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Overcoming the race-sex barrier: what matters most in the executive sponsorship of black women

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Overcoming the Race-Sex Barrier: What Matters Most in the Executive Sponsorship of Black Women

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DISSERTATION
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Defense Committee:
Dr. Jaclyn Jensen, Committee Chair
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Recognition and heartfelt thanks are extended to so many wonderful individuals who made this achievement possible.

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Biography

Stephanie Bradley Smith is a native of Detroit, Michigan. She attended Immaculata High School, and thereafter attended Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois where she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Literature and a Master of Science degree in Integrated Marketing Communications from the Medill School of Journalism. Stephanie is an experienced business executive who specializes in the field of Human Resources, and whose career has spanned the retail and consumer packaged goods industries and the higher education sector. She looks forward to integrating her academic background and work experiences as a scholar-practitioner.
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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine the factors that are common, different and most important in the executive sponsorship of Black female protégés in comparison to the executive sponsorship of White male protégés. Drawing on social capital and social exchange theory, I propose a model that examines specific protégé and sponsor attributes relevant to career mobility and sponsorship for White male and Black female protégés. A sample of existing sponsors (n=72), comprised of C-suite executives (CEO, President, Managing Directors), and their protégés (n=59) who were senior level professionals (Division Presidents, General Managers, and Vice Presidents) participated in the study. Notwithstanding the challenges faced by Black women to ascend to the C-suite in most organizations, the study found greater similarities across most factors when comparing sponsor evaluations of Black female protégés and White male protégés. For Black females, the results affirm the importance of educational attainment and performance attributed to personal capability, along with sponsor desire to mitigate workplace bias, as key factors underlying the sponsor-protégé relationship.

*Key words: sponsorship, Black females, career success, career mobility, protégés*
I. Introduction

A common refrain now echoes in the popular press: “there are no Black female CEOs in Fortune 500 companies”. This abject statement of fact is both disappointing and bewildering. For decades, Black women have leveraged the gains of the Civil Rights movement and the Women’s Movement by exercising their rights and following pathways to better opportunities. Black women now outpace the rates of all other women and men with respect to the percentage of bachelor’s degrees awarded by degree-granting, post-secondary institutions (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). Progressive corporations actively promote diversity, in all forms, as a pledge to corporate social responsibility and a desire to reflect their consumer base. Yet, despite these outward manifestations of dedication and commitment, Black women remain absent at the highest level of corporations. The CEO statistical profile is overwhelmingly male with a representation of 95.2% and 4.8% women. With respect to race, a similarly skewed profile exists with Whites occupying 96% of CEO positions, and just over 4% of CEOs classified as minorities including Asians, Blacks, and Latinos (Huffington Post, 2015). With respect to the appointment of Black CEOs in Fortune 500 companies, the gender pattern that emerges is male. Of the 15 Blacks who became Fortune 500 CEOs between 1999–2011, only one was a woman who has since retired (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 2011).

The disparate treatment of Blacks versus Whites and women versus men in organizations is well documented in the literature. Although these groups share the same organizational context, they tend to have very different career experiences and outcomes. For Black women in particular, the intersection of race and gender means that they are twice as likely to have significantly different and disadvantaged career experiences and outcomes (Sesko & Biernet, 2010). The majority of research on racial and gender stereotyping and bias investigates Black men as the
targets of racism and White women as the targets of sexism, thereby eliminating focus or emphasis on Black women (Sesko & Biernet, 2010). This elimination effect is certainly evident in the CEO ranks, where White women, and albeit few, Black men are represented. However, Black women are non-existent.

One of the primary exclusions that Black women face in organizations is membership in informal networks, and most importantly, sponsorship from well-placed executives (Combs, 2003). Sponsorship is the “holy grail” of career advancement for all executives and the missing link for Black women. Sponsors make many things possible. Individuals with sponsors receive higher salaries and bonuses than those without sponsors (Roche, 1979). Studies show that most successful corporate male presidents have had sponsors who have facilitated their ascension through the ranks and into the C-suite (Jennings, 1971).

Sponsorship is a selective endeavor that is available to a few privileged protégés. So, how does a potential protégé obtain a sponsor? More specifically, how does a Black woman obtain a sponsor in an environment where she is considered a “double-outsider” because of the intersection of her race and sex? The purpose of this research is to perform a comparative study to identify the factors that lead to the executive sponsorship of White males versus the factors that lead to the executive sponsorship of Black women. The paucity of Black women in the C-suite, and specifically in the CEO ranks, would indicate that there is a difference in these factors and that the difference matters. The ultimate research goal is to identify and attest to both the common and unique factors that will contribute to the ascension of Black women to the highest level of a corporation. An integrated theoretical framework is applied to explain the dynamics of sponsorship and to develop the hypotheses for this study. This framework is based on social
capital theory (Adler & Kwon, 2002), social exchange theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), and the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971). See Appendix A for the research model.

II. Literature Review

The topic of sponsorship is frequently addressed in the popular press; however, there has been an absence of recent scholarly, peer reviewed literature on sponsorship as attested by the following literature review. This research provides a contemporary study of the topic while also providing an in-depth analysis of an often-overlooked subject: Black females.

Mentorship versus Sponsorship

An important element of this research is that it draws a marked distinction between two terms, mentor and sponsor. The literature often uses these terms interchangeably or refers to sponsorship as a subset of mentorship. While both mentors and sponsors can have significant impact on the career of a protégé, this study contends that their respective impact is quite different. Mentors provide a protégé with psychosocial support that may include such functions as role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, counseling, and friendship (Cram, 1985). This type of support addresses the interpersonal aspects of the relationship and refers to those aspects of a relationship that can enhance an individual’s sense of competence, identity, and effectiveness in role. Mentorship can be executed privately and without risks to the mentor.

Sponsors, on the other hand, not only provide psychosocial support, but also provide career-related support. They advocate openly for protégés to be promoted, or to attain enriching, coveted, and challenging assignments that position protégés for development and career success. Sponsors provide exposure and visibility, and importantly, protection. This protection is a critical aspect as it allows the protégé the freedom to learn and make mistakes without fear of penalties
or derailment. Unlike a mentor, a sponsor has “skin in the game”, as the sponsor-protégé relationship is highly visible. If a protégé flounders or fails, this visibility may prove burdensome at a minimum, or it may ultimately prove to be damaging to the sponsor’s reputation (Hewlett, Peraino, Sherbin & Sumberg, 2010; Kram, 1985).

A major premise of this study is that Black women are over-mentored and under-sponsored. Women have mentors but are only half as likely as their male peers to have a sponsor (Hewlett, 2011). The Center for Talent Innovation found that, in a survey of 3000 U.S. professionals across career levels, those who claimed to be sponsors actually exhibited mentor behaviors. Only 27% of “sponsors” said they advocated for their protégé’s promotion, and only 19% reported providing protection for their protégé. In an effort to heighten the visibility of Black women and increase their opportunities for advancement, many progressive companies offer a combination of initiatives, conferences, programs, and training to alleviate unconscious bias, promote connections, and prepare women for leadership (Hewlett & Green, 2015). However, the dearth of Black women in the C-suite ranks would indicate that these offerings are not sufficient. Ninety-one percent of Black women consider themselves ambitious, but 44% feel stalled in their careers and less than half are satisfied with their rate of advancement (Hewlett & Green, 2015). The findings would seem to indicate that true sponsorship is either elusive or not working for Black women in the ways in which it has worked for White men, White women, and Black men as evidenced by the presence of these groups in the CEO ranks of the Fortune 500.

Criticality of Sponsorship

There are generally two recognized models that lead to career success: the contest-mobility model, and the sponsor-mobility model (Turner, 1960; Ng, Eby, Sorensen & Feldman, 2005). Contest-mobility is based on the notion that individuals get ahead because of their own
abilities and contributions. The model subscribes to career mobility and advancement as an open and fair contest, which suggests that an individual’s performance and ability to contribute to the goals of the company will serve to differentiate them from others. Sponsor-mobility, on the other hand, is based on the notion that established, well-placed executives pay special attention and provide favorable treatment to high potential individuals. As a result, these individuals obtain organizational mobility and advance their careers. Ng et al. (2005) concluded that career success is a function of the two models combined. That is, to attain mobility and advance one’s career an individual must do both. They must work hard, and they must receive sponsorship. When it comes to ascension to the most elite levels of an organization, the contest-mobility model alone is insufficient.

Sponsored individuals report an increase in both objective success factors and subjective success factors. Subjective success factors are those attributes that are intrinsic to career success such as an individual’s feelings of job/career satisfaction and/or career commitment. Objective success factors are the observable exoteric metrics such as salary growth and/or the number of promotions an individual receives (Judge, Cable, Boudreau & Bretz, 1995; Ng et al, 2005). Objective success factors, such as compensation and promotions, largely accrue from the benefits of having a sponsor.

Social Capital and Social Exchange Theory

The roots of sponsorship lie in social capital theory that links social capital to career success (Seibert, Kramer & Liden, 2001). Social capital is defined as the goodwill that is engendered through social relations or networks which, in turn, facilitate positive actions or outcomes (Adler & Kwon, 2002). The goodwill derived from social capital produces three primary benefits: information, influence and solidarity (Seibert et al, 2001). First, social capital
provides access to broad sources of information and improves the quality, relevance, and
timeliness of information. Secondly, social capital confers influence or power that allows
individuals to get things done and to achieve their goals. Thirdly, social capital generates
solidarity since recipients align with the relevant norms, beliefs, rules, and customs of the
network.

The function of sponsorship is possible because of a senior executive’s position level,
accrue social capital through the acquisition of authority, respect, trust, power, influence, and
control. When a senior executive sponsors an individual, they essentially loan their social capital
to the protégé (Bono, Braddy, Liu, Gilbert, Fleenor, Quast & Center, 2017). This loan produces
valuable outcomes. In keeping with the tenets of social capital theory, sponsors impart valuable
knowledge and information to their protégés that enhance their performance and potential. They
use their influence and power to provide opportunities and experiences that contribute to their
protégés’ growth and development. Lastly, they vouch for the merit and legitimacy of the
individual as a potential successor into the executive ranks of the organization.

To understand the dynamics of sponsorship further, it is also necessary to consider social
exchange theory as it provides a framework for examining the sponsor-protégé relationship.
Social exchange theory is based on the premise that individuals will enter into relationships when
they believe the benefits will be greater than the costs (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Allen,
Poteet & Russell, 2000). There are three primary tenets of the theory: 1) relationships evolve over
time into trusting, loyal, and mutual commitments, 2) a bilateral transaction occurs which means
something is given and something is returned, and 3) relationships are interdependent and based
on mutual and complementary effort.
Ragins and Scandura (1999) studied the expected cost-benefit factors associated with being a sponsor among a sample of executives. Five categories of benefits were identified: 1) rewarding experience, 2) improved job performance, 3) loyal base of support, 4) recognition by others, and 5) generativity (legacy). Conversely, there were also five costs associated with sponsorship: 1) trouble outweighs value, 2) potential relationship dysfunction, 3) perceived nepotism/favoritism, 4) poor performance that may reflect badly on sponsor, and 5) time and energy drain. The degree to which sponsors perceive benefits or costs can be attributed to their prior experience. Those with prior experience are more inclined to see the benefits of sponsorship whereas those without experience are inclined to see the costs (Allen, 2007). Thus, social exchange theory forms the basis for the sponsor-protégé relationship.

The application of social exchange theory to sponsorship indicates that sponsors will perform a cost-benefit analysis when considering the decision to sponsor (Allen, 2007). Additionally, the theory implies that a sponsor will be more inclined to select a protégé who they expect will be successful as demonstrated by ability, performance and potential in exchange for their sponsorship and its accrued benefits. Allen et al. (2000) found that individuals were more willing to sponsor protégés who exhibited the likelihood of organizational success.

In summary, social capital theory and social exchange theory provide the foundation and underpinning of the sponsor-protégé relationship. That notwithstanding, the application of these theories will differ for White men versus Black women, as aspects of race and gender influence how sponsors evaluate and select protégés.
III. Hypotheses

A sustainable sponsor-protégé relationship is most often an organic one. The relationship forms as a result of two conditions: 1) the willingness of an executive to be a sponsor (Allen, 2007), and 2) the mutual attraction and interpersonal chemistry between a sponsor and a protégé (Kram, 1980).

Predictors of Sponsorship and Protégé Career Success

Section III will first explore the predictors of one’s willingness to sponsor others and the predictors of protégé career success that are common or that can be generalized to both White men and Black women. Thereafter, the focus will shift to the predictors that are unique to the sponsorship of Black women.

The most consistent finding with respect to an executive’s motivation to sponsor a protégé is the executive’s previous experience. Previous experience as a sponsor and previous experience as a protégé are both considered predictors of an executive’s willingness to provide sponsorship (Allen, 2007). In particular, those who have been the recipient and beneficiary of sponsorship are likely to be motivated to reciprocate and give back to others. Results further indicate that executives with an internal locus of control are more inclined to sponsor others (Allen, Poteet, Russell & Dobbins, 1997). That is, the influence that accompanies executive standing is likely to bolster confidence in one’s ability to affect positive outcomes on behalf of a protégé. As previously discussed in relation to social exchange theory, individuals may also be motivated to sponsor others because of the perceived benefits associated with personal recognition or the desire to leave a legacy. Sponsors may be recognized or valued for their ability to identify and nurture high potential talent. For executives in later career stages, sponsorship may be motivated by
generativity: the opportunity to contribute to one’s legacy through developing and building a leadership pipeline. These motivations are foundational to the existence of the sponsor-protégé dyad. As a result, I predict:

**Hypothesis 1a:** Influence, reciprocity, recognition, and generativity will be equally important motivators in an executive’s decision to sponsor Black females and White males.

**Hypothesis 1b:** There will be no difference in the extent to which influence, reciprocity, recognition, and generativity affect an executive sponsor’s selection of a White male protégé versus a Black female protégé.

Career success is generally assessed by evaluating level of salary, number of promotions, and degree of career satisfaction (Ng et al., 2005). The level of salary and the number of promotions are aspects of objective career success while the degree of career satisfaction is an aspect of subjective career success. Multiple factors predict career success and these factors generally fall into three broad categories: socio-demographic, human capital, and motivational (Ng et al., 2005; Judge et al., 1995; Wayne, Liden, Kraimer & Graf, 1999). Given that Black women are the central focus of this research, socio-demographic factors of race and gender have not been included in this study. The stereotypes connected with their race and gender make Black women less likely to be chosen for career development and advancement due to dissimilarities with White sponsors (Ng et al., 2005). Furthermore, while marital status and children are viewed as positive attributes that connote stability, responsibility, and maturity for men (Bloch & Kuskin, 1978), the results of numerous studies are mixed for women. While some studies indicate that being married and having children pose a negative relationship to career success for women (Marini, 1989; Jacobs, 1992; Harrell, 1993), others have reported no effect (Tharenou & Conroy, 1994). It is likely that well-educated, professional women have the financial resources, coping
mechanisms, and management skills to handle family demands, which exceed the general expectations of women (Kirchmeyer, 1993). Thus, given equivocal findings regarding marital and familial status, and the known barriers associated with race and gender, I will focus my hypotheses on the human capital and motivational factors as they relate to the sponsorship of White men and Black women.

Human capital factors refer to an individual’s educational and professional experiences. Specifically, this research focuses on the quantity and quality of education; the level of education; the degree obtained; and P&L experience. The literature indicates that the labor market rewards investments that individuals make in themselves (Judge et al, 1995). As an example, of the 15 Black CEOs who helmed Fortune 500 companies between the years 1999-2011, all were college graduates: two completed Harvard, one completed Williams, and one completed Bowdoin. Fourteen of the CEOs earned advanced degrees (4 MBAs, 5 law degrees, and 1 PhD.) from elite institutions (5 from Harvard, 3 from Stanford, 2 from MIT, and 1 each from Columbia, and Johns Hopkins) (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 2011). Similarly, according to a 2013 U.S. News & World report, 14 of the top 100 CEOs of the Fortune 500 who were all White males received an MBA and were granted degrees from Ivy League institutions. Seven graduated from Harvard, four graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, two graduated from Cornell, and one graduated from Columbia. Seven of the top CEOs graduated from law school (Smith-Barrow, 2013).

Motivational factors include the degree to which one’s work is important or central to their lives, and their ambition or desire to succeed. These factors explain a significant amount of variance in objective career success. England and Whitely (1990) found that individuals with high degrees of work centrality netted higher disposable incomes. Additionally, in an AT&T study, it was determined that the best predictor of advancement were managers who exhibited a desire to
assume increasing levels of responsibility (Howard & Bray, 1988). This study leverages the factors of career success to predict the provision of sponsorship. It contends that specific factors associated with human capital and motivation form a basis for the development of the sponsor-protégé relationship. Thus, I predict:

**Hypothesis 2a:** Human capital factors and motivational factors will be equally important factors in the decision to sponsor Black females and White males.

**Hypothesis 2b:** There will be no difference in the level of human capital factors and motivational factors between White male protégés and Black female protégés.

While human capital and motivational factors are important variables for sponsorship in general, these factors alone are inadequate. As similarity and liking can be assumed threshold requirements for a successful sponsor-protégé relationship, White males have an advantage. The similarity-attraction paradigm suggests that individuals like and are attracted to others who are similar rather than dissimilar to themselves (Byrne, 1971). Given free choice and the opportunity to engage with any number of individuals, a sponsor will have a strong tendency to select a protégé that is more similar to themselves (Williams & O’Reilly, 1998). Individuals who share the same or similar demographic attributes will be attracted to each other. Differences in demographic characteristics may also activate stereotypes that limit affinity and interfere with the development of a relationship (Ragins, 1997). Additionally, evidence suggests that White men may shy away from the sponsorship of a minority protégé because of their perceived “token status”. That is, the sponsorship of a Black woman may call into question whether she is legitimately worthy of this treatment, or whether she is merely a symbol of equity and inclusion. This status may subject the dyad to more scrutiny than a traditional, homogeneous dyad (Ensher & Murphy, 1997). When one considers these findings and considers the fact that the power
structures of most organizations are dominated by White men, the lack of representation of Black women at the highest ranks of corporations is predictable. Thus, an assumption of this research is that most, if not all of the sponsoring executives, will be White males. By definition, because of their shared race and gender, White male sponsors will be attracted to White male protégés more easily and will base their sponsorship decision on human capital and motivational factors alone. Yet, Black women will face additional barriers due to race and sex differences, thereby making the list of factors relevant to their sponsorship more extensive.

Overcoming the Race-Sex Barrier

The literature suggests that organizational success for employees, particularly Black women, will be influenced by their ability to establish relationships with White men. White men dominate the power structures of most organizations, thereby offering their protégés more advantages than sponsors of other races do. They are better able to confer legitimacy on their protégés and provide resources for success because of their positional authority and influence (Dreher & Cox, 1996). This finding does not presuppose that relationships with sponsors of other races are unimportant; however, it does infer that there is a reasonable probability that Black female proteges will be sponsored by White males.

Thus, the degree of perceived or actual dissimilarity between White men and Black women compels the need to bridge the potential race-sex divide or barrier for sponsorship to occur. Although less probable given the demographics of the C-suite, the same race-sex barrier holds true for Black women protégés who are sponsored by Black male or White female executives, as both groups would still differ with respect to either gender or race, respectively. Thus, in the following sections, I will identify and explain the attributes of protégés and sponsors that may contribute to the sponsorship of Black executive women. Additionally, I will explain
why these attributes are unique to the sponsorship of Black executive women versus the sponsorship of White executive men.

Bicultural Proficiency

High achieving, Black executive women must become adept at mastering the art of biculturalism. Bell (1989, 1990) described biculturalism as the ability to manage the “tensions between two cultural worlds: one Black and one White”. The art of moving back and forth between these two worlds is known as “shifting” (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003). To operate with bicultural proficiency, a Black woman must be able to manage the beliefs, values, standards, and expectations of the dominant White culture as well as those of her own culture. Biculturalism is a phenomenon that reflects how Black women successfully manage their professional lives and their personal lives. Further, it is a structure that permits retention of Black women’s Afro-American roots without the assimilation to the Euro-American culture (Bell, 1990).

Biculturalism is a requirement for occupational success since the careers of most Black executive women are anchored in the white dominant culture. As Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003) acknowledge, “there are few high-achieving Black women who are not adept at shifting, a few others who, whatever their proficiency, do not find that they must shift in order to survive.” The facility to navigate within the dominant culture provides access to information and knowledge, exposure to different types of experiences, and entry into important social networks and connections.

Biculturalism can be either a source of distress or a source of empowerment for Black women (Bell, 1990; Parker, 1996). Those who experience distress do so because of role or identity conflict, particularly when a Black woman feels that she may be losing touch with her authentic
According to Blackwell (1989), Black professionals who enter the mainstream of white organizations adopt one of two behavioral responses: assimilation or compartmentalization. Assimilation requires the divestiture of one’s culture in an attempt to fit into the dominant culture whereas compartmentalization requires the assembly of boundaries between cultures, which are separate and distinct. In either case, a Black woman may be disadvantaged. If she assimilates, she is stripped of her identity and if she compartmentalizes, she may be subject to what Jones and Shorter-Goeden (2015) refer to as the “yo-yo paradox”, the constant ups-and-downs of shifting in and out of cultural contexts.

While all minority groups, whether male or female, must adapt to fit into the mainstream culture, research suggests that Black women must adapt more often and more consistently than others (Jones & Shorter-Goeden, 2015). This difference is largely due to the way in which the intersection of racism and sexism affects Black women. Because of biases, misperceptions, and bigotry toward Black women, they must take measures to counteract stereotypes, they must compromise themselves to put others at ease, and they must go to great lengths to show that they are feminine, capable, and have the ability to contribute value.

This research subscribes to the belief that biculturalism is a strength for successful Black women executives. It helps them develop skills in divergent thinking, creativity, risk-taking and boundary-spanning (Bell, 1990). It also allows women to discover their genuine attributes, make connections with people who are different, and pursue mainstream opportunities. It is further believed that biculturalism is adaptive (Jones & Shorter-Goeden, 2015): a learned ability that allows Black women to shift consciously and comfortably without the feelings of polarity and distress that are often linked to biculturalism.
By definition, bicultural proficiency is a less effective construct in consideration of White males as White males represent the mainstream culture. Yet, cultural diversity is an imperative for all executives given the increasing multicultural and multinational nature of work teams. As an analogue to bicultural proficiency, the construct of cultural intelligence will be used to assess the presence and effectiveness of cultural diversity as it applies to White males. Cultural intelligence is defined as the capability to function and manage effectively in culturally diverse settings, and concerns cross-cultural experiences that traverse differences in race, ethnicity, and nationality (Ang, Van Dyne, Koh, Ng, Templer, Tay & Chandrasekar, 2007). Despite the growing importance of cultural diversity, ethnocentrism persists. That is, the belief that one’s cultural values are identical to others. This stance is particularly prevalent in majority groups where they often create obstacles for women and ethnocultural minorities (Ayman & Koranic, 2010). Thus, I predict:

**Hypothesis 3a: Bicultural proficiency will be a more important factor in the decision to sponsor Black females than cultural intelligence will be in the decision to sponsor White males.**

**Hypothesis 3b: Sponsors of Black females will report higher levels of protégé bicultural proficiency whereas sponsors of White males will report lower levels of protégé cultural intelligence.**
Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal skills are considered an essential element of leadership success as well as a core predictor of leadership derailment (Bono et al, 2017). Ineffective interpersonal behaviors are disproportionately damaging for women in general, regardless of race. When women and men exhibit poor interpersonal skills, role-based stereotypes emerge. Men are given a pass since their behavior is likely to be associated with assertiveness which is a desirable leadership trait. However, women are penalized, as their behavior is likely to be construed as unfeminine. For women, a lack of interpersonal effectiveness is especially harmful as it may lead to the withdrawal of sponsorship and may interfere with their mobility and ascension in the organization (Bono et al, 2017).

Black women frequently experience interpersonal conflict within dominant culture organizations, and the conflicts are likely to occur in interactions across diverse groups including Anglo women, Anglo men, and Black men (Bell & Nkomo, 1992). The genus of the conflict emanates from Black women stereotypes and the resulting negative images and perceptions. In a survey of White mixed gender respondents conducted by Weitz and Gordon (1993), Black women were characterized as “loud, talkative, aggressive, intelligent, straightforward, and argumentative”. Interestingly, the study provided evidence that Black women are not viewed in the same way in which women in general are viewed. When asked to characterize women without race distinction in the same study, respondents characterized them as “sensitive, attractive, sophisticated, career-oriented, and independent”. In a study conducted by Shuter and Turner (1997), White women perceived themselves as conflict avoidant while they perceived Black women as sustainers of conflict. Yet, Black women viewed themselves to be quite different from
these images and perceptions. They tended to see themselves as exhibiting openness and using conflict-reducing strategies more often than they were credited.

These findings point to the necessity for Black women executives to develop emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is the “ability to monitor one’s own and others’ emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one’s thinking and actions” (Salovey & Mayer, 1993). To avoid damaging their careers, Black women executives must become skilled at reading their environments and reacting strategically to stimuli that arises from stereotypes. They must also resist the natural tendency to become angry or resentful when doubted or ignored repeatedly (Roberts, Mayer, Ely & Thomas, 2018). When others respond in ways that are opposite of how Black women perceive themselves, it requires that they hold on to a strong sense of their identity and resist the desire to react negatively or forcefully.

In addition to emotional intelligence, Black women can also mitigate the negative expectations that others have of them through the accentuation of non-verbal cues that exude interpersonal warmth. Cooley, Winslow, Vojt, Shein and Ho (2018) demonstrated that a nonverbal cue, such as smiling, could lead to the perception of increased positive interactions with Black women in two ways: 1) by increasing the application of the interpersonal warmth stereotype associated with femininity, and 2) by decreasing the application of the threat stereotype associated with masculinity and Blackness. This finding is especially important in the case of potential interracial interactions where individuals oftentimes fear rejection and may decide whether to ignore or engage a potential partner based on perceived warmth or approachability. Thus, I predict:
Hypothesis 4a: Emotional intelligence and interpersonal warmth will be more important factors in the decision to sponsor Black females than emotional intelligence and interpersonal warmth will be in the decision to sponsor White males.

Hypothesis 4b: Sponsors of Black females will report higher levels of protégé emotional intelligence and interpersonal warmth whereas sponsors of White males will report lower levels of protégé emotional intelligence and interpersonal warmth.

Status Distance

Status is a concept that is generally present in all work environments and refers to “the prominence, respect, and influence individuals enjoy in the eyes of others” (Anderson, John, Keltner & Kring, 2001). Status is important because it conveys one’s value and standing in relation to others. There are two types of status: ascribed status (e.g., gender, inherited wealth, country of origin) and achieved status (e.g., education, job history, life experiences) (Phillips, Rothbard, and Dumas, 2009). Status distance is determined by perceived differences in status between a focal person (e.g. a sponsor) and another individual (e.g., a protégé).

In the status hierarchy of racial groups in American society, Whites and Asians are conferred higher status than Hispanics and Blacks (Fong, 1998; Ho & Jackson, 2001; Lee, 1996; Leslie, 2008; Maddux, Galinsky, Cuddy & Polifroni, 2008; Ridgeway, 1991; Tuan, 1998). Those who have similar status to those in power, whether actual or perceived, will be able to develop closer ties and relationships. Given the hierarchy, Black women tend to be positioned the farthest away from the norm or power structure in an organization. As demographically dissimilar individuals, they face difficulty in developing high-quality relationships in organizations due to status distance.
The disclosure or sharing of personal information is an important means by which relationships are built and maintained. In fact, there is a strong empirical relationship between self-disclosure and liking (Cozby, 1973). Individuals often strategically disclose positive information about themselves to enhance their personal image in the eyes of others. This is also known as impression management. On the other hand, individuals may be hesitant to disclose information because they may fear that others will not understand them. This feeling is especially prevalent when there are status asymmetries—individuals with dissimilar or lower levels of status.

For example, in a 1995 study of Black college students, it was found that the students withheld personal information (i.e., their fondness for rap music and basketball) because they feared that it would confirm negative stereotypes (Steele & Aronson, 1995).

Yet, individuals who fail to disclose personal information may be perceived as aloof or anti-social. Individuals, particularly Black women, may be best served to strategically choose personal information to share in order to manage status distance and build relationships. Disclosure of status-disconfirming information will have an important effect on reducing status distance with dissimilar individuals. Status-confirming information will likely increase status distance between dissimilar individuals (Phillips et al, 2009). Carton and Rosette (2011) offer many suggestions for achieving perception-based reform with respect to bias against Black leaders in their study. First, they suggest that organizations provide individual information about leaders, such as their educational background, back-stories, and personal accomplishments. This provision has been found to minimize the occurrence of stereotypes (Kunda, Davies, Adams & Spencer, 2002). Additionally, Black leaders are encouraged to share information with their colleagues to make them more aware of their qualifications, aptitude, and experience. Finally, information that refutes Black stereotypes should be widely accessible in the organization (e.g.,
photos of successful Black leaders, stories in organizational publications about Black leaders and their business results).

Status distance is a dynamic construct. Perceptions can either be changed or not depending on the degree to which personal information is shared and serves to disconfirm information that increases status distance. Black women are more susceptible to status distance and its effects due to their ascribed status -- the characteristics they cannot change (i.e., race, gender). White men however are assumed to have similar status to the norm or power distribution in organizations, thereby eliminating the prospect of status distance, strengthening their ties and relationships, and gaining sponsorship. Thus, I predict:

\textit{Hypothesis 5a: Status distance will be a more important factor in the decision to sponsor Black females than status distance will be in the decision to sponsor White males.}

\textit{Hypothesis 5b: Sponsors of Black women will report higher levels of consciousness with regard to protégé status distance whereas sponsors of White males will report lower levels of consciousness with regard to protégé status distance.}

In summary, there are multiple strategies that Black women can employ to enhance their ability to attract executive sponsorship. This research examines three of them in-depth:

- bicultural proficiency
- high-level interpersonal skills, specifically emotional intelligence and interpersonal warmth, and
- status distance

Strategic management and demonstration of these attributes may enable Black women to overcome the deficits that they incur as a result of the similarity-attraction paradigm. In very
important ways, these attributes may compensate for race-gender differences and the concomitant stereotypes that mitigate the development of sponsor-protégé relationships between White males and Black women.

Sponsor Attributes Motivating the Decision to Sponsor Black Women

The vast majority of the empirically based discrimination literature has focused on gender inequities; however, much of the research overlooks the workplace inequities of Black women (Combs, 2003). To understand the career plight of Black women, it is helpful to first understand how the work experience of Blacks as a racial group is divergent from the experience of White men and women.

The literature highlights two types of discrimination: access discrimination and treatment discrimination. Access discrimination prevents members of a group from entering a job or organization whereas treatment discrimination prevents members of a group from receiving the resources, opportunities, and rewards that are available to others (Greenhaus & Parsuraman, 1990). While civil rights laws have provided access to employment for Blacks, Blacks are still subject to treatment discrimination, which restricts their access to power and mitigates their ability to develop and enhance their careers. Perhaps the most glaring example of treatment discrimination is the finding that supervisors rate Blacks lower than Whites on both the relationship and task components of performance. When relationship and task components on performance evaluations were averaged, race accounted for 4% of the variance in the evaluations (Greenhaus & Parsuraman, 1990). For Blacks in general, negative direct effects have been found in connection with multiple job-related outcomes: job performance, career plateauing (promotability), and career satisfaction (Greenhaus et al, 1990; Combs, 2003).
It is often assumed that Black women are a subset of the same cohort and experience as White women and Black men with respect to work experiences and outcomes. However, organizational experiences of White women differ from those of Black women (Alderfer, Alderfer, Tucker & Tucker, 1980) and those of minority men differ from those of minority women (Cox & Nkomo, 1990; Fernandez, 1981). As “double outsiders”, Black women are subject to a unique form of bias and discrimination in which they are neither recognized nor credited for their contributions. This phenomenon is referred to as the “invisibility” of Black women and extends across a broad range of issues. For instance, Black women are 26% less likely than White men to have their ideas endorsed (Hewlett & Green, 2015), and are more likely to have their contributions to a group discussion misattributed to some other individual (Sesko & Biernat, 2010). Unlike Black men, Black women cannot identify with White men on the basis of gender. Nor can Black women easily capitalize on shared gender experiences, such as sports, as a way bonding and perhaps obtaining sponsorship (Wingfield, 2018).

The duality of race and gender places Black women in the position of being subjected to both racism and sexism (Settles, 2006). As a result, they often find themselves at the bottom rung of the career ladder that leads to advancement and increased earning power. McGuire and Reskin (1993) found that, in spite of their credentials, Black women received fewer rewards with respect to job authority and earnings potential than Black men, White women, or White men. The exception occurs when there is a willingness and the ability of those within the organizational power structure to recognize, support, and develop Black women through sponsorship (Roberts et al, 2018). To ensure the career mobility and advancement of Black women requires sponsors to lend critical career traction that includes opportunities, advocacy and protection (Hewlett &
EXECUTIVE SPONSORSHIP OF BLACK WOMEN

Green, 2015). Given the race-gender considerations, the selection of a Black female protégé for sponsorship is also likely to be motivated by a unique set of factors.

Workplace Bias

In organizational settings, workplace bias is characterized by two dimensions: institutional discrimination and interpersonal prejudice (Hughes & Dodge, 1997). Institutional discrimination refers to organizational policies and procedures that unfairly restrict opportunities for Black women or perpetuate the advantages or privileges for the dominant population (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986). These policies and procedures mitigate fairness and equity in the distribution of salaries, benefits job assignments, and promotional opportunities. Interpersonal prejudice refers to the negative beliefs, attitudes, and feelings towards Black women, and the ensuing actions and behaviors that lead to negative outcomes.

By its very nature, sponsorship generates scrutiny regarding perceptions of fairness and equity. The benefits of sponsorship are positive for selective recipients; however, a majority of others are relegated to lower salaries, less development, and fewer opportunities (Bauer, 1999). Perceptions of inequity and fairness are heightened when these differences occur across race-gender lines. White males are the predominant recipients of sponsorship in organizations, with 83% acknowledging that “who you know” counts significantly or at least as much as one’s performance (Hewlett et al, 2010). The question of who has access to sponsorship is at the root of fairness, particularly when it pertains to Black women.

According to Adams (1965), who used social exchange to evaluate fairness, individuals are less concerned about the absolute level of outcomes and more concerned about whether the outcomes are fair. Fairness and equity continue to elude Black women. Black women experience
further differences in objective success factors such as compensation and promotions when compared with White women and Black men. Black women in comparable positions earn 93% of Black men’s earnings, 83% of White women’s earnings, and 68% of White men’s earnings (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). With respect to promotions, Black women experience lower promotion rates than White women managers (Bell & Nkomo, 1994), and have different predictors for advancement than Black men (Nkomo & Cox, 1989).

To determine the fairness of outcomes, Adams suggested the calculation of the following ratio: a person’s contributions or inputs (e.g., education, experience and ability) to a person’s outcomes. The ratio, known as the equity rule, could then be compared with the ratios of others to determine who is more deserving of the outcome (e.g., sponsorship). Adams was quite clear that, even with the benefit of the equity rule, determination of career outcomes would always be largely subjective and based on prosocial behaviors. Prosocial behavior is voluntary behavior that is intended to benefit others. This research examines workplace bias from the vantage point of the sponsor and the sponsor’s desire to produce a level playing field for all employees. Specifically, the research intends to highlight the application of fairness and equity for Black women when they receive the sponsorship of White males given the preponderance of inequities that Black women face with respect to career outcomes. Thus, I predict:

**Hypothesis 6a:** Perceptions of workplace bias will be a more important factor in the decision to sponsor Black females than perceptions of workplace bias will be in the decision to sponsor White males.

**Hypothesis 6b:** Sponsors of Black females will report higher perceptions of workplace bias whereas sponsors of White males will report lower perceptions of workplace racial bias.
Performance Attribution

Attribution theory suggests that individuals make inferences or ascribe cause and effect based on simple deductions (Kelley & Michela, 1980) related to behavior and events. They infer that positive outcomes are produced by positive attributes, and negative outcomes are produced by negative attributes. For instance, a good grade that a student receives on an exam may be attributed to how diligently the student studied for the exam. Conversely, a poor grade that a student receives on an exam may be attributed to the student’s lack of motivation and study preparation.

According to attribution theory, leaders in an organizational setting are likely to infer that responsibility for outcomes rests with the individual, and they are likely to attribute the individual’s work result or outcome to their performance. Positive attributions will occur as a result of performance success and negative attributions will occur upon observation of performance failure (Carton & Rosette, 2011). However, according to Fritz Heider, a psychologist and early contributor to attribution theory, “perceptions of causality are often distorted by...certain cognitive biases” (Donelson, 1987). This phenomenon of distortion is especially salient in the assessment of Black women’s leadership competence and ability.

The distortion is often influenced by the bias that an evaluator holds regarding his perception of an effective leader. Individuals may not be recognized as effective leaders unless they measure up to the evaluator’s envisioned prototype (Carton & Rosette, 2011). The prototype, in this instance, is White leaders, the normative or standard group. Stereotypes, defined as generalized beliefs about certain groups, are the counterbalance of the prototype and will significantly influence the perception of Black leaders. Because Black leaders do not reflect the prototype of what is believed to be an effective leader, it often leads to the stereotypic
presumptions of Blacks as incompetent (Devine & Baker, 1991; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick & Xu, 2002) and therefore, ineffective.

In assessing the leadership ability of Blacks in general, evaluators may not attribute their success to leadership ability, but rather to external or unstable causes (Ilgen & Youtz, 1986). Instead, evaluators may use compensatory stereotypes to explain Blacks’ success (Carton & Rosette, 2011). Compensatory stereotypes are attributes that are perceived to compensate for incompetence. For example, a Black leader in a hierarchical organization may have her success ascribed to being controlling rather than being competent. Thus, Blacks are viewed as incompetent when they fail, and they are viewed as displaying compensatory stereotypes when they succeed. From a comparative standpoint, the success of White men is more likely to be attributed to ability and less likely to be attributed to other factors than the success of Black men, White women, or Black women (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1993).

A major determinant in the relatively slow rate of advancement of Blacks and, correspondingly, their relatively low presence in positions of power in organizations is bias in the performance evaluation process. When observers hold unfavorable stereotypes about minorities, low performance expectations will be upheld. In the face of successful performance, unfavorable attributions regarding the cause of the performance may occur (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1993). Bias in the performance evaluation process is particularly harmful given its indirect effect on promotability. The promotion opportunities for Blacks will be restricted because they receive lower performance ratings than Whites (Greenhaus, Parasuraman & Wormley, 1990). Performance ratings are the antecedents for the determination of potential and promotability. Consistently low performance ratings will lead to assessments of low potential and negatively affect the opportunity for Blacks to assume greater levels of responsibility. Most importantly, the
privilege of sponsorship afforded only to those identified as high performing-high potential will be withheld.

Performance attribution will have important consequences for the career advancement prospects of Black women. For example, all of the Black female protégés within this study have sponsors which signals that their performance has largely been attributed to their ability. When an evaluator ascribes performance to ability, performance is attributed to stable determinants and future expectations of continued achievement and success in subsequent work. Thus, I predict:

_Hypothesis 7a: Performance attributed to ability will be an equally important factor in the decision to sponsor Black females and White males._

_Hypothesis 7b: There will be no difference between White male protégés versus Black female protégés in the degree to which sponsors attribute protégé performance to ability._

Perceived Attitudinal Similarity

Byrne’s (1971) similarity-attraction paradigm indicates that, the more similar an individual perceives another individual to be to him or herself, the greater the chance of attraction or liking. Dissimilarity is believed to activate social categorization and the emergence of stereotypes or biases that may limit the development of a sponsor-protégé relationship (Ragins, 1997). That said, as the notion of the similarity-attraction paradigm is primarily based on relational demography, that is, the comparison of shared demographics between individuals, it is important to distinguish between two types of differences or diversity: surface-level diversity and deep-level diversity (Harrison, Price & Bell, 1998). Surface-level diversity refers to the easily observable, immutable characteristics, such as race and gender while deep-level diversity refers to values and attitudes.
There is evidence that more information about an individual and more experience with an individual reduces biases arising from racial stereotypes. When deep-level characteristics are exposed, there is a greater potential to foster a relationship (e.g., sponsor-protégé relationship). Studies have shown that, in supervisor-subordinate relationships, supervisors display fewer attributional biases as they gain more experience working with individuals (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1993). As supervisors from different backgrounds gain more experience working with individuals, they are likely to base their assessments on the merits of the individual rather than stereotypic views based on their membership within a certain group. The supervisor-subordinate research can be extended to the sponsor-protégé relationship given that both are dyadic, work-based relationships, and both are based on social exchange and the goal of generating positive, career-related outcomes.

Ensher, Grant-Vallone and Marelich (2002) examined deep-level similarity, also known as perceived attitudinal similarity, and found that the attribute was significantly associated with the conferral of sponsorship. Perceived attitudinal similarity is measured by the degree to which individuals are similar in general outlook and perspective, problem-solving, work values, and life values. The attribute was found to be an important predictor of all three sponsorship elements: role modeling, psychosocial support, and career-related support. Perceived attitudinal similarity, specifically values and attitudes, was further found to be a better predictor of relationship quality.

For White men, the prospect of obtaining or solidifying sponsorship due to recognition of deep-level similarity is facilitated by the shared demographics of race and sex. Black women must find a way past the initial dissimilarities in order to expose the potential of deep-level similarities. Thus, I predict:
Hypothesis 8a: Perceived attitudinal similarity will be a more important factor in the decision to sponsor Black females than perceived attitudinal similarity will be in the decision to sponsor White males.

Hypothesis 8b: Sponsors of Black females will report higher perceived attitudinal similarity whereas sponsors of White males will report lower perceived attitudinal similarity.

This research highlights the belief that executive sponsorship of Black women is contingent on multiple variables. Some of these variables, as I have previously described, are dependent on strategies undertaken by Black women. Others are conditional and dependent on individuals, primarily White men, within the power structure of organizations to lend their social capital to the identification, development, and career mobility of Black women. This research focuses on three specific attributes that are believed germane for sponsors of Black women to acknowledge and manage:

- workplace bias
- performance attribution
- perceived attitudinal similarity or deep-level similarity

Acknowledgement and effective management of these attributes enable the circumvention of stereotypes that Black women face due to the immutable characteristics of race and sex. Importantly, focus on these attributes provide a pathway for the recognition of the performance and potential of Black women.
IV. Method

Overview

The sample for this study included two distinct dyads: (1) Executive sponsors-Black female protégés, and (2) Executive sponsors-White male protégés. The executive sponsors of protégés were the target of this research given that the interest of this research was to understand three factors: a) the motivations of the sponsors to confer sponsorship, b) how the sponsors assessed their protégés on multiple variables, and c) to gauge how important the variables were in the sponsor’s decision to confer sponsorship. While a secondary target, the involvement of the protégé was also important. The protégé provided a means for corroborating the sponsor-protégé relationship, and in many cases, the protégé served as the conduit for the identification and participation of the executive sponsor in the research. Thus, two invitations to participate in the research and surveys were developed: one for sponsors and one for protégés. If the invitation to participate in the research was directed to a sponsor, the sponsor was asked to forward the survey link for the protégé survey to his/her protégé. If the invitation to participate in the research was directed to a protégé, the protégé was asked to forward a survey link for the sponsor survey to his/her sponsor (Appendix B – C: Sponsor and Protégé Surveys).

Procedures and Sample

Respondents for this study were sourced through a variety of channels, including executive organizations and associations, social media and personal professional networks. Black female protégés were primarily sourced from personal professional networks and the Executive Leadership Council (ELC). The Executive Leadership Council is a national, professional organization that has been in existence for 32 years. The organization focuses on developing and
supporting a diverse pipeline of high potential Black leaders. Its members are proven entrepreneurs, corporate board directors, or corporate leaders who are positioned within 1-2 levels of the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) in their respective organizations. Via email invitation (Appendix D), each female ELC member was asked to engage their executive sponsors, if applicable, and to solicit their participation as part of this research. In some cases, Black female ELC members and Black male ELC members also participated as sponsors, given their executive level. A similar email invitation was sent inviting participation of sponsors and White male protégés (Appendix E), who were sourced from a variety of professional organizations, such as the Chicago Executive Club, and personal professional networks. A LinkedIn post (Appendix F) on the author’s LinkedIn page also solicited potential respondents. In total, approximately 620 invitations to participate in the research were distributed. Approximately 500 of the invitations were directed to those perceived to be sponsors and approximately 120 invitations were directed to those perceived to be protégés.

The survey was administered on-line using Qualtrics, and IRB approval was obtained prior to data collection. To be eligible for participation in the study, the sponsor-protégé dyads must have met the following inclusion criteria: (1) be currently engaged in a sponsor-protégé relationship, (2) work for U.S. based organizations, and (3) have sponsor-protégé alignment with the definition of a sponsor. Sponsor-protégé dyads who did not meet these criteria were not permitted to participate in the research. The survey was confidential, but not anonymous. In order to track and match the sponsor-protégé dyads, sponsors and protégés were asked to provide their own name as well as the name of their protégé or sponsor, respectively. Additionally, the dyads were asked to provide email addresses in the event that they would be willing to participate in future related research.
In total, 112 respondents participated in the sponsor survey while 115 individuals participated in the protégé survey. After cleaning and removing partial or unreliable responses from the data set, there were 72 usable responses from the sponsors. Thirty-eight (38) of the 72 responses were sponsors of Black female protégés and the remaining 34 responses were sponsors of White male protégés. Additionally, there were 59 usable responses from protégés. Twenty-nine (29) of the 59 responses were Black female protégés and 30 of the responses were White male protégés. It should be noted that, in a couple of cases, sponsors introduced multiple protégés into the study for assessment.

Overall, sponsors were 85% male and fifty-four (54%) of sponsors were White. Sponsors held titles such as Chief Executive Officer or President; Chief Operating Officer; or Managing Director or Partner. The majority (72%) had earned an advanced degree (i.e., Master’s, Professional, or Doctorate), and had known their protégé for an average of 7 years. Across the 59 protégés, most reported positions with senior-level titles such as Vice President & General Manager; Senior Vice President; or Division President and 56% had responsibility for managing profit and loss. Fifty-four percent (54%) of protégés were positioned within 1 to 2 levels of the CEO in their organization, and the majority (91%) had earned an advanced degree (i.e., Master’s, Professional or Doctorate).

With respect to the demographic match between sponsor-protégé dyads, all of the sponsors of White male protégés were males. Of these individuals, the majority were White (73.5%), followed by Black (23.5%), and Asian (2.9%). The sponsors of Black female protégés were more diverse with respect to race and gender. Of the 38 sponsors of Black women, twelve (31.6%) were White men, 15 (39.4%) were Black men, 2 (5.3%) were White females, 7 (18.4%) were Black females, and 1 sponsor was an Asian female (2.6%).
Despite great efforts to ensure that each participating sponsor had matched protégé data, and vice versa, there were instances where only one member of the dyad participated in the study. Given that the primary focus of this research was the sponsor’s evaluation of his or her protégé, a decision was made to discard protégé data that lacked corresponding sponsor data (i.e., sponsor data was not imputed in these instances). Thus, data for nine Black female protégés and three White male protégés was discarded.

However, there were nine cases where a sponsor had participated in the research, but their protégé did not. In these cases, the sponsor data was retained and the missing protégé values were imputed based on the respective group means of the protégé respondent. Specifically, data was imputed for eight Black female protégés (drawing on scale means for all other Black female protégés) and for three White male protégés (drawing on scale means for all other White male protégés).

Based on the prediction of a large effect size between the two sample groups, the final sample of 72 dyads meets the minimum threshold for the total sample size (see Table 1 below). However, it is worth noting that the final sample falls one dyad short (n=34) for White male protégés, which will be addressed more fully in the Discussion section.
**Table 1. Power Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistical Test: Difference Between Two Independent Means (Groups)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effect size</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sample Size (Group 1)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Size (Group 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Sample (# of Dyads)</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Power</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Measures**

In most cases, previously validated, established scales were used in the research. When items were created uniquely for the study, or when measures were adapted to meet the study circumstances, a description is provided below.

**Protégé measures.** In addition to reporting their race (1=White, 2=Black), sex (1=male, 2=female), and job-related characteristics such as job level, type of job responsibility, job title, and job location, protégés responded to the following measures:

**Human Capital Variables.** Human capital variables included three items that were analyzed separately: the highest level of education (e.g. bachelor’s, master’s degree), the quality of universities attended (e.g., quality-coded based on the most recent college rankings from U.S. News and World Report), and future promotability (sponsor provided).
**Motivational Variables.** To measure the work motivation of protégés, the Motivation at Work Scale (Gagne et al, 2010) was adopted. This scale contains 12 items that were rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1=not at all; 2=very little; 3=a little; 4=moderately; 5=strongly; 6=very strongly; 7=exactly) ($\alpha = .79$).

**Sponsor measures.** In addition to reporting their race (1=White, 2=Black), sex (1=male, 2=female), highest level of education, university attended, and current job title, sponsors responded to the following measures:

*Influence, generativity, recognition, and reciprocity.* To measure the extent to which sponsors were driven by the desire to influence, to reciprocate the gift of sponsorship, to obtain personal recognition for executive development, and to leave a legacy, four items were created for this study, each reflecting one aspect of sponsor motivation. These items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1=Not at all important and 5=Extremely important. Each item was analyzed separately.

**Attribute measures.** Sponsors evaluated Black female and White male protégés on the following eight attributes:

*Bicultural Proficiency.* To measure bicultural proficiency, items from the Bicultural Self-Efficacy Scale developed by David, Ozaki and Saw (2009) were re-worded with a change to the referent. The scale was used to measure the extent to which Black female protégés exhibited the behaviors associated with bicultural proficiency and to measure whether the sponsor considered bicultural proficiency to be an important factor in the decision to sponsor a protégé. Two factors that are a subset of the six-factor scale were used: the social groundedness factor and the role repertoire factor. Social groundedness is a 7-item scale that measures the extent to which an
individual can develop relationships in two different cultural groups. Only six of the 7-point scale items were used, as one item was inadvertently eliminated from the scale. This missing item had no effect on the reliability of the scale. Role repertoire is a 3-item scale that measures the range of culturally appropriate behaviors or roles a person possesses or is willing to learn in order to operate effectively in both cultural groups. Both factors were rated on a 7-point scale (i.e., 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree). The final 9-item scale had coefficient alpha of .85.

**Cultural Intelligence.** To measure cultural intelligence with the sample of White male protégés, the Cultural Intelligence Scale developed by Ang, Van Dyne, Koh, Ng, Templer, Tay and Chandrasekar (2007) was used and adapted with a change to the referent. The Cultural Intelligence Scale measures one’s ability to function effectively in culturally diverse settings. Two factors that are a subset of the four-factor scale were used: the Metacognitive Culture Quotient factor, a 4-item scale, and the Motivational CQ factor, a 5-item scale. The Metacognitive CQ measures one’s knowledge, norms, practices and conventions within different cultures that may be acquired from education or personal experience. Motivational CQ measures the attention and energy one expends toward learning and functioning in situations where cultural differences occur. Both factors were rated on a 7-point scale (1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree) (α = .90).

**Warmth and Emotional Intelligence.** To measure warmth as a variable, a six-item scale (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002) was adapted with a change to the referent. The items were rated on a 7-point scale (1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree) (α = .82). Emotional intelligence was measured by use of the Trait Emotional Intelligence -Short Form (version 1.50), a thirty-item questionnaire (Cooper & Petrides, 2010), using a Likert scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree (α = .71).
**Status Distance.** To measure status distance, a 10-item background homophily scale developed by McCroskey, McCroskey and Richmond (2006) was adapted with a change to the referent. A 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree was used by respondents, with higher scores indicating similarity (sponsors felt closer in status to their protégé) ($\alpha = .82$).

**Workplace Bias.** To measure workplace bias, the 15-item Workplace Prejudice/Discrimination Inventory (WPDI) developed by James, Lovato and Cropanzano (1994) was reworded and adapted to reflect the extent to which a sponsor perceived the existence of workplace bias and may have made the decision to sponsor a protégé as a result of the perception. A seven-point Likert scale was used for respondents to indicate their level of agreement with each item, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree ($\alpha = .92$).

**Performance Attribution.** To measure performance attribution, two different scales were used. The first is a multi-item scale developed by Greenhaus and Parasuraman (1993), reflecting the degree to which a protégé’s performance is attributed to possessing the appropriate skills, working very hard, being lucky, having an easy job, and receiving a lot of help. It is important to note that the first two items--possessing appropriate skills and working very hard--are internally-focused attributions while the remaining items reflect more externally-oriented attributions. The externally focused items were included for exploratory purposes. Given that the Greenhaus and Parasuraman (1993) items that assess internal attributions contained only two items, a second 5-item scale capturing the extent to which a sponsor attributes the protégé’s performance to competence (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick & Xu, 2018), was also used. A 7-point scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree was used by respondents.
Analysis of the performance attribution items revealed that the two internal attribution items from Greenhaus and Parasuraman (1993) correlated at .61, slightly below the standard for conventional reliability. As a result, the decision was made to combine the two Greenhaus and Parasuraman items with the 5-items from Fiske et al. (2018), thereby creating a 7-item scale (ɑ = .70). The three items from Greenhaus and Parasuraman (1993) assessing performance attributed to external causes evidenced low alpha (.34) and were discarded from further analysis.

*Perceived Attitudinal Similarity.* To measure perceived attitudinal similarity, eight items were adapted from a combined scale (Turban & Jones, 1988; Liden et al, 1993) developed by Ensher, Grant-Vallone and Marelich (2002). The referent was changed to reflect the sponsor’s assessment of similarities between the protégé and himself/herself. Items were rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree (ɑ = .86).

**Control Variable**

According to Turban, Dougherty and Lee (2002), time has a moderating effect on the sponsor-protégé relationship. Their findings indicated that the more time gender-dissimilar dyads spent in longer-term relationships the more beneficial the relationship outcomes. Consistent with this study’s perceived similarity hypothesis, it was speculated that time allows for the introduction of a wider range of information into the relationship. To control for the effects of time on the associated sponsor-protégé outcomes, the sponsor was asked the following question: how long have you known your protégé professionally? Responses were provided on a 1-9 scale, with 1 = less than 6 months and 9 = 7 or more years.
V. Results

Table 2 provides the means, standard deviations, reliabilities and correlations among the study variables. The results reflect variability in significance between the independent variables - Black females and White males and the eight attribute measures. For example, there is a positive correlation between protégé race and workplace bias, $r = .33$, $p < .01$ whereas status distance was negatively correlated with protégé race, $r = -.25$, $p < .01$. Additionally, there is some significance in correlation between variables (e.g., importance of emotional intelligence correlated with the importance of warmth, $r = .56$, $p < .01$), however, the strength of most correlations was moderate.
### Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities, and Correlation Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<td>0.48**</td>
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N = 72, except bicultural proficiency variable where N = 88 (Sponsors of Black females) and Cultural Intelligence variable where N = 94 (Sponsors of White males).

*p < .05

**p < .01

*Alpha reliability appears on the diagonal.
All hypotheses were tested by conducting a one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to determine between-group differences. The study analyzed two sample groups, Black female protégés and White male protégés to determine between-group differences with respect to the multiple variables. The study measured two aspects of the variables of interest: 1) the extent to which each variable differs between Black female versus White male protégés, and 2) the importance of each variable in the decision to sponsor an individual. For example, when assessing emotional intelligence as one of the variables, sponsors were asked: a) to rate the level of their protégé’s emotional intelligence, and b) to rate the importance of emotional intelligence in the decision to sponsor the protégé. The analysis then determined whether absolute standing and importance on the respective variables differed between Black female protégés versus White male protégés, while controlling for the length of the sponsor-protégé relationship. The results of each analysis of covariance follow, with specific statistics presented in table format (for ease of reading) when appropriate.

**Hypothesis 1a-b.** This hypothesis predicted that the variables of influence, reciprocity, recognition, and generativity would be equally considered in the motivation to sponsor a Black female or a White male. After controlling for overall length of the relationship, the predicted main effect of a protégé’s sex and race on these four variables was not significant. Additionally, the mean levels for the variables did not indicate differences between Black female protégés and White male protégés. Therefore, hypothesis 1a-b was supported.
<table>
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<th>Variable</th>
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<th>Effect</th>
<th>Mean/Standard Deviation</th>
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<td>F = 1.977, p = .164</td>
<td>F (1,69) = 2.622, p = 0.107, R^2 = .070</td>
<td>Black Female M = 1.18 (SD = .39) White Male M = 1.38 (SD = .55)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reciprocity</td>
<td>F = 1.528, p = 0.221</td>
<td>F (1,69) = 0.753, p = 0.389, R^2 = .035</td>
<td>Black Female M = 2.03 (SD = 1.305) White Male M = 2.32 (SD = 1.224)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>F = 1.329, p = 0.253</td>
<td>F (1,69) = 0.013, p = 0.909, R^2 = .020</td>
<td>Black Female M = 2.32 (SD = 1.233) White Male M = 2.38 (SD = 1.206)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generativity</td>
<td>F = 0.029, p = 0.866</td>
<td>F (1,69) = 2.19, p = 0.143, R^2 = .032</td>
<td>Black Female M = 2.29 (SD = 1.469) White Male M = 2.79 (SD = 1.343)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hypothesis 2a-b.** This hypothesis predicted that human capital and motivational variables such as level of education, university quality, future promotability and career motivation would be equally considered in the decision to sponsor a Black female or a White male. After controlling for the overall length of relationship, the predicted main effect of a protégé’s sex and race on these four variables was not significant. Additionally, the mean levels for the variables did not indicate differences between Black female protégés and White male protégés. Therefore, Hypothesis 2a-b was supported.
Hypothesis 3a. Bicultural proficiency was selected to measure the ability and adeptness of Black female protégés to shift between two cultural worlds, their own and the predominant White culture. For approximate comparison, cultural intelligence was selected to measure the cultural agility of White male protégés in diverse settings. This hypothesis predicted that bicultural proficiency would be a more important factor in the decision to sponsor a Black female protégé than cultural intelligence would be in the decision to sponsor a White male protégé. After controlling for the overall length of the relationship \( F = .026, p = .873 \), the predicted main effect of protégé sex and race on bicultural proficiency versus cultural intelligence was not significant \( F (1,69) = 2.682, p = .106, R^2 = .039 \). The mean level of bicultural proficiency for Black female protégés was \( M = 3.03 \) (\( SD = 1.42 \)), and the mean level of cultural intelligence for White male protégés was \( M = 3.53 \) (\( SD = 1.08 \)). Therefore, the hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis 3b. It was further predicted that sponsors of Black female protégés would report higher levels of bicultural proficiency in their respective protégés, while sponsors of White
male protégés would report lower levels of cultural intelligence in their respective protégés. After controlling for the overall length of the relationship (F=0.14, p=.71), the predicted main effect of protégé sex and race on a sponsor’s level of reporting was not significant (F (1,69) =2.491, p=.119, R² =.035). The mean level of bicultural proficiency for Black female protégés was M = 6.26 (SD =.63), and the mean level of cultural intelligence for White male protégés was M = 6.03 (SD = .59). This hypothesis was not supported.

**Hypothesis 4a.** Given the existence of role-based stereotypes that Black female protégés are likely to encounter, it was predicted that sponsors of Black female protégés would rate emotional intelligence and interpersonal warmth to be more important in their sponsorship decision than sponsors of White male protégés would in their sponsorship decision. After controlling for the overall length of the relationship, the predicted main effect of protégé sex and race on a sponsor’s level of reporting was not significant with ratings of importance for either emotional intelligence or interpersonal warmth. Thus, this hypothesis was not supported.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Control Variable</th>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Mean/Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Intelligence</td>
<td>(F=.376, p=.542)</td>
<td>F (1,69) = .277, p =0.6, R² = .009</td>
<td>Black Female M =3.73 (SD=.86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>White Male M = 3.82 (SD =.83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warmth</td>
<td>(F=.399, p=.53)</td>
<td>F (1,69) =.211, p=.647, R² = 010</td>
<td>Black Female M = 3.49 (SD=1.177)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>White Male M = 3.62 (SD = .88)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hypothesis 4b.** It was also hypothesized that sponsors of Black females would report higher levels of protégé emotional intelligence and interpersonal warmth than would sponsors of White male protégés. After controlling for the overall length of the relationship, the predicted
main effect of protégé sex and race on a sponsor’s level of reporting was not significant with either emotional intelligence or interpersonal warmth. This hypothesis was also not supported by the data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Control Variable</th>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Mean/Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Intelligence</td>
<td>(F=.91, p=.344)</td>
<td>F (1,69) = 0.893, ( p =0.348 ), ( R^2 =.028 )</td>
<td>Black Female M =5.71 (SD=.58) White Male M = 5.86 (SD =.66) [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warmth</td>
<td>(F=.035, p=.851)</td>
<td>F (1,69) =2.01, ( p =.161 ), ( R^2 =.030 )</td>
<td>Black Female M = 6.57 (SD=.37) White Male M = 6.42 (SD = .52)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hypothesis 5a.** It was predicted that status distance would be a more important factor in the decision to sponsor a Black female protégé. The assumption was that Black female protégés would have reduced status distance between themselves and their sponsors through the development of closer ties and relationships over time. Conversely, it was predicted that White male protégés would benefit from an assumed similarity or likeness with respect to status. After controlling for the overall length of the relationship (\( F = 2.028, \ p = .159 \)), the predicted main effect of protégé sex and race on status distance was not significant (\( F (1,69) =.282, \ p=0.6, \ R^2 =.031 \)). The mean level of status distance for Black female protégés was \( M = 1.6 \) (SD =0.82), and the mean level of status distance for White male protégés was \( M = 1.68 \) (SD = .098), thus indicating that sponsors of Black female protégés and White male protégés regard the importance of status equally.

**Hypothesis 5b.** It was further predicted that sponsors of Black females would report higher levels of status alignment with regard to protégé status than sponsors of White males. After
controlling for the overall length of the relationship (F = .044, p = .835), the predicted main effect of protégé sex and race with respect to status distance was significant (F (1,69) =4.373, p=0.04, R² =.062). However, the mean level for Black female protégés M = 3.5 (SD =0.98) was lower than the mean level for White male protégés M = 4.1 (SD = 1.34), indicating the reverse of what was predicted.

**Hypothesis 6a.** This hypothesis predicted that perceptions of workplace bias would be more important in the decision to sponsor a Black female protégé than a White male protégé. After controlling for the overall length of the relationship (F=0.471, p = .05), the predicted main effect of protégé sex and race with respect to workplace bias was not significant (F (1,69) =0.147, p=.703, R² =.010). The mean level of the importance of perceptions of workplace bias in the decision to sponsor Black female protégés was M = 2.95 (SD = 1.432), and the mean level of perceptions of workplace bias for White male protégés was M =2.79 (SD = 1.409). Therefore, the hypothesis was not supported.

**Hypothesis 6b.** It was further predicted that sponsors of Black female protégés would report higher perceptions of workplace bias while sponsors of White male protégés would report lower perceptions of workplace bias. After controlling for the overall length of the relationship (F=5.739, p=.019), the predicted main effect of protégé sex and race on a sponsor’s level of reporting was significant (F (1,69) =7.45, p=.008, R² =.175). The mean level of workplace bias for Black female protégés was M = 4.02 (SD = 1.08), and the mean level of workplace bias for White male protégés was M = 3.27 (SD = 1.12). Thus, hypothesis 6b was supported.

**Hypothesis 7a.** This hypothesis predicted that performance attributed to ability would be an equally important factor in the decision to sponsor both Black female protégés and White males
protégés. After controlling for the overall length of the relationship (F = .243, p = .624), the predicted main effect of protégé sex and race on a sponsor’s level of reporting was insignificant (F (1,69) = .041, p = .84, R^2 = .004). The mean level of the importance of performance attribution in the decision to sponsor Black female protégés was M = 4.39 (SD = .718), and the mean level of performance attribution for White male protégés was M = 4.44 (SD = .824), thereby indicating equal levels of importance in both groups. Therefore, hypothesis 7a was supported.

*Hypothesis 7b.* It was also predicted that there would be no difference in the degree to which sponsors of Black female protégés and White male protégés attributed performance to ability. After controlling for the overall length of the relationship, (F = .13, p = .72), the predicted main effect of protégé sex and race on a sponsor’s level of reporting was insignificant (F (1,69) = .208, p = .65, R^2 = .005). The mean level of performance attribution for Black female protégés was M = 6.48 (SD = .449), and the mean level of performance attribution for White male protégés was M = 6.53 (SD = .433). Therefore, hypothesis 7b was supported.

*Hypothesis 8a.* It was predicted that perceived attitudinal similarity would be more important in the decision to sponsor Black female protégés than in the decision to sponsor White male protégés. After controlling for the overall length of the relationship (F = .003, p = .956), the predicted main effect of protégé sex and race on a sponsor’s level of reporting was insignificant (F (1,69) = .137, p = .712, R^2 = .002). The mean level of the importance of perceived attitudinal similarity in the decision to sponsor Black female protégés was M = 2.89 (SD = 1.226), and the mean level of perceived attitudinal similarity for White male protégés was M = 2.79 (SD = 1.067). This hypothesis was not supported.
Hypothesis 8b. It was also predicted that sponsors of Black females would report higher levels of perceived attitudinal similarity than sponsors of White male protégés. After controlling for the overall length of the relationship, \( F = 1.225, p = .272 \), the predicted main effect of protégé sex and race on the sponsor’s level of reporting was insignificant \( (F (1,69) = .457, p = .501, R^2 = .026) \). The mean level of perceived attitudinal similarity for Black female protégés was \( M = 5.26 \) (SD = .821), and the mean level of perceived attitudinal similarity for White male protégés was \( M = 5.42 \) (SD = .814). The hypothesis was not supported.
The table below provides a summary of the results for each hypothesis in terms of importance and absolute standing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Absolute Standing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1a-b. Influence, reciprocity, recognition, generativity</td>
<td>Equal</td>
<td>Equal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2a-b. Human Capital and Motivational Factors</td>
<td>Equal</td>
<td>Equal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3a-b. Bicultural Proficiency vs. Cultural Intelligence</td>
<td>More Important</td>
<td>Less Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4a-b. Emotional Intelligence and Interpersonal Warmth</td>
<td>More Important</td>
<td>Less Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5a-b. Status Distance</td>
<td>More Important</td>
<td>Less Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6a-b. Perceptions of Workplace Bias</td>
<td>More Important</td>
<td>Less Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H7a-b. Performance Attribution</td>
<td>No difference</td>
<td>No difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H8a-b. Perceived Attitudinal Similarity</td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Post-hoc analyses

In an effort to ensure the comprehensive identification and assessment of the potential factors that predict sponsorship, sponsors were also asked the following question, “Were there additional factors of importance in your decision to sponsor your protégé?” Twenty-nine (40%) of sponsors provided comments to this question. Their responses primarily focused on motivational factors (“We need to do a better job of developing women and African American talent”), the protégé’s ambition (“Her willingness to take on projects so she could learn about different aspects of the specialty industry”), the protégé’s performance and potential ("I think my protégé is one of the smartest, hardest working people I have ever met.”), and perceived similarity (“He and I have very similar global and life values”). Further analysis revealed that 89% of the sponsors provided responses that overlapped with the factors that were assessed via the quantitative measures in this research. While there may be other factors that predict sponsorship, the additional insights provided by the sponsors in this research did not result in vastly different information from the theory-driven assessments that were incorporated in the study.

VI. Discussion

The literature on the career mobility of Black women is rife with the difficulties that they experience in attaining sponsorship, membership and inclusion in informal networks. These associations are regarded as necessary for the development and ascension of all individuals in corporations. The value and benefit of this research is its focus on Black women who have attained a sponsor, the “holy grail” for career advancement. Thus, the goal of this research was to examine existing sponsor-protégé relationships to determine the factors that contribute to the decision to provide executive sponsorship to Black females and compare the absolute standing and importance of these factors to a group of sponsored White male protégés. Despite the sizeable
variance between White males and Black females in their ascension to the highest ranks of corporations, the results indicated that there was less predicted variance in the standing and importance of factors that led to executive sponsorship for either group.

Theoretical Implications

Overall, results were mixed among the research findings. Consistent with the predictors of sponsorship, executives were motivated to sponsor Black females and White males to virtually the same extent, stating “influencing future talent in my organization or field” as the primary reason. This finding is consistent with social exchange theory (Young & Perrewe, 2000) which suggests that sponsors may be motivated to support others because of the perceived benefits of doing so. In this case, support was given in exchange for the development of organizational talent. Also, as predicted and consistent with the research on predictors of career success (Judge et al, 1995), human capital factors, such as level of education and university quality, and career motivation were comparable between Black females and White males. This finding signals the gateways that are required for sponsorship to occur, and likely signals a basis for establishing common ground between a sponsor and protégé. Sponsors did not regard workplace bias as more important in their decision to provide sponsorship to Black females than White males; however, they clearly acknowledged higher perceptions of workplace bias toward Black females at a significant level. The significance may indicate sponsor recognition of the need for a “level playing field,” which is consistent with research on gender inequity and diversity (Combs, 2003). Finally, the importance of performance was attributed equally across Black females and White males and based on intrinsic personal qualities of the protégé, such as working hard, possessing skills, and demonstrating competence. The senior organizational levels attained by the Black females in this study likely contributed to the equivalence of this finding.
Conversely, there were instances in the study in which between-group differences were predicted, however, the data did not validate those differences. The data for bicultural proficiency showed no significance as a determinant in the sponsorship of Black females when compared to the data for cultural intelligence as a determinant in the sponsorship of White males. The degree to which professional Black women shift comfortably and effortlessly between cultures may account for the lack of significance in this finding. Biculturalism may be an adaptive skill assumed by Black women that may go unnoticed or underappreciated by males and non-minorities. For example, Giscombe and Mattis (2002) found that many executives had very little understanding of the unique experiences of women of color. It is estimated that 75% of Fortune 500 companies have some form of a formal diversity training program (Society for Human Resources Management, 1998); however, these programs tend to deal with diversity as a mechanism for profit or competitive advantage, or as a contributor to the cultural breadth and depth in an organization. These programs tend to overlook the great lengths that minorities, and specifically African American women, endure to make themselves acceptable in order to make others comfortable (Jones & Shorter-Goeden, 2003).

Similarly, emotional intelligence and interpersonal warmth showed no differential significance as determinants in the decision to sponsor Black females in comparison to the decision to sponsor White males. Given that emotional intelligence (EI) plays a significant and more important role in performance success than technical or functional skills at the highest levels of organizations (Goleman, 1998), a plausible explanation is that Black females in this study have developed the required capacity to manage EI effectively. As previously mentioned, Black women who have scaled the ranks of corporate America have done so because they have learned to manage and regulate their emotions, even in the face of slights, microaggressions, or
mistreatment (Roberts et al, 2018). The similar lack of significance with respect to interpersonal warmth was likely due to the strong correlation between interpersonal warmth and emotional intelligence ($r = .54$).

Based on insights related to the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971; Montoya & Horton, 2013), it was predicted that sponsors would assign more importance to the similarities they shared with Black female protégés than to the similarities they shared with White male protégés. The assumption was that sponsors of Black female protégés would have to actively engage with their protégé to reduce or neutralize perceived or actual gaps in status, and that this effort would be more substantial than that expended by sponsors of White men. To some extent, this assumption was driven by the realities that most sponsors of Black women were expected to be White men given their predominance (an expectation that was not confirmed, as only 32% of sponsors of Black women in this study were White males). The fact that sponsors of both protégé groups, Black females and White males, assigned nearly identical importance to the measure of status may be linked to length of relationships between sponsors and protégés. The average length of relationships between protégés and sponsors was 7 years, allowing for adequate time to socialize qualifications, aptitude, and experience, and thus mitigate status distance.

Interestingly, an unanticipated significant effect for status distance did occur in the mean level for White males ($p < .05$), with sponsors reporting higher degrees of similarity. While this effect was an unexpected outcome for what was hypothesized in this study, it was not an unexpected outcome based on the theory of similarity-attraction which predicts that actual and perceived similarity of demographic variables, attitudes and values increases interpersonal attraction and liking (Williams & O’Reilly, 1998; Montoya et al, 2008).
Perceived attitudinal similarity also produced a similar lack of effect as status distance and is likely related to the same contributors. For example, the literature on perceived attitudinal similarity suggests that relational demography is foundational to the development of perceived attitudinal similarity (deep-seated similarity of values and attitudes). However, current findings indicate the presence of perceived attitudinal similarity despite race and gender differences. Given their high level and position in the organizational hierarchy, it is possible that Black female and White male protégés were equivalently positioned on perceived attitudinal similarity, as sponsors would be reluctant to invest in individuals with whom they perceived significant attitudinal or status differences.

**Practical Implications**

Studies of the predictors of career success primarily focus on human capital factors (Todd, Harris, Harris & Wheeler, 2009). However, this study distinguishes itself in two important ways. First, it provides singular focus on the current active sponsorship of Black professional females as a means of exploring the variables that motivate sponsorship of this group. Second, it focuses on examining which among multiple variables is most important in the sponsorship of Black females.

The results of this study produced mixed results whereby some predictions were supported, and others were not. The lack of findings for the unsupported variables should not be construed as if these variables are irrelevant to the sponsor-protégé relationship, but only that their differential degree of importance and different level of absolute standing did not evidence between-group differences as hypothesized. While sponsorship is regarded as a necessary association for ascension to the highest organizational ranks, it is not a guarantee for Black women. This circumstance may account for the fact that there has only been one Black female
CEO of a Fortune 500 company (Ursula Burns), and the current absence of Black women CEOs within the Fortune 500. As the dominant group, White males perpetuate dominance by conferring senior positions to individuals who are similar to themselves (Giscombe & Mattis, 2002). Yet, the results of this research would suggest that the two groups of sponsored protégés are much more similar than different from one another, which raises a number of practical questions and opportunities for Black female professionals and for firms with aspirations to attain C-suite diversity.

In particular, where should Black females focus their efforts to enable career mobility and improve the odds of their ascension to the C-suite? This study provides evidence that the labor market pays dividends to those who invest in furthering their education (Judge et al, 1995). Eighty-two percent of the Black females in this study had earned a Master’s or a professional degree. Research has shown educational attainment to be positively correlated with managerial advancement, assessments of performance and potential (promotability), and salary progression (Wayne et al, 1999).

A second, critical area of focus for Black females must be performance. Performance excellence is expected of all executives; however, research shows that it is particularly important for females who are required to prove their ability repeatedly and to exceed performance expectations in order to counter negative perceptions regarding their readiness and competence (Ragins, Townsend, & Mattis, 1998). Sponsors ranked performance attribution among the three highest rated variables in absolute standing and ranked it first in terms of importance for Black female protégés in this study. It is worth emphasizing that the measure of performance in this study evaluated the attributes of performance, finding that internal factors (i.e., hard work, competence, skills) versus external factors (i.e., help, luck) were the basis for the assessment.
Relatedly, Black females who demonstrate high performance in positions responsible for profit and loss greatly improve their chances for the C-suite (Reinhold, 2005).

A third area of focus emerged from an observation of the sponsor-protégé relationship over the course of this research. Many Black females who were invited to the study as potential protégés (given their rank and status within their respective organizations) reached out to the study author and indicated that they either lacked or had lost sponsorship for one reason or another, and therefore could not participate. This was initially surprising but is not inconsistent with results of a 2015 study by the Center for Talent Innovation (CTI). This research cites two principle reasons for the lack of sponsorship of Black females: 1) some Black females are advocates of contest-mobility: they are determined to “go it alone” in the hope that their capabilities and track record will stand on their own merits, or 2) some Black females are unskilled in building or connecting to a network of advocates (Hewlett & Green, 2005).

In contrast, many protégés who were successful in obtaining their sponsor’s participation in this study exhibited political skill, or the ability to influence others to act in ways that benefit one’s personal and organizational goals (Todd, Harris, Harris & Wheeler, 2009). As evidenced by sponsor feedback and communications, sponsors viewed participation in this study as a continuation of their advocacy and support for their protégés. Sponsorship is paramount to career mobility and Black females must acknowledge its importance and be able to develop the political skill to nurture and retain it.

Furthermore, while the focus of this research was on individual factors such as protégé characteristics that motivate sponsorship, this study also provides insights into a few factors that organizations can leverage in support of the sponsorship of Black females. Sponsors are motivated to advocate for protégés because of the power of their influence (social capital), their desire to
“give back” (reciprocity), their willingness to be recognized as advocates, and their desire to build a legacy. Sponsors of Black females also assessed workplace bias at more significant levels for Black female protégés than White male protégés. Organizations that encourage and reward practices such as sponsorship as a means to champion the development and promotion of Black females, while working to address known issues with workplace bias, are likely to see results. The study by Allen, Poteet, and Russell (2000) indicated that, when the tenets of good organizational citizenship are communicated and valued, high aspirational managers are more likely to sponsor others.

This study is also reflective of the “mixed bag” of career circumstances that confront Black females as they attempt to ascend in their organizations. While all fortunately have sponsors, most sponsors (57%) are of the same race and almost one-third (29%) are of the same sex. Yet, it is White males who are firmly ensconced in the leadership ranks of corporate America and who are the primary decision-makers regarding promotability to senior level and C-suite positions. As previously mentioned, there is a natural tendency for White males to confer promotability to other White males given perceived or actual similarities. Unless there is a deliberate effort by White males to recognize and act on sponsoring those who have traditionally been excluded from consideration of senior level opportunities, the current circumstance will be perpetuated.

**Limitations**

The present study makes a unique contribution to the extant literature on sponsorship given its focus on a between group comparison of the Black female protégés and White male
protégés from the vantage point of the sponsor. However, the study has a few limitations that must be acknowledged.

The most significant limitation is sample size. Despite extensive interest in the research topic by those who were invited to participate, many potential respondents failed to initiate or follow-through with completion of the survey. The study author engaged in significant efforts to follow up with potential respondents and exhausted all available channels to recruit the minimum number of dyads necessary to meet the desired sample size. Despite these efforts, it is important to acknowledge that a more robust sample may contribute to more statistically significant findings and stronger inferences regarding the data.

Second, the survey was confidential, but not anonymous which may have contributed to respondent reluctance to participate. Despite assurances of complete confidentiality, a potential impediment to participation was likely the need for name identification of both sponsor and protégé on the surveys. This was a requirement to match the sponsor-protégé dyads that were ultimately numerically coded, however, there was obvious reluctance by some respondents that resulted in names either being withheld or dummied.

An additional limitation of this study is restriction of range. The protégé groups were solicited from the same or similar organizations and the personal networks of the researcher, resulting in more homogeneity than anticipated. The protégés and sponsors were a very high achieving group of individuals with little variability in motivational factors or cumulative educational and professional experiences. Thus, the expected gaps between the Black female and White male protégés were not as dramatic as hypothesized and may not reflect the unique attributes of what it takes to become a highly placed executive.
Future Research

The findings point to a number of different directions for future research. First, there are alternative research methods that may allow for different ways to understand the sponsor-Black female protégé relationship. The current research, which utilized a cross-sectional design, uncovered some unexpected reactions to the topic of sponsor-protégé relationships. In most cases, there was a high regard and common understanding of the benefits of the two-way relationship in alignment with social exchange theory. In other cases, the role of the sponsor was a clandestine and unilateral situation where the sponsor provided advocacy “behind the scenes” without the protégé’s knowledge. In these cases, there appeared to be some discomfort with disclosure among a minority of sponsors, where concerns ranged from perceptions of favoritism to fear of implied promises. The end result is a protégé being sponsored, but without her knowledge -- which calls into question whether the protégé is being supported in a way that is consistent with the definition of sponsorship (i.e., a relationship of mutual benefit). This phenomenon should be explored further.

To assuage these potential conflicts, an alternative is to use an experimental paradigm with dummy profiles of protégés. This design has the potential to be less personally risky to sponsors as it would not require them to answer questions about current protégés, but still uncover how sponsors evaluate potential protégés. For example, an experimental vignette study asking sponsors to indicate the likelihood of sponsoring protégés with different profiles (either of demographic, educational, or trait-like characteristics) could explore how sponsors make decisions with respect to these factors, and the extent to which certain factors are more versus less important than others in the decision making process. This design would also allow for an exploration of factors influencing the sponsorship decision in its very early stages, versus an
evaluation of the factors that influenced sponsorship in long-standing relationships (as was the case in the current study). A potential advantage of experimental design may be the ability to measure the factors involved in the cost-benefit analysis (Allen, 2007) that sponsors perform when selecting a protégé.

In most instances where the sponsor-protégé dyad was transparent and engaged, there is still much to learn, such as: a) how the race-sex barrier was overcome, b) how the relationship operates, and c) the specific exchange benefits that have accrued to sponsors and protégés. Qualitative research with a select number of sponsor-protégé dyads may provide a means to explore the sponsor-protégé dyad more deeply than the current study allowed. Relatedly, of primary importance to the current study is whether the sponsor-protégé relationship ultimately results in ascension to C-suite opportunities for Black women. It would be informative to launch a longitudinal study of protégés to track their progress, particularly those for whom sponsors have designated as having C-suite potential.

In addition to examining the factors that motivate executive sponsorship as an accelerant to career mobility for Black females, future research should also pursue alternative streams that address the double-marginalization of this group. A potential new research stream to address is ethics as it pertains to diversity, or lack thereof. For decades, the leadership within many Fortune 500 companies and their respective boards have committed to shape and manage companies with a workforce that represents a diversity of backgrounds, perspectives and values throughout its ranks; however, the results belie this commitment. Positioning diversity, and specifically the ascension of Black females to top leadership positions as an ethical issue may strengthen the imperative and improve results. Nelson, Poms and Wolf (2012) have emphasized the intersection of ethics and diversity and found that many unethical behaviors directed at individuals overlapped
with diversity-related behaviors, such as discriminating against employees on the basis of age, race, gender, religious belief, sexual orientation, etc. Thus, they have advocated for the intersection of ethics and diversity where both constructs focus on the fair and just treatment of all individuals within all realms of business.

Another possible research stream to examine is culture as a variable with respect to Black female career mobility. Depending on various dynamics and characteristics, culture may serve as either a stimulus or a deterrent to the advancement of Black women in corporations. It may be advantageous to explore which environments are likely to be most beneficial to the career mobility and ascension of Black women. The research findings may be helpful in two ways: 1) coaching Black women on how to find more welcoming environments to build and sustain a career, and/or 2) coaching organizations on how to be more accommodating to a diverse workforce.

VII. Conclusion

While we are far from having a level playing field with equitable outcomes and rewards for Black females, there has been tremendous progress in labor-market gains since the 1960’s. Many of these gains can be attributed to the advent of anti-discrimination measures, in particular Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act that barred discrimination on the basis of race and sex (Fosu,1997). A historical review would seem to indicate that diversity progress most often results from the enactment of policy-driven measures with firm accountability. To that end, some organizations are taking the path toward the implementation of such policies. For example, Goldman Sachs has adopted its own version of the ‘Rooney Rule’, which will require two diverse candidates to be interviewed for any open job. The Rooney Rule was initiated in the National Football League (NFL) and currently requires NFL teams to interview minority candidates for
head coaching and general manager positions before vacancies are filled or pay the consequence of a stiff fine. Meanwhile, the state of California has enacted a bill that requires the placement of at least one woman on all public boards, or a sizeable fine is charged. Whether these efforts, along with others, is enough to increase representation of Black women in C-suite roles and beyond, remains a critical question.
References


EXECUTIVE SPONSORSHIP OF BLACK WOMEN


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EXECUTIVE SPONSORSHIP OF BLACK WOMEN


Appendix A: Research Model

**Attributes of Sponsors and Protégés**

**Social Capital Theory**

**Sponsor (White Men)**
- Influence
- Reciprocity
- Recognition ("Star-Maker")
- Generativity

**Similarity-Attraction Paradigm**

**Protégés (White Men)**
- Human Capital
  - Quantity of Education
  - University Quality & Prestige
  - P & L Experience
  - Performance/Potential
- Motivational
  - Promotion Ambition
  - Work Centrality

**Social Exchange Theory**

**Sponsor (Black Women)**
- Workplace Racial Bias
- Performance Attribution
- Perceived Attitudinal Similarity

**Protégés (Black Women)**
- Biculturalism
- Interpersonal Skills
- Status Distance
Appendix B: Sponsor Survey

Default Question Block

Information Sheet for Participation in Research Study
“What Matters Most in Executive Sponsorship”

Principal Investigator: Stephanie B. Smith – Doctoral Candidate
Institution: DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois, USA
Faculty Advisor: Jaclyn Jensen, PhD., Department of Management & Entrepreneurship

I am conducting a research study to learn more about executive sponsorship and the factors that are unique, common, and most important in the decision of executives to sponsor individuals for career mobility. I am asking you to participate in the research because you may currently be engaged in a sponsor-protégé relationship. To be eligible to participate in this research, you must be the executive sponsor of either a White male or a Black female who works for a US-based organization. If you do not meet the eligibility criteria, you will be exited from the survey. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete the following online survey that will take about 20 minutes of your time. The survey will include questions about your perceptions of your protégé’s standing across a number of factors and the importance of those factors in your decision to sponsor your protégé. The factors will include bicultural proficiency, cultural intelligence, warmth, emotional intelligence, status distance, perceived attitudinal similarity, workplace bias, and performance attribution. I will also collect some personal information about you such as your sex, race, education, and job title.

The efficacy of this research relies on obtaining information from both you and your protégé. Therefore, in addition to completing the survey that follows this information sheet, please forward the survey using the link in the preceding email to your protégé along with the recommended note. The protégé survey collects demographic data and information on career motivation. The protégé survey will only take 5 minutes to complete. The survey requests the names of the sponsor and protégé so that the sponsor and the protégé can be linked through name identification. The data collected from you and your protégé will be kept confidential. In appreciation for your participation in completing the sponsor survey, you will receive a copy of the research findings and you will be entered into a drawing for one of 20 Amazon e-gift cards with a value of $25 each.

You must be 18 years or older to participate in this research. Your participation in this research is voluntary which means that you can choose not to participate. There will be no negative consequences if you decide not to participate or change your mind after you begin the research. You may skip a question if you prefer not to provide a response. You can withdraw your participation at any time prior to submitting your survey. If you change your mind while answering the survey, you may simply exit the survey. You may request to have your data removed up until the time the data is collected and aggregated with other survey data. Once the data is aggregated, I will be unable to remove your data from the study because I will not know which data belongs to you.

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about this study or you want to get additional information or provide input about this research, please contact Stephanie Smith at 312-362-7552 or by email at ssmit185@depaul.edu, or Jaclyn Jensen, PhD. at 312-362-6852 or by email at jjensen10@depaul.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact Susan Loess-Perez, DePaul University’s Director of Research Compliance, in the Office of Research Services at 312-362-7593 or by email at sloesspe@depaul.edu. You may also contact DePaul’s Office of Research Services if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the researcher.
- You cannot reach the researcher.
- You want to talk to someone besides the researcher.

You may save or print this information for your records.

By completing the survey, you are indicating your agreement to be included in the research. To advance through the survey, please click on the arrow at the bottom right of each page. A progress bar appears at the bottom of the survey to show how far along you are in the survey.
EXECUTIVE SPONSORSHIP OF BLACK WOMEN

This research is designed to obtain information about why sponsorship occurs and to determine attributes that may or may not influence an executive's decision to sponsor an individual (protégé). The research requires the collection of information from you and your protégé. For the purposes of this research, it is first important to define sponsor.

**Definition of a Sponsor**

A sponsor actively guides the career of a protégé. Sponsors use their influence and advocate openly for protégés to be promoted, or to obtain enriching, coveted, or challenging assignments that position protégés for critical development and career success. Sponsors provide exposure, information, visibility, and protection. Protection allows the protégé the freedom to learn and make mistakes without fear of derailment. Sponsors are committed to the personal and professional well-being of their protégés.

Please review the statements below and indicate whether you have provided the following support to a specific individual in your company or organization (Check all that apply.)

- Given or recommended the individual for challenging assignments that present opportunities for him/her to learn new skills
- Given or recommended the individual for assignments that required personal contact with managers in different parts of the company or organization
- Given or recommended the individual for assignments that increased his/her contact with higher level managers
- Given or recommended the individual for assignments that helped protégé meet new colleagues
- Went out of your way to promote the career interests of the individual

Based on the definition above and your responses to the statements above, do you currently consider yourself a sponsor?

- Yes
- No

Are you the sponsor of a White male or Black female?

- Yes
- No

From the list of choices below, indicate the importance of each of the reasons below in motivating you to become a sponsor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Extremely important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Moderately important</th>
<th>Slightly important</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can influence the future talent in my organization or field</td>
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<td>I had the benefit of a sponsor and now I want to reciprocate</td>
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<tr>
<td>I want to demonstrate my value as a developer of talent</td>
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<td>I want to leave a legacy</td>
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</table>

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EXECUTIVE SPONSORSHIP OF BLACK WOMEN

What is your sex?

- Male
- Female

What is your protégé's sex?

- Male
- Female

What is your race?

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Other (Please specify)

What is your protégé's race?

- White
- Black or African American

What is the highest degree you received?

- Elementary school diploma
- High school diploma or GED
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Professional degree (MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD, DD)
- Doctorate degree (PhD, DBA, Ed.D)

List the colleges or universities from which you graduated:
What is your current job title? Please provide the level and the description (e.g., Executive Vice President of Marketing)


Do you have responsibility for managing, controlling, or influencing profit and loss in your job?

- Yes
- No

Based on your role as a sponsor, you will now be asked to respond to questions about your protégé. The integrity of this study depends on a response to each question. If you are not sure, please provide your best guess based on the information you have.

**Primary Study Variables**

Biculturalism is the ability to negotiate two sets of cultural norms, practices, identities, and values. Using the scale below, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement regarding each statement as it applies to your protégé. (*Dominant culture* refers to White, middle class Americans of northern European descent.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My protégé counts on people from the dominant culture and people from her heritage culture</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My protégé develops new relationships with people in the dominant culture and people from her cultural group</td>
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<tr>
<td>My protégé feels comfortable attending a gathering of mostly Americans from the dominant culture as well as a gathering of mostly people from her heritage culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>My protégé has strong ties with Americans from the dominant culture as well as people from her heritage culture</td>
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<td>My protégé feels at ease around Americans from the dominant culture and people from her heritage culture</td>
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</tbody>
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EXECUTIVE SPONSORSHIP OF BLACK WOMEN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4/29/2019</th>
<th>Qualtrics Survey Software</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My protégé fits in with Americans from the dominant culture as well as people from her heritage culture</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My protégé can alter her behavior to fit a particular social context</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My protégé appropriately chooses the degree and manner by which she affiliates with each culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My protégé learns new aspects of both the dominant culture and her heritage culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How important was biculturalism in your decision to sponsor your protégé?

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

Cultural intelligence is an individual's capability to function and manage effectively in culturally diverse settings. Using the scale below, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement regarding each statement as it applies to your protégé.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My protégé is conscious of differences when interacting with people with different cultural backgrounds</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My protégé knows how to interact with people from backgrounds that are unfamiliar to him</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My protégé is conscious of differences and he applies his knowledge to diverse interactions</td>
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<tr>
<td>My protégé acts culturally appropriate when he interacts with people from diverse backgrounds</td>
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<tr>
<td>My protégé enjoys interacting with people from diverse backgrounds</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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EXECUTIVE SPONSORSHIP OF BLACK WOMEN

4/29/2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My protégé is confident when he socializes with people from diverse backgrounds who are unfamiliar to him</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My protégé adjusts well to people and places that reflect diverse backgrounds and experiences</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My protégé enjoys learning about and experiencing diverse settings that are unfamiliar to him</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My protégé is confident when he must become accustomed to conditions in a diverse setting</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How important was cultural intelligence in your decision to sponsor your protégé?

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

The scale below refers to attributes of individuals who exhibit interpersonal warmth. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement regarding each statement as it applies to your protégé.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My protégé is tolerant</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My protégé is friendly</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My protégé is good-natured</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My protégé is sincere</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My protégé is trustworthy</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My protégé is well-intentioned</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How important was interpersonal warmth in your decision to sponsor your protégé?

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important
Emotional intelligence refers to the perception, regulation, understanding, and utilization of emotions. Using the scale below, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement regarding each statement as it applies to your protégé.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On the whole, my protégé is a highly motivated person</td>
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<tr>
<td>My protégé usually finds it difficult to regulate his/her emotions</td>
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<tr>
<td>My protégé tends to change his/her mind frequently</td>
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<tr>
<td>My protégé often finds it difficult to stand up for his/her rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>My protégé is usually able to influence the way others feel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Those close to my protégé often complain that s/he treats them poorly</td>
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<tr>
<td>My protégé normally finds it difficult to keep himself/herself motivated</td>
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<tr>
<td>On the whole, my protégé seems pleased with his/her life</td>
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<tr>
<td>My protégé is generally aware of his/her emotions as s/he experiences them</td>
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<tr>
<td>My protégé tends to back down even when s/he knows s/he is right</td>
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<tr>
<td>My protégé generally believes that things will work out fine in his/her life</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

How important was emotional intelligence in your decision to sponsor your protégé?

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

The following questions are related to status. Status refers to the degree of prominence, respect, and influence individuals hold in the eyes of others. Using the scale below, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement.
disagreement regarding each statement as it applies to your protégé.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My protégé is from a social class similar to mine</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My protégé’s status is different from mine</td>
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<tr>
<td>My protégé is from an economic situation different from mine</td>
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<tr>
<td>My protégé is from a social class different from mine</td>
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<tr>
<td>My protégé is from an economic situation like mine</td>
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<tr>
<td>My protégé’s background is different from mine</td>
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<tr>
<td>My protégé and I come from a similar geographic region</td>
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<tr>
<td>My protégé’s life as a child was similar to mine</td>
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</table>

How important was status in your decision to sponsor your protégé?

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

The following statements relate to workplace bias. Using the scale below, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement regarding each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At work I believe that individuals are sometimes singled out because of their racial/ethnic group</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prejudice exists where I work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where I work all people are treated the same, regardless of their racial/ethnic group</td>
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<tr>
<td>At work minority employees receive fewer opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is no discrimination in my present work environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where I work members of some racial/ethnic groups are treated better than members of other groups</td>
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</tbody>
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### Executive Sponsorship of Black Women

4/29/2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualtrics Survey Software</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At work, people are intolerant of others from different racial/ethnic backgrounds</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>At work, I believe that some supervisors scrutinize the work of members of other racial/ethnic groups</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where I work people of different racial/ethnic groups get along well with each other</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At my present job, some people get better treatment because of their racial/ethnic group</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is discrimination where I work</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At work some individuals are treated poorly because of their racial/ethnic group</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>At my present place of employment, people of some racial/ethnic groups do not share job-related information with people of other racial/ethnic groups</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where I work promotions and rewards are not influenced by racial/ethnic group membership</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How important was your sensitivity to workplace bias in your decision to sponsor your protégé?**

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

The following statements relate to job performance and performance attributes. Using the scale below, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement regarding each statement as it applies to factors that can be attributed to your protégé’s level of performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My protégé possesses the appropriate skills</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My protégé works very hard</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My protégé is lucky</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My protégé’s job is very easy</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Executive Sponsorship of Black Women

#### Qualtrics Survey Software

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4/29/2019</th>
<th>Qualtrics Survey Software</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strongly disagree</strong></td>
<td><strong>Disagree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My protégé receives a lot of help</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My protégé is competent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My protégé is confident</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My protégé is independent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My protégé is competitive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My protégé is intelligent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How important was your protégé’s job performance in your decision to sponsor your protégé?

- [ ] Extremely important
- [ ] Very important
- [ ] Moderately important
- [ ] Slightly important
- [ ] Not at all important

The following statements relate to similarities between you and your protégé. Using the scale below, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement regarding each statement as it applies to you and your protégé.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Strongly disagree</strong></th>
<th><strong>Disagree</strong></th>
<th><strong>Somewhat disagree</strong></th>
<th><strong>Neither agree nor disagree</strong></th>
<th><strong>Somewhat agree</strong></th>
<th><strong>Agree</strong></th>
<th><strong>Strongly agree</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My protégé and I see things in much the same way</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My protégé is similar to me in terms of our general outlook and perspective</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My protégé and I are alike in a number of areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>My protégé and I often think alike in terms of coming up with a similar solution for a problem</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My protégé and I analyze problems in a similar way</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My protégé and I have similar values about work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My protégé and I have similar values about life in general</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My protégé and I are more similar than dissimilar in important ways</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How important were the similarities between you and your protégé in your decision to sponsor your protégé?

- [ ] Extremely important
- [ ] Very important

[https://depaul.ca1.qualtrics.com/Q/EditSection/Blocks/Ajax/Getsurvey/printPreview](https://depaul.ca1.qualtrics.com/Q/EditSection/Blocks/Ajax/Getsurvey/printPreview)
EXECUTIVE SPONSORSHIP OF BLACK WOMEN

Were there additional factors of importance in your decision to sponsor your protégé? If so, please list them and describe briefly.

Protege Professional Information

How many levels are there between your protégé and the CEO or President of your organization?

- 1 level
- 2 levels
- 3 or more levels

What is the likelihood that your protégé will be promoted to a higher level position in the near future?

- Extremely likely
- Somewhat likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Extremely unlikely

From your perspective, what is the highest level position that can reasonably be attained by your protégé?

How did the sponsor-protégé relationship develop?

- Sponsor's initiative
- Protégé's request
- Formal, company-sponsored program

How long have you known your protégé professionally?

Sponsor Contact Information

https://depaul.ca1.qualtrics.com/Q/EditSection/Blocks/Ajax/GetSurveyPrintPreview
This research study is confidential, but not anonymous. The efficacy of the study requires information from both you and your protégé; therefore, please provide names and email information for you and your protégé. Every precaