatives of government, Supreme Court measures and congressional laws, significantly changed both the African-American participants numbers and their distribution geographically throughout American institutions of higher education. Plan one was basically to pass the GI bill, which increased a lot in terms of the number of Black veterans who were able to attend college. The GI bill allowed hundreds of thousands of veterans, including Black veterans, to go to college courtesy of scholarship or prior educational achievement. The second plan was the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

As a result of this act, more Blacks had increased opportunities to select PWIs including schools in California. By 1980s, African-American enrollment in colleges and universities had risen to 1.2 million; but only 20% of these new enrollees were attending Black colleges.

Graduate education continues to be one of the fundamental pointers of access to high income and prestigious professions, as well as a precondition for a high quality of life for African-Americans. In the era of lawful segregation, academically endowed African-American students who desired to pursue university degrees usually opted to go to HBCUs due to the few available options for them.

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The overrepresentation of African-American HBCU graduates in professions that are conceivably positively associated with high confidence such as university professors, congressman, civil rights activists, and court judges imply that the presence of HBCUs has exhibited an advantage in developing self-esteem identities, as well as character, among African-American students.

### **Chapter Summary**

Findings from the previous research studies have shown that more initiatives must be taken to enhance the quality of education of Black students. As has been explained in the Literature Review and a portion of Chapter 1, there is some discrepancy between the value of education in “inner-city” and minority high schools than that in suburban schools. Clearly, not only does financial support need to be more impartially distributed, but some teachers’ attitudes, perceptions, and expectations about the abilities of Black students need to improve. Some studies have shown that America’s system of education has not made any notable differences in enhancing Black student’s achievement so they may be better prepared to attend and graduate from a higher education institution. This may be because the reforms have done little to modify instructors’ viewpoints about the potential of these students.

In addition to that sentiment, Turner and Bound (2003) show that, it is evident that when students view their educational setting as being inclusive and encouraging to their social and academic advancement; moreover, regarding their performance opportunities, they are increasingly liable to succeed. The studies imply that African-American students pursue vigorous out of class education experiences and achieve more or the same as students that stay in California who engage in similar activities.

However, while the existing studies have led to the understanding of the effectiveness of HBCUs on the Black origin students, there are various limitations in the current literature. One of the limitations is that little research that has been done in terms of the effectiveness or impact of HBCUs on the most important areas of academic success, such as school student experiences, career preparation, career advancement, and postgraduate advantages.

Similarly, the prevailing studies have obviously ignored the potentially confusing factors which might have an impact on student outcomes. Particularly, many of the researches approximating the impact and effectiveness of HBCUs have controlled for variables such as academic preparation, with most of them appearing to ignore other important background variables like gender, the parents' socioeconomic status, and characteristics of the institution like the selectivity and the enrollment size-factors which might impact the development of the student during college.

It is essential to realize that the procedure of out-of-class and peer interactions bear a positive influence on African-American student learning, as well as personal advancement despite the college or university they choose to attend for their undergraduate studies.

## **Chapter III: Qualitative Research and Methods**

### **Introduction**

The researcher made use of qualitative methods of collecting data to investigate the undergraduate school experiences of Black graduates of HBCUs who then attended and graduated from PWIs in California. These experiences were then compared with their experiences at the public or private colleges and universities in California for graduate school courses. The graduate schools are classified either as predominately White institutions (PWIs), given that there are no HBCUs in California.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions are:

1. What are the school-related experiences of the graduates at a HBCU as an undergraduate compared to the same graduates that experienced graduating from a public or private university graduate program in California?
2. How did the perceptions of Black graduates of HBCUs regarding their undergraduate college program career preparation compare with the perceptions of the same Black graduates of public or private colleges and universities in California for their graduate school program?
3. How do the perceptions of Black graduates of HBCUs and those of Black graduates of public or private colleges and universities in California compare regarding the post-graduation advantages associated with their graduate and undergraduate program experience?
4. How do the perceptions of Black graduates of HBCUs regarding post-graduation advantages associated with their undergraduate program experience compare with their perceptions of their experience in California regarding their graduate program experience?

A qualitative and a phenomenological methodology were used in this research. I conducted interviews and online surveys with the participants to collect the relevant data. The data collected included in-depth interview responses. Conducting interviews through online surveys was the preferred method of collecting qualitative data as I investigated the experiences, views, beliefs, and motivations of individual participants. This approach provided me with the opportunity to tweak the interview environment to ascertain certain aspects that could have been overlooked in the structured interviews, including changing the environment to eliminate the environmental influences from the responses given.

In addition, I also used interviews that were semi-structured and surveys to collect the data that was necessary. The interviews were partly based on structured questions and partly on the direction of the conversation. The semi-structured interviews and surveys consisted of several important questions that helped to define the phenomenon to be explored. This aspect also allowed the participants to divulge more details about their lived experiences in HBCU in relation to not only the undergraduate level but at the graduate level, as well. The interview questions will provide the participants with guidance on what to write about, as well as the chance to provide more details regarding their response.

Using interviews questions allowed the provision of a “deeper” understanding of the social phenomena studied. In addition, interviews gave the participants an opportunity to provide detailed insights into the subject of the study. During the interview, I asked the questions that would yield as much information about the studied phenomenon as possible. The aim of this research was to address research objectives of the study. Interview sessions carried out online were emailed to me through services such as Survey Monkey for further analysis. Moreover, I

took notes whilst conducting and analyzing the interviews to have the information provided by the participant available through the online source for future reference.

### **Research Objectives**

1. This research study intended to explore how effective HBCUs are in relation to serving the interests and needs of Black students born and raised in California. The study focused attention on those who chose to attend and graduate from HBCUs as an undergraduate. The same individuals then chose to attend and graduate from PWI colleges in California, such as the California State Universities and University of California institutions, and private universities for their graduate degrees.
2. To find out the undergraduate school experiences through the eyes of the Black graduates of HBCUs compared to their experiences at public or private colleges and universities in California for graduate school? The focus was to see the similarities and differences of their experiences.
3. To establish how the perceptions of Black graduates of HBCUs regarding their undergraduate college program career preparation compare with the perceptions of the same Black graduates of public or private PWI colleges and universities in California for their graduate program.
4. To establish in what ways, if any, do Black graduates from HBCUs perceive that their undergraduate college program contributed to their career advancement. It is also aimed at establishing how their perceptions compare with the perceptions of those same Black graduates who attended and graduated from public or private colleges or universities in California for their graduate school program.
5. To find out how the perceptions of Black graduates of HBCUs regarding post-graduation advantages associated with their undergraduate program experience compare with the

perceptions of those same Black graduates of public or private colleges and universities in California regarding their graduate program.

### **Site**

According to Creswell (1998), Qualitative researchers tend to collect data in the field at the site where participants' experience the issues or problem under study. The study was carried at a place in Southern California, comprising 13 males and 13 females who were born, raised, and graduated in high school in one of the five counties. Southern California was defined as any city in the Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Ventura, Orange as well as, the county of San Diego.

This site that was used for the interview was chosen to help show the most "optimal example of the phenomenon and the setting in which one is most likely to see whatever it is they are interested in" (Morse & Richards, 2007, p. 75).

The individuals in this study are students of color (those of African descent) or biracial (with one parent being an African or African-American). They also graduated from a four- year institution in California for their first degree and any of the 105 historically Black colleges or universities at the undergraduate level. The participants "are individuals who will all have knowledge of the issue explored and could express how their lives were experienced" (Creswell, 1998, p. 122). In this sense, candidates with more relevant information were chosen. This will effectively translate to accurate data and the drawing of the correct conclusions after analyzing the data collected.

### **Sample**

Purposive sampling was employed in this study so that each research participant had experienced the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 1998). In addition, each participant had graduated from a high school in Southern California and had one parent that was considered

“African-American or African,” and had experienced the phenomenon as described. This experience on a first-hand basis might contribute immensely to the understanding of the topic at hand.

A list of up to 44 participants was selected from Generation X. Generation X ordinarily uses birth years ranging from the early to mid-1960s and birth years ranging from the late 1970 to early 1980s. The participants’ ages ranged from 22- 40, half male and half female. The list was drafted and coded for managing data to be collected. The use of pseudonyms was applied to all participants to ensure confidentiality. The actual names are known to me exclusively.

Table 1.

*List of Data Collectors*

Matt	(Orange County/Grambling)
Jan	(Orange County /Hampton)
Paula	(Los Angeles/Jarvis Christian)
Carl	(Orange County /Jackson State)
Gary	(Orange County/Texas State)
John	(Los Angeles/Clark Atlanta)
Erin	(Los Angeles /Howard)
Lisa	(San Diego / Howard)

**Research Methods: Data Collection**

Because I may have personal knowledge about many of the participants, and to ensure that the participants felt open and free to discuss their undergraduate experience, the interviews were conducted and recorded individually and not in a focus group setting.



Conversations with each participant were relatively informal, so as to receive their initial reaction to each question asked. I will bear the responsibility of quickly discerning the ease with which the participants were willing and at ease when sharing information. Putting the participants at ease was necessary for the acquisition of truthful and unbiased information and helped to determine when the conversations were to take in-depth informal stances whilst keeping formality in view through objective and tactful questions.

Several forms of data collection took place which included emails, face-to-face interviews, and the use of Survey Monkey. As Morse and Richards state, “Their lived world, or they lived experience is critical to phenomenology” (2007, p. 49). Incorporated my social and personal networks, such as *Facebook Messenger* and *WhatsApp*, into this study to help in the data collection since it seems that the social networking sites are the most current means of communicating and staying in contact with one another.

### **Data Set**

A thorough interview of the subjects helped to pave the way for a phenomenological analysis of the data. This can be explained as a process of data preparation, organization, and analysis. Through qualitative lenses, I managed to gather data through what Creswell (1998) refers to as protocol; an instrument for collecting data.

The protocols included reasons for attending college; reasons for choosing the specific college they attended; the extent to which their high school experiences affected their choice of colleges; and if they received any kind of scholarship. Other types of protocol include their perceptions of HBCUs prior to attending them; if they would have attended an HBCU if one was in California; if they had switched or remained in the same field they were in during the period they attended HBCUs and why; and if there were any non-academic reasons why they attended

a HBCU. The importance of building their social networks while graduating from high school; the influence of these networks on their choices of also comprises of the protocols. Lastly, the aspects that either enhanced or hindered academic progress at the HBCUs should then be enumerated.

### **Management of Data**

Confidentiality of the subjects and their respective interviews was maintained. I used social-networking sites such as Skype or face to favorites interviews. A pass code security was put on the computer where the identities are found to keep them confidential. This means that details concerning the password and other security details are kept secured. I also stored the data collected electronically on my computer system, using a backup system that Survey Monkey provides and I noted changes made to the database.

The data was collected on flash drives, where it was dated, labeled, and kept locked in a filing cabinet designed specifically for this research project. “The system the researcher chose (use of surveys and interviews) was tailored to the task and adequate to the scope of the project and the varieties of data and analysis expected” (Morse & Richards, 2007, p. 83)

### **Data Analysis**

After collecting data, the analysis started immediately. Data for phenomenological research was primarily obtained through interview (Creswell, 1998). This data analysis was assisted by other experienced coders. This helped to address any potential bias on the part of the researcher. I used electronic means such as NVIVO for the purposes of coding and identifying themes. As such, themes and trends throughout the data were tabulated in tables, labeled, and organized so that the themes were apparent to the reader. The analysis described the experiences of those that were researched. The findings were documented by using the scripts acquired from the

interview processes to show their phenomenon logical experience. The purpose of the study was to help the reader understand better what it is like for someone to experience that.

I recorded and then scripted all interviews with subjects. For example, participant “Matt” may be highly influenced by his parents (who were both graduates of). They didn’t give him much of an option to pick a school that better met his desire to play Division 1 football. This valuable information was described in detail as part of the analysis. I sought what Creswell (1998) described as “significant phrases, developing meaning, and clustering, and placed them into themes and presenting an exhaustive description of the phenomenon” (p. 144).

This means that I asked questions such as “what influence did your parents have on your selection of college?” If the participants volunteered additional information, I recorded the same. Nevertheless, it is important to note that asking multiple probing questions may be an indicator of bias.

### **Human Subject Considerations**

Involvement of the human participants will mean that I as the researcher abided by certain ethics and rules that ensured their dignity and privacy is protected at all times. The participants were treated as autonomous agents with no pressure being used or even implied to encourage their participation. The participants were also given the option or opportunity to withdraw from participation at any time without any penalty or prejudice. They were also allowed to ask questions on how the research was being conducted. Special consideration was also taken for the participants who were incapable of understanding the information so as to make fully informed decisions on whether to take part or not. The experimental protocols were scrutinized for incidences of consistency with the prevailing ASHA guidelines and policies.

## **Instrumentation**

The questionnaire was developed with the goal of the research in mind. It contained different kinds of questions to improve on its reliability and flexibility at gaining information from the respondents. The first part of the questionnaire contained dichotomous questions. These questions were generally no/yes queries with some that required agree/disagree. These are the simplest of the questions to analyze but they do not form a highly sensitive measure. The next set of questions had multiple choice questions which contained three or even more categories that were mutually exclusive. This section was being easier to analyze however, its only drawback was that it may not provide the respondent with the answer that they seek since the options are restricted. In this study, the questionnaires were designed in such a manner that they ensured the respondents' anonymity. There was no designated spot for writing down the respondent's name but each of the questionnaires had a unique code that were referred to if need be.

## **Credibility of the Instrument**

The questionnaire's credibility is enhanced by making sure that the respondents were assured of their privacy and anonymity. This was to make them more honest and truthful since I made sure the provided information could not be traced back to them. They were also briefed on how the returned questionnaires would be stored and the necessity of them not including any personal unique identifiers.

## **Positionality-Role of the Researcher**

The reason why I have a passion for exploring this study is reflected in the quote by Creswell. This study reflected my own history, culture, and personal experiences. This is more than a simple biography in which a writer or researcher affirms his or her background; rather, it

focused on how individuals' culture, gender, history, and experiences shaped all aspects of the qualitative project (p. 46-47).

I am a Black woman who is a second-generation, HBCU college graduate, and the first in my family to pursue and graduate with a postgraduate degree. I was born and raised in Orange County, California from African-American parents from Gary, Indiana. My father went to college at Purdue University but did not graduate, while my mother graduated from Tennessee State University (HBCU). In addition, I have an older (parental) half-brother who attended DeVry College and a younger brother who graduated from Grambling State University (HBCU). Growing up in Anaheim, Fountain Valley, and then San Clemente, California, being many times the only Black person in school, while having parents and a family that were very "pro-Black" was a great experience. My lenses may be different than one from a city such as Los Angeles or Oakland, California. I was also a figure skating child prodigy (specifically placed to be the next Black Olympic skater), with a conservative/traditional upbringing in the Church of Christ.

I entered Paul Quinn College in Dallas, Texas, (a small HBCU) under a full, academic SAT scholarship after turning down several track and field scholarship offers to attend a non-HBCU school. There, at Paul Quinn College, I became a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated (first sorority founded for Black women, by Black women, in 1908). Thereafter, I transferred to Howard University (HBCU) where I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Broadcast Journalism and a minor in Theatre Arts.

While pursuing my career in the Entertainment industry, I inquired about substituting at a school in the County of Prince Georges, Maryland, (approximately 90% African-American). I was offered a position to teach 8<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts shortly after my inquiry. I started my Master of Arts in Education program at Bowie State University (HBCU) in Maryland to fulfill

my credential requirements, where I was offered a Church of Christ scholarship at Pepperdine University. I transferred to Pepperdine University where I obtained my Master of Arts in Education. I taught for Pasadena Unified School District (Blair High School, grades 7-12) for two years while completing my advanced degree. Currently, I am pursuing my doctoral degree in Leadership, Administration, and Policy from Pepperdine University and a career in Higher Education.

My journey, experiences, and struggles have brought me to this goal, to discover what the benefits would be for students of color if a higher learning institution were established in California. I had to travel all over the country to complete what I wanted to learn since I entered Howard University's campus at the age of 16. My mother and a close friend would spend days telling me of their experiences of attending a historically Black college, and I was curious and intrigued.

The Positionality as the researcher emanates from her ability to set aside her own experiences and focus on the data received during the research. In this way, the participants' experiences are highlighted as intended by the research (Creswell, 1998). Setting aside my opinion contributes immensely to the truth value of the research exercise. I utilized Journaling to maintain a sense of objectivity in order to continue focusing on the experiences of the participants rather than her own.

## Chapter IV: Data Analysis

### Introduction

The objective of this study is to determine how effective HBCUs are in serving the interests and needs of Black native Californians. That means, those who choose to live Southern California and not only attend but also graduate from a Historically Black College or University. In this case as an undergraduate moreover, comparing their Undergraduate years to their years in graduate school. Following the objectives of the study, a data analysis has to be conducted to ensure the viability and reliability of the study outcome. This involved the initial procedures of identifying location to collect data and later on taken in for analysis.

Data had to be collected, analyzed, and the findings presented. The methods used to collect data were questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. The questions presented during the interviews and the questionnaires were similar to maintain consistency. Questionnaires each of which consisted of questions were sent to different individuals who met the sample requirement by email followed by face to face interviews. The same questionnaire was also published in an online tool called Survey Monkey, which targeted the respondents. The total numbers of respondents targeted were 30 and 7 responded to the entire survey, where 10 responded to a select few questions. The targeted population was from the state of California. Specifically, Southern Californian African-Americans who had attended and graduated from a four-year undergraduate program at an HBCU and then a mainstream PWI institution back in their native state of California.

This particular chapter gave an analysis of the findings based on the respondents' responses to these questionnaires and the face-to-face interviews.

## Response Rate

Twenty-six respondents out of the targeted 44 participated in the face-to-face interview. Thirteen were male, and 13 were female. Therefore, the response rate of the face to face interview was 59.1%. Out of the 60 questionnaires sent by email, 42 respondents replied. Therefore, the response rate of the questionnaire sent by mail was 70%. More respondents preferred to answer the questions via the Survey Monkey. Therefore, out of the planned total of 200 respondents, a total of 100 respondents answered the questionnaire. Thus, the average response rate was 58.5%.

Table 2.  
*Response Rates of Data Collection Method*

Mode of Data Collection	Number of Targeted Respondents	Respondent Turnout	Response Rate in percentages (%)
Face to face interview	44	26	59.1
Questionnaire by E-mail	120	84	70.0
Questionnaire on survey monkey	29	7	24.14

However, it must be noted that not all the questions in the survey received a 100% response rate. Besides, there were regrets. There were varied response rates for each question. All the 58 respondents responded to the first four questions. Hence, the first four questions received a 100% rate. Item number 5 received a response rate of 88.03%. The next three issues



received a response rate of 85.47%. In this section, 17 respondents skipped each question. The last issue received the lowest response rate. A response rate of 50% was recorded for this question, as 50 respondents skipped this question. There was an average 89.08% response rate for all the questions that were responded to.

The table illustrates the above information.

Table 3.  
*Response Rates from the Questionnaire*

Question	Respondents	Number of respondents who skipped this question	Response Rate in percentages (%)
1	100	0	100
2	100	0	100
3	100	0	100
4	100	0	100
5	100	14	88.03
6	100	17	85.47
7	100	17	85.47
8	100	17	85.47
9	100	50	50

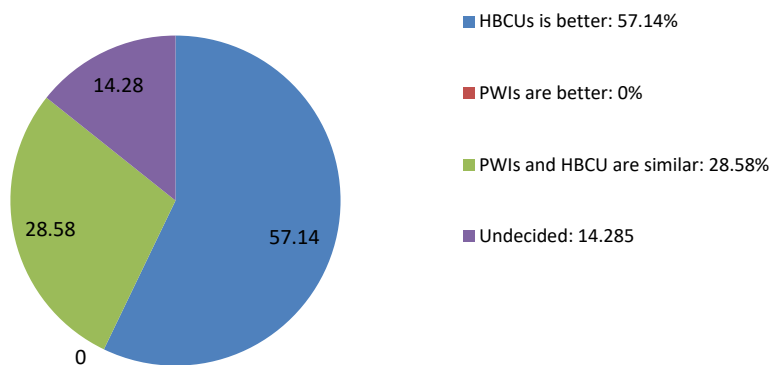
The subsequent sections show an analysis of the individual questions to fulfill each objective of the study regarding Graduate school-related experiences while undergraduates at

HBCUs compared to the experiences of graduates from public or private university graduate program in California (PWIs).

This was counted among the regrets. The regrets formed 11.97% out of the total response.

The majority, 59.75%, indicated that they had a better experience in HBCUs as compared to public or private university graduate schools in California. Most of them noted that the bond between the peers and even with their professors was stronger in HBCUs than in PWIs. Those who attended an HBCU reported that their relationships were like that of a family. Also, most of them felt that being students in HBCU gave them more confidence. Studies by Van Camp (2009) and Bentley-Edwards and Mar (2015), observes that there are closer professor-student relationships and closer peer-to-peer relationships among Black Americans in HBCUs than the interracial relationships seen in PWIs.

#### Undergraduate Experiences at HBCUs Compared to PWIs



*Figure 4.* From “Comparison of Undergraduate Experiences between HBCU and PWI’s,” from Provasnik, 2004, adapted with permission.

A total of 28.28% of the total population reported that the experience at both institutions was similar. They noted that the amount of attention and care provided by the professors at both institutions were similar. None reported that PWIs had a better experience than HBCUs. It formed 0% of the total responses. Table 4 summarizes the previous information.

Table 4.  
*Response Rate from Each Institution*

Institution	Response in %	Total Valid Response
HBCU had a better experience.	59.75%	88.03%
PWI had a better experience.	0.0%	
Both PWI and HBCU had a similar experience.	28.28%	
Invalid response.	11.97%	

Next there is a comparison of how Black students in HBCUs relate to their college professors compared to how Black students in PWIs relate with their professors:

<p>Tell the researcher how your relationships were with your professors at the HBCU and California school you attended. How were the relationships different and how were the similar?</p>
<p>Respondent 1: I had great relationships with the majority of my professors at my 2 colleges that I attended both undergrad and graduate. Professors at my HBCU War more like family and the professors at the California school or more like professors. The only relationships that really stuck were the relationships between my African-American</p>

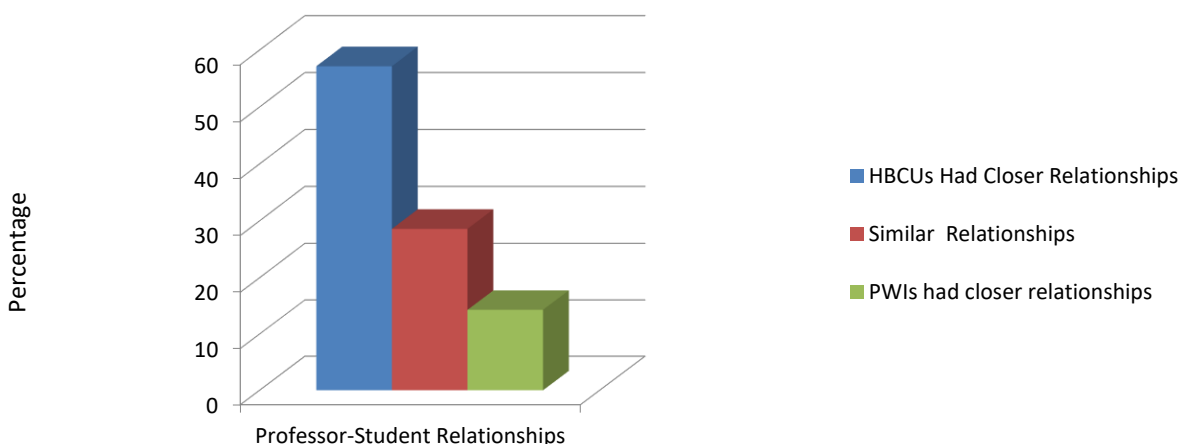
professors at both schools. I had non-African American professors at both colleges but it was the relationship with the African-American professors that really stuck.

Respondent 2: My relationships with my professors at my HBCU were not consistent in that some expected the best and others were more lenient. All my professors at my grad school expected the best.

Respondent 3: the most part, I think my relationships with my professors were the same. I didn't necessarily develop close relationships with many of my professors at either school, maybe a select one or two. However, at my graduate school, I did gravitate more towards the Black professors, simply because I had more in common with them and they were a part of organizations like BSU so I was able to get to know them better outside of class.

Respondent 4: The relationships with my professors at my HBCU were more personal than those I established at California schools. With the professors at the California schools, the relationship ended when the class was over.

Respondent 5: Relationships appeared to be about the exact same. I found mentors at all institutions that were willing to help. I also found professors at all institutions that genuinely weren't interested in establishing a close student/teacher relationship



*Figure 5.* From “HBCUs Professor-Student Relations,” from Fountaine, 2012, adapted with permission.

As illustrated by the above bar graph, HBCUs had a better or a close professor-student relationship. 57.14% said that their relationships with their professors were more like family. They had a working relationship with their professors who taught them than they had with the professors from PWIs (Fountaine, 2012). Also, notes that the relationship between students and teachers and among the peers at the HBCUs is closer than those observed at the PWIs. One respondent quoted saying, “one of my professors was like a father to me” during his tenure at a HBCU. Twenty-eight point five seven % of the total respondents felt that their relationships with professors from both institutions were similar. Finally, 14.29% of the total respondents reported that their relationship with their professors from PWIs was more consistent than they had with the professors from the HBCUs.

### **The Presence or Absence of Discomforts; Social, Political or Academic Experience in HBCU and California Universities**

In this section, some of the responses were incomplete, in that some respondents noted cases of discomfort but did not specify whether it was social, political, or academic discomfort. Both HBCUs and PWIs had various cases of discomfort at their institution. PWIs had 90 cases of discomforts where 30 were social, 30 were political, and the other 30 were not specified. Another responded was quoted as saying “during their years at their PWI they never truly felt at home.” PWIs contributed 85.47% of the total cases of discomforts while studying at their institution.

On the other hand, HBCUs had only 17 cases of distress, which were political. HBCUs contributed to only 14.53% of the total. Political issues contributed the overall majority, which was 48.72%, followed by social and unspecified, which were tied at 25.64% each. The academic section did not report any discomfort while studying at their institution.

Generally, Hamilton (2009) observes that Black American students are more comfortable in HBCU institutions than the Black American students at PWI bodies.

The table summarizes the above analysis.

Table 5.  
*Cases of Distress Institution Wise*

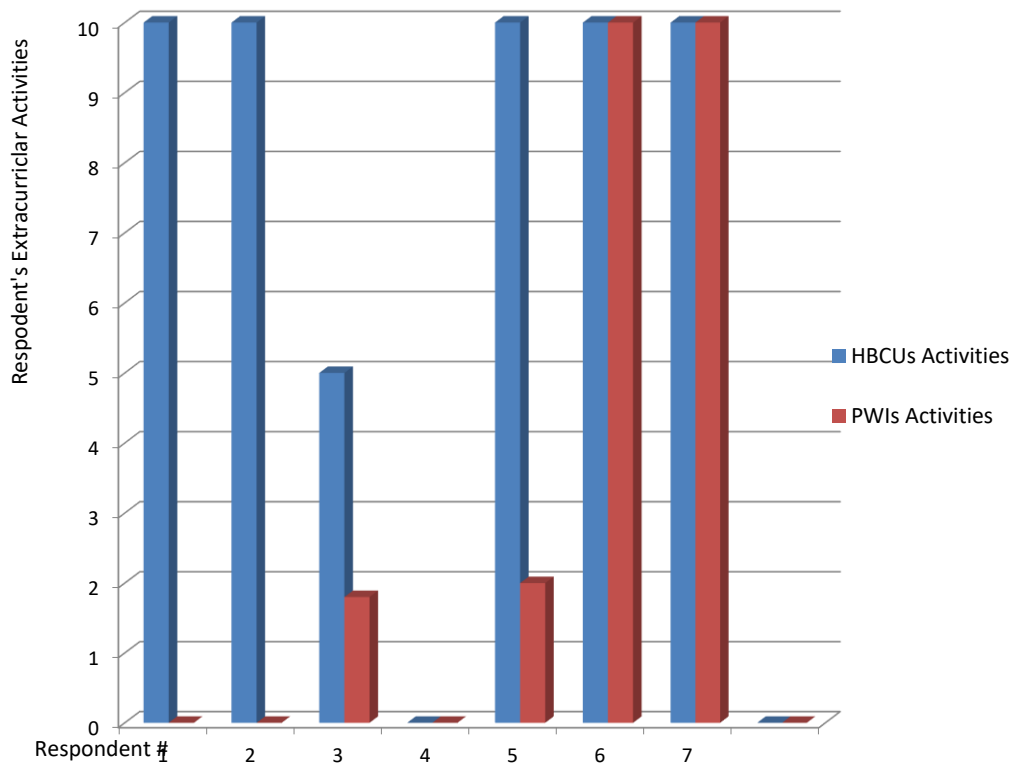
Discomforts							
Institution	Discomfort presence	How many?	%	Social	Political	Academic	Unspecified
HBCUs	yes	17	14.53%	0	17	0	0
PWIs	yes	83	85.47%	30	40	0	30
Total		100	100.00%	30 25.64%	57 48.72%	0 0.0%	30 25.64%

Were there any negative or uncomfortable social, political, or academic experiences that happened directly or indirectly while you were at the HBCU and/or California universities?

Respondent 1: An HBCU schools don't want really any racial negative racial experiences was more political like corporate politics because everybody was the same at the historical Black college pretty much every student had some kind of African descent at the HBCUs. The California schools I really felt like a number I didn't feel as connected to those schools as I did the HBCU but I wouldn't say there was really anything negative that happened besides maybe with some of the student body and their perception of me because I was African American.

Respondent 2: I did not experience any discomfort in the aforementioned areas at my HBCU. I did however experience some discomfort at my graduate program due to the diversity of the student body.
Respondent 3: No
Respondent 4: No, there were no negative experiences that occurred at either school.
Respondent 5: A few situations but nothing beyond the range of normal
Respondent 6: None that I can recall.
Respondent 7: Yes: 1. racial tensions escalating in nearby Forsythe County and Stone Mountain. Both at the time had a large KKK presence and there were instances of crimes against Blacks, KKK rallies and harassment; 2. fear of retaliation from people opposed to Spelman and Morehouse's continued protest of the apartheid in So. Africa, and 3. general fear of being harassed by police or people if any of us students stepped outside of the ATL city limits, or Fulton County.

The figure presents a comparison of Black Americans in HBCUs' involvement in extracurricular activities and Black Americans in PWIs' participation in extracurricular activities. Data is stated in percentages.



*Figure 6.* From data on respondents' "Involvement in Extracurricular Activities" based on information from Gasman, 2010, adapted with permission.

As depicted in the figure above, 71.42% of the respondents who attended HBCUs were extremely interested in extra-curricular activities. 14.29% were involved, and 14.29% did not participate at all. On the other hand, 42.86% of the respondents who attended PWIs were not involved in any extracurricular activity. Specifically, 28.57% were underrepresented while only 28.57% were extremely involved in extracurricular activities. Table 6 gives further insights on this.

How involved in extracurricular activities were you at the HBCU and at the California school? Explain in detail, your experience.

Respondent 1: I was extremely active at the historical Black college. At first, I was apprehensive about being active, but I was encouraged by many of the student body to



participate because they felt that I would do a good job. I was not active am I graduate school in California. I really just wanted to go to class and go home I don't really have any lasting relationships after my graduate school program.

Respondent 2: I was involved in a sorority and the cheer squad at my HBCU. Both groups offered new friends, experiences and fun. I was not involved in any activities in my graduate program because I was a full-time worker and student and I had no time.

Respondent 3: I was involved in a few clubs at my HBCU. Of course, I socialized and attended parties and things like that. At my California school, I was involved in BSU and that was it. But I also had a very busy life outside of graduate school that didn't allow me to be too involved with things there. I pretty much saw graduate school as school, go to class on Fridays and then leave so I could carry on with other things in my life. I was not really trying to be involved, whereas at my HBCU, I lived on campus. Being a part of extracurricular given because I was always on campus.

Respondent 4: I was not involved in any extracurricular activities outside of attending games.

Respondent 5: I was heavily involved in activities ranging from community service, fraternities, organized professional societies, etc. as that was heavily encouraged at the HBCU. I had very limited activities at the California school due primarily to the lack of time as well as not much emphasis amongst the school as well as my colleagues to do so.

Respondent 6: I was deeply involved at Tennessee State University. Freshman year I was a part of the Pep club, which is like a group of students that excite the audience with different chants and cheers for the football games or basketball games played. I

also was a part of the Californian that same year and represented as Miss California during the TSU pageant. My junior year I became a Resident Assistant at the freshman dorm. I also was elected President for the Student Teacher Education club and was responsible for bringing in guest speakers and holding meetings and representing at the local and statewide meetings held. Senior year I pledged Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and we held a plethora of campus events, community service projects, and chapter meetings. At Cal State LA, I was asked to be a host at one of the campus events to talk about the education department and I was a candidate to be inducted into an honor society.

Respondent 7: I was extremely active in extra-curricular activities both in private school and at the HBCUs. In private school, I was active in all sports and in the orchestra playing flute. At Spelman, I earned my 20 pearls and pledged Mu Pi Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., was a student representative to the College's Board, and member of the English and Political Science clubs. At my law school, I pledged Phi Alpha Delta Legal Fraternity.

Table 6.  
*Involvement in Extracurricular Activities*

Institution	Extremely Involved	Involved	Underrepresented	Not Involved
HBCUs	71.42%	14.29%	0.0%	14.29%
PWIs	28.57%	0.0%	28.57%	42.86%

How did the perceptions of graduates of Black origin from HBCUs regarding their undergraduate college program career preparation compare with the perceptions of Black graduates of public or private colleges and universities in California for their graduate school program? A. Why did you choose both colleges you attended? B. Did you receive any scholarships at either or both institution? C. Did your family members or other influences (i.e., high school teacher or coach) attend either or both universities you graduated from?

Table 7.  
*Perceptions of Black Graduates*

Institution	Convenience	Scholarships	Influence of Family	Positive Perception	Negative Perception
HBCUs	0	33	67	33	17
PWIs	67	0	0	0	0

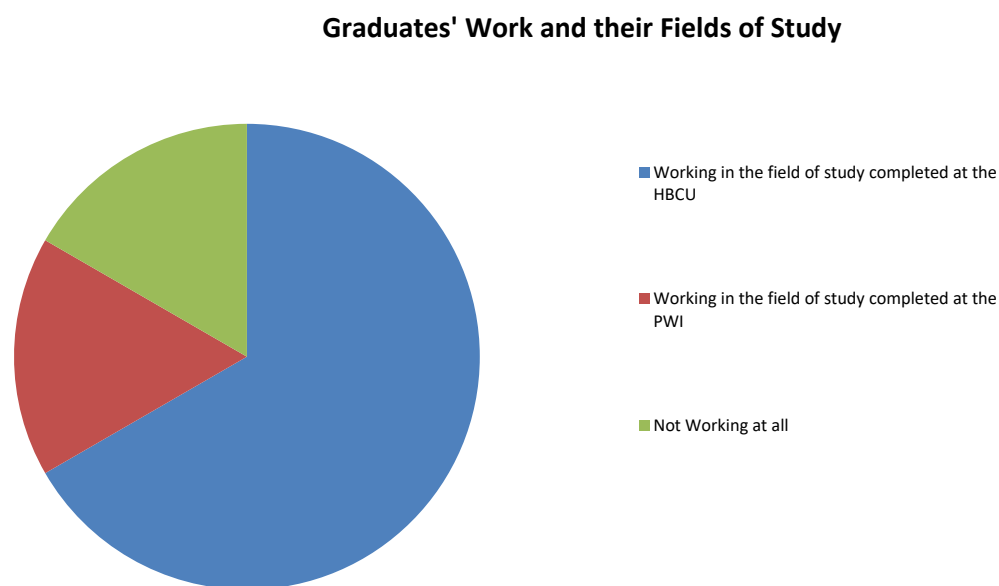
As illustrated above, most Black Americans attend HBCUs because of the influence of the people they are close to fifty-seven-point twenty-six % of them visit HBCUs because of the recommendation of close relatives who attended the same institution. A similar trend was observed by Freeman (2002). Also, 28.21% of them attended because of the scholarships offered by these institutions. (Nia Imani Cantey, 2013) noted that financial constraints are a major factor that impedes African-Americans from obtaining an education. Twenty-eight-point twenty-one% of Black Americans have positive perceptions about the HBCUs.

Finally, 14.53% of the Black Americans who attend HBCUs felt that there are still people who have a negative attitude towards HBCUs. All the respondents who attended PWIs reported

that they do so for convenience. Either they can afford, or a PWI program fits into their schedules.

“How do the perceptions of Black graduates of HBCUs and those Black graduates of a public or private colleges and universities in California compare regarding post-graduation advantages associated with their graduate program experience? A. Are you working in the field of study that you completed at the HBCU or the California school? Explain in detail why or why not. B. How was the job search after both graduations, if you worked in between each program?”

Most respondents (57.14%) said they are working in the field of study they completed at the HBCU. 28.57% of the total respondents reported that they are working in the field of study they completed at the PWI. A minority of 14.29% said that they are not working at all. This disparity can be represented by the pie chart.



*Figure 7.* From “Comparison of Field of Study and Current Work for Graduated Students from HBCU and PWI’s” based on information from Gasman, 2010, adapted with permission.

How easy was the job search after graduating from HBCU or PWI?

Not all respondents completely answered the question. A few respondents did not specify how easy or how difficult the job search was. Those who did not respond formed 5.13% out of the total response. The remaining 94.87% answered the questions thoroughly. Out of the remaining participants, 33.33% reported that it was easy to secure a job in the same field they completed from HBCUs. However, the same percentage said that it is hard to secure a job in the same field of study they graduated from HBCU. Similarly, Gasman (2010) observes that even though Black students often do not fare well in predominantly White institutions, those who graduate from Historically Black Colleges have relatively the same success rate as those who graduated from predominantly White institutions.

On the other hand, 33.33% said that it was easy to secure a job in the same field they graduated from PWI. None reported that it was difficult to secure a job after graduating from the PWI. However, it must be noted that one respondent did not specify how difficult it was to secure a job.

<p>How do the perceptions of Black graduates of HBCUs regarding post-graduation advantages associated with their undergraduate program experience compare with the perceptions of those Black graduates of a PWI in California regarding their graduate program experience?</p>
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<p>Respondent 1: I believe there's more prestige with those that don't go to historical Black colleges except for those individuals that are really concerned about Black rights Black civil rights. Those that are concerned with Black civil rights usually hold the historical Black colleges and high esteem. But besides those individuals California schools are considered more in high esteem in the perception is more prestigious.</p>
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Respondent 2: I find that graduates of a HBCU have more confidence and tend to go further in their career and education as opposed to those who went to a PWI.

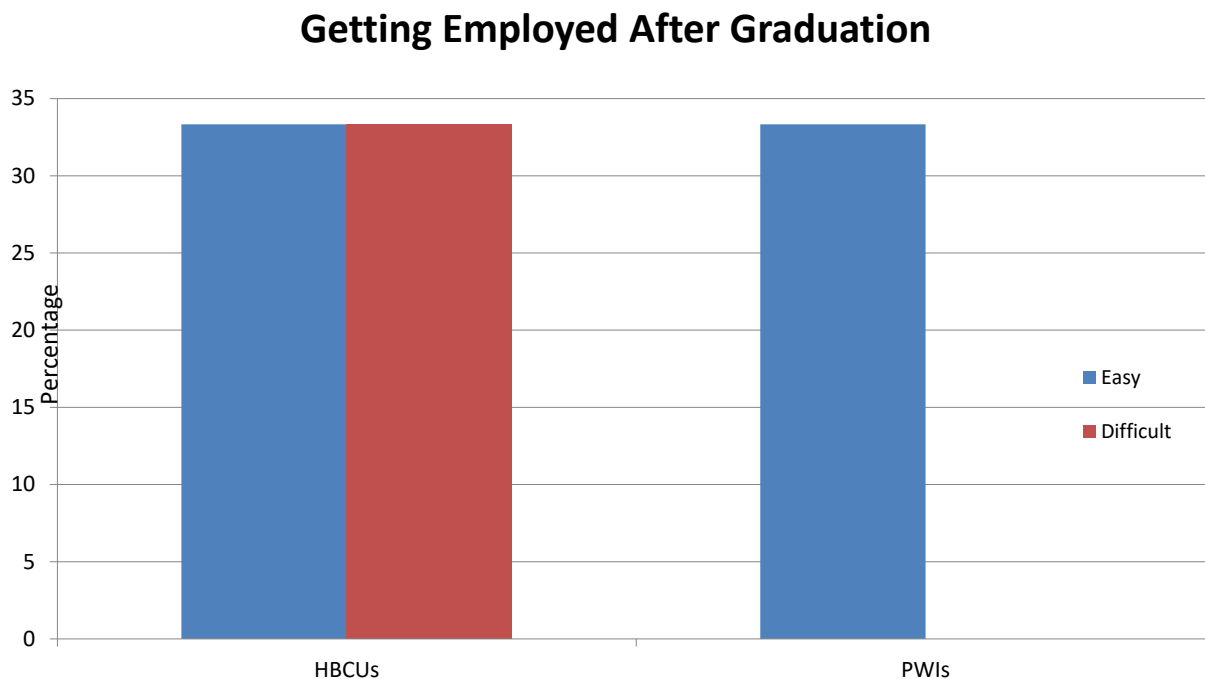
Respondent 3: I think graduates of HBCUs are just more hopeful and confident about finding jobs. We were taught that we are the best of the best and we leave our HBCUs with much confidence. I'm not sure students from PWIs have that level of confidence.

Respondent 4: I feel that much of the focus at both are on graduating.

Respondent 5: I have more connections with my fellow TSU alumni as well as my sorority sisters and other member of the Divine Nine. I believe the perception of the advantages are known within HBCU graduates, but still not a perception that is widely believed to be an advantage. As far as sorority membership, it applies to both an HBCU as well as a PWI, however the lines are bigger at an HBCU and the number of line sisters you will have connections with alone will be greater than a PWI due to a much smaller line mostly due to the difference in the small number of people interested in pledging interested in being a member of a predominantly Black sorority or fraternity.

Respondent 6: The perception of graduating from an HBCU v a PWI has always had an unfair negative connotation. Graduating from Spelman was the best decisions of my life. It not only prepared me academically to compete with any graduate of a PWI, but it also enhanced my self-awareness as an African American, my self-esteem and prepared me quite efficiently to not only compete with PWI graduates, but to win and excel beyond their expectations of an HBCU graduate.

The following bar graph depicts the above analysis. The following bar graph shows how easy it is for a Black graduate from a HBCU to land a job compared to after they graduated from a PWI to a job in percentage.



*Figure 8.* From “Employment Rates after Graduation for HBCU and PWI’s” from Gasman, 2010, adapted with permission.

How do the perceptions of Black graduates of HBCUs regarding the post-graduation advantages associated with their undergraduate program experience compared with the perceptions of the graduates from a PWI in California regarding their graduate program experience?

The majority (66.67%) of those who responded perceive that Black graduates from HBCUs had more post-graduation advantages than the graduates from a PWI. A minority (16.66%) perceived that both HBCU and PWI tie. Moreover, they believed no graduate has an advantage over the other (Gasman, 2010). Also, observes that both HBCU and PWI students have roughly the same competitive advantages after graduation

Finally, 16.67% believe that graduates from PWIs have a great post-graduation advantage over Black graduates from HBCUs. I believe that the benefits of graduating from a PWI institution are more than being alumni of an HBCU. This information can be summarized in

Table 8.

*Post-Graduation Advantages Institution Wise*

Institution	Post-Graduation Advantages in % (percentage)	Total Valid Response % (percentage)
HBCU	66.67%	85.47%
PWI	16.67%	
Both HBCU and PWI tie	16.66%	

The following pie chart depicts these traits.

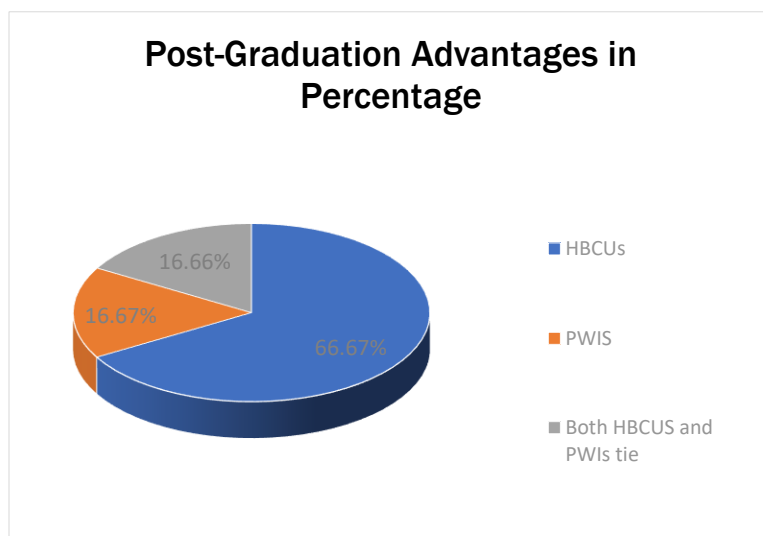


Figure 9. From "Post-Graduation Advantages Institution Wise" from Heller 2004, adapted with permission.

The pie chart above, according to (Gasman, 2010); gives an analysis of Americans who are Black and who are part of the alumni association in HBCU and Californian Universities. It



provides reasons why or why they are not part of the alumni associations of their universities as well as why and why they donate to either or both institutions. Half (50%) of those who responded said that they are in the alumni association at the HBCU institution they attended. A minority (16.66%) reported that they are alumni at both the HBCU and PWI institutions they attended. A small percentage (16.67%) said that they are alumni of the PWI institution they attended. Generally, Brogdon (2011) observes that institutions do not do enough to engage their Black American alumni. Lastly, 16.67% reported that they are neither active alumni of HBCU nor PWI institutions. Those who were active alumni of either school quoted tight schedules as being the reason for not doing so.

Half (50%) of those who attended an HBCU institution have donated to that organization. They said that they felt it is their duty to do so. None of those who attended a PWI institution donated to their university. They quoted financial difficulties and a busy schedule that constrains them from making any contributions.

The table summarizes the above information.

<p>Are you a part of the alumni association for the HBCU and/or California school you graduated from? Why or why not. Please explain in detail. Do you donate time and or money to either or both universities you graduated from? Explain why you do or do not, in detail.</p>
<p>Respondent 1: I'm not part of either institutions. I want to be part of my HBCU alumni association but getting information to do so has proven difficult. Also, I do not donate time because I live in California and my HBCU is in TX. I'm not part of my graduate alumni yet.</p>

Respondent 2: I am a part of the alumni association for my HBCU, although I need to pay my dues. I am not a part of an alumni association for my California school, simply because I don't know anything about an alumni association for my grad school. I was automatically enrolled in the alumni association as soon as I graduated from my HBCU. Our first year of dues was free, so I automatically joined. b. When I can, I donate money to my HBCU. Haven't donated anything to my grad school. I probably won't, because I have enough loans to pay at the moment, and they don't ask. My HBCU asks for money all the time, I had a better experience there, and I'm more supportive of helping out other Black students.

Respondent 3: I was involved in the alumni association of my HBCU but had to stop due to career and family demands.

Respondent 4: I was a member with the TSU LA Alum chapter for a year when I moved back to California, and I have made a small donation once. I have not donated time or money. Simply due to a busy time schedule as far as time is concerned. Before marriage and before having children, I would attend every Homecoming and fly back to Nashville. I haven't been back to attend a Homecoming and be involved in the community service project we have during that weekend since being married in 2010.

Respondent 5: Yes, I am a member of Spelman's alumni assoc. Giving back is not optional it is a pleasure and mandate expected of all alumnae to uphold and continue the legacy.

Table 9.  
*Rate of Alumni Association*

Institution	Alumni in %	Reasons for not being in the Alumni Association	Donation in %	Reason for Donating or not Donating	Total Valid Response in %
HBCU	50%	Tight schedules and financial difficulties.	50%	Goodwill	85.47%
PWI	16.67%		0.0%	Financial difficulties, busy schedules	
Both HBCU and PWI	16.66%		0.0%	-	
Neither PWI nor HBCU	16.67%		-	-	

Experiences that Black Americans either in HBCUs or PWIs found interesting, or information or something that has not been addressed that they may want to share.

This section recorded the lowest response rate. Out of the majority, 57.26% out of the total respondents responded to this question. Out of this 25%, a number of respondents said that they had shared everything that needed to be shared and had nothing more to share. Half (50%) of the total respondents felt that HBCU imparted more self-confidence as African-Americans. A quarter (25%) of those who responded indicated that both institutions were helpful.

The table gives a summary of the above information.

Table 10.  
*Response Rate on Self-Confidence*

Institution	Self Confidence in %	Total Response Rate
HBCU	50%	57.26%
PWI	0.0%	
Both HBCU and PWI	25%	

### **Conclusion**

In summary, most Black Americans born and raised in Southern California were more comfortable at HBCUs than at colleges and universities in California. The findings show that the management of the HBCUs has measures to ensure students are comfortable, and thus the majority of African-Americans prefer HBCUs over their California PWIs.

Per this research, the leading factor that makes African-Americans prefer HBCUs over the PWIs they attended in California, was the close relationship among the peers and their professors. Most of the respondents reported that the bond between peers and their professors at the HBCUs are unyielding; further, they stated that their experience was like being around their family.

The second factor is that of the post-graduation advantages associated with an institution, that is, the benefits associated with graduating at an HBCU or a PWI. So many respondents indicated that the line they are working is in the field of their studies after graduating from HBCUs compared to most alumni of their California schools, who are not working in their field of study. From the above findings, the majority of Black Americans that attended both the

HBCU and California PWI are making donations to their respective HBCU institution alumni associations in comparison to the number of alumni endorsing and donating to the alumni association at PWIs. It shows that the alumni of HBCUs were more satisfied with the education they received.

Lastly, a major concern that hinders African-Americans from getting an education is finance (Lotkowski, Robbins, & Noeth, 2004). Historically Black College and Universities are encouraged to provide affordable education to the less privileged, such as the minority who are Black. To encourage education for all, implementation of robust scholarship programs is very important (Heller, 2004). Financial aids such as scholarships, grants, endowments, loans, and minority scholarships would boost the number of African-Americans acquiring an education. Indeed, this will empower them, and encourage equality among different groups of people.

## Chapter V: Discussion

### Introduction

This chapter presents the study summary and discussion of implications of the study. Specifically, this chapter interprets and describes the significance of the findings, considering what was already known concerning the research problem. An explanation of new insights and understandings about the problem after analyzing the findings into consideration is given. This chapter commences by presenting the explanation of the results, and then gives references to the previous research, before making a concise summary of the implications of the study.

Over the years, the relevance of HBCUs has been questioned, especially with most of these institutions facing cohort default rates, declining enrollment, and fiscal issues. Considering this, my research study sought to explore the effectiveness of HBCUs in providing a service, which meets the interests and the needs of Black students born and raised in California, being that the HBCU model is not largely represented as in other states. In this study, there was an above average response rate (58.5%), where 100 students participated out of the planned 200. This makes the findings more general to Southern California.

For a student attending an HBCU institution, striving for excellence acts as a strong asset to future success. In most ways, this study has shown this to be true. When comparing PWIs, with HBCUs, specifically in California, many Black students claim to feel relatively more comfortable when around people who look like them. The study revealed that 59.75% of the Black students who attended HBCUs had a better experience compared to their California experience. Being in a predominantly Black environment helped the students to develop bonds with professors and peers, resulting in a family-like relationship.

More than half (57.14%) of the respondents indicate that HBCUs have a better relationship between professor and students compared to the graduate program they attended in California. According to Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2014), every person thrives better in an environment where they feel understood and accepted. Considering this, the students who are Black tend to feel and perform better in an HBCU environment where they feel their professors understand them better. This has created a less attractive educational environment. The establishment of HBCUs created a conducive and serene educational environment that students could relate to and develop social bonds more easily. This is reflected by the findings that PWIs had an overwhelming majority regarding discomfort issues. They contributed to 85.47% (compared to 14.53% of the HBCUs) of the total discomfort cases, including political, social, and other factors.

Black students graduating from HBCUs have a high likelihood of feeling that they are supported more while in college and thrived well afterward than were the Black graduate from PWIs. Preparation for future careers requires students to be empowered, feel accepted and supported, and learn in an environment that instills self-confidence and self-esteem (Williams & Williams, 2011). This study revealed that HBCUs instills to the Black students a sense of belonging environment, and thus creates a better way for them to thrive even after college than their peers from PWIs. This study revealed that 28.21% of Black graduates from HBCUs attended these institutions due to the positive perception that they have on the institution, compared to 0% of California graduate school experience they had.

It is worthy to note that relatives and friends played an instrumental role in helping Black students choose the kind of educational institution to attend. About 57.26% of HBCU graduates were found to have attended these institutions due to influence and recommendations of close

family members and friends who also attended similar institutions. According to Grier and Cobbs (2000), close relatives played a critical role in helping Black graduates feel more fulfilled about a career they had chosen. Only 14.53% of the HBCU students' experience felt that there are still people with a negative attitude toward HBCUs. In summary, the HBCUs experience left a positive perception regarding their undergraduate college program career preparation as compared with the perceptions of their graduate program experience in California.

The majority of the HBCUs graduates pursue careers that are commensurate with their educational background. In this study, 54.17% of the participants stipulated that they are working in the field of the studies that they completed in HBCU, while only 28.57% of the students said they were working in the field of their study after their graduate program was over. This indicates that most of the HBCU graduates are motivated to work in their field of their study and continue in what they originally started. This reveals the positive impact that HBCU programs and learning environment have on the career choice of Black students. However, concerning getting a job opportunity, there is an equal probability of either securing the job. Nearly a third (33.33%) of HBCU graduates stated that it was easy to secure a job opportunity in their field of study.

This is also a similar case for post-graduate studies, stating the extent to which they are unlikely to secure a job. It can be explained better from an observation by Smyth and McArdle (2004), who noted that other than the difference in inner motivation and personal level of confidence, Black graduates, regardless of the type of institution they attended, have equal chances of securing a job. This is because most of the organizations and employers look at the qualification and background of the applicant in relation to the required qualifications and job roles, rather than the institution from which they graduated.



Since the level of interest, engagement, and interaction has been found to be more in HBCUs than in non-HBCU institutions, graduate students from such institutions have a higher chance of future success than students from non-HBCUs. In addition, most of the HBCUs graduates reported having had professors and mentors who connected with them on a personal level. Having inter-personal connections plays a critical role in assisting students in growing into more goal-oriented individuals.

In addition, many respondents agreed that their HBCU institution prepared them for postgraduate life. About two-thirds (66.67%) of the respondents have a perception that graduates from HBCUs had more post-graduation advantages compared to their California university. This figure is higher than 16.67% of the respondents who believed that Black students from both HBCUs and PWIs have equal competitive advantages after graduation. In addition, only 16.67% believed that California graduates have a higher post-graduation advantage than those graduating from HBCUs.

According to Kaiser (2005), the attitude of the students towards the institution can be well gauged by their likelihood of keeping ties with the same institution after graduation. In this study, 50% of the graduates from HBCUs said they were in the alumni association of the HBCU institution they attended. Only 16.67% said they are members of their alumni association to their California alma mater. The wide disparity between these two groups can be explained by the nature of the bond that a student develops with peers, professors, and other people within and without the institutions, with students from HBCUs arguably developing stronger bonds than their peers from PWIs. The findings indicate that Black students from HBCUs from Southern California feel more comfortable, engage more in extracurricular activities, and expect more association with their institutions even after graduating than they did at their graduate

school in California. This indicates that, despite various infrastructural, resources, funding, and historical limitations, HBCUs have achieved their primary objective of edifying and empowering the African-American Students.

### **References to Previous Research**

The finding that undergraduates from HBCUs are more likely to prosper more than their counterparts with a sole experience from a PWIs is in tandem with the “*Gallup-USA Funds Minority College Graduates Report*” (USA Fund, 2015). This study found out that there is a higher likelihood for graduates from HBCUs to excel to a higher level after graduation than those with no HBCU experience. The study involved 2278 graduates from both HBCUs and other institutions. The well-being of the graduates after graduation was measured regarding financial, purpose, social, physical, and community aspects. Nearly 55% of HBCUs graduates stipulated that they felt more prepared for life after graduation, compared to 29% from other institutions. This shows there is a relatively high level of satisfaction from HBCUs graduates with their engagement at work and college experience. These findings say a lot about the beneficial experiences of the Black students who attend HBCUs.

Furthermore, this study revealed stronger experiential and emotional support that HBCU graduates get from professors and mentors. In a study by many graduates from HBCUs agree that students who attended HBCUs are more prosperous because they have more of purpose and mission compared to students from PWIs. Wooden (2016) noted that non-HBCU institutions should learn from HBCUs about offering the experience of more experiential and emotional opportunities. HBCUs play a critical role in providing a ‘*sense of belonging*’ feeling, which helps students to unleash their potential. In reply to the question as to whether students remembered any professor who cared for them, encouraged them, or made them excited, more

HBCU graduates said they do, compared to their PWI experience. Thus, it reinforces the findings of this study that professors and other stakeholders from the HBCU may be more understanding and encouraging to their students.

The study's sample was heterogeneous because the focus was on Black students graduating from Historically Black Colleges and Universities, as an undergraduate and a Californian school for their graduate studies. The elimination of students from other races and cultural backgrounds did not have much bearing on the predictor variables. This is because the focus population was the HBCUs' Black community from Southern California and not students from other races and backgrounds (Kim, 2002). The time and financial limitations were only significant as to the extent to which they limited the geographic scope of the study. Overall, the finding that HBCUs are more effective in nurturing, empowering, encouraging, and shaping the future career of Black students than PWIs was supported by my findings and are generalizable in Southern California.

### **Conclusions**

The majority of students like to associate themselves with people they deem to be from similar backgrounds. This is either through race or ethnicity shared among a group. Such groupings tend to understand each other better due to the connection they share. They share a strong connection among each other in a way that they become close and comfortable around each other. This, in turn, helps them support each other both emotionally and socially among other types of support. In HBCUs, the majority of the students comprise African-Americans, from students to professors. Keeping in mind the effects of similar backgrounds in students, HBCUs help in assisting students to feel that sense of belonging. This helps them reduce unnecessary stress and concentrate more on studies to improve academic performance.

Many people prefer to live or stay close to family, relatives, and friends. The immediate comfort and support people enjoy from either family, relatives, or friends play an important role in decision-making (Kim, 2002). Therefore, while choosing a school or campus, a student is likely to choose one which is close to any of the three. Considering that some African-Americans live within the vicinity of HBCUs outside of California, students choose to attend such schools, live around the school, and continue this cycle further (Kim, 2002). Therefore, African-American students may tend to prefer HBCUs to any other type of campus since they live within the vicinity of HBCUs because of their local influences.

At times, relatives and friends influence the choices students make in life. For example, a student wishing to join a campus can be advised by his/her parent attend a certain school. People often seek someone to trust and care for them when the need arises. Family, relatives, and friends come in to serve this role in the society (Freeman, 2002). Thus, in light of being influenced by someone you trust, it usually feels right and fair to obey their suggestions. As many parents of African-American students advise their children or friends to attend HBCUs, students usually end up listening to this advice and join the HBCU.

The educational background of a person may influence the type of career choice they make. These career choices are common in similar schools that have similar structures and composition. Thus, a student with an African-American-based K-12 educational background is more likely to choose a similar campus for higher education (Freeman, 2002). Given this notion, some students coming from African-American K-12 schools often end up choosing HBCUs due to their educational background. Such schools or campuses are easy to adapt in and make progress much faster than other types of schools or campuses. Therefore, educational background may influence the type of university a student attends (Kim, 2002).

In as much as educational background may influence the type of job a student selects, it is never the opposite. Some people think an educational institution does not affect the job selection process. Many feel that employers test the ability and capacity of graduate students in determining who qualifies to get an open position in the company or organization (Freeman, 2002). Therefore, if non-HBCUs have an advantage over HBCUs is unfounded. Furthermore, organizations or companies have the freedom to choose whomever they deem fit for their organization. Hence, HBCUs are equally important as other types of universities in providing knowledge and shaping students into educated members of the society.

### **Policy Implication and Recommendations for Future Research**

The study presents various opportunities for many future researches, both in concept validation and theory development, as discussed further in this section. Further, research is very necessary to elucidate more and refine the novel findings of this research. Research does not always directly influence educational practice, but it can effect educational change by influencing in arenas of the HBCU or PWI's education systems that do influence practice.

First, while this study has generated useful and new conceptual categories, given the in-depth sampling strategy that was focused on exploring the experience and opinion of both HBCUs and PWIs Black students, there is little that can be said about the nature of an entire (larger) population of Black students from HBCUs in the United States. This study can be extended to a future study by using data from HBCUs and PWIs graduates from all over the USA. In this manner, it would be possible to increase the generalizability of the research to the entire country.

Secondly, this study provides an opportunity to validate and refine the constructs and concepts that emerged from the deductive analysis. For example, the idea of HBCU's effectiveness will require further elaboration and refinement, regarding its internal dynamics and

component elements. One could seek to answer whether it is possible to identify the ideal types of HBCUs in such a way that the typology of the HBCUs forms of satisfaction can be constructed.

Finally, this study needs to be extended in comparative and longitudinal ways. For example, in this study, it is hypothesized that HBCUs are efficient for career development and personal empowerment of the Black students. Further research could elucidate on this point, offering precious information to the stakeholders in the education system. In addition, further research could consider a historical perspective and ask whether the level of satisfaction that the Black students get from the HBCU has significantly changed over the last several decades, including a material change in school performance, post-graduation experience, and career development. This would offer invaluable information to those in charge of the HBCUs and concerns the ways in which they make their organizations attain and surpass the educational and personal development needs of the African-American students.

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## APPENDIX A

## Notice of Approval for Human Research

Date: January 14, 2016

Protocol Investigator Name: Keyna K.C. Boykin

Protocol #: 15-10-116

Project Title: Black Degrees Matter: A Phenomenological Study of Southern Californians with HBCU Bachelors' and Mainstream Institutional Graduate Degrees in California

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Keyna Boykin:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events *Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at [community.pepperdine.edu/irb](http://community.pepperdine.edu/irb).

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,  
Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chairperson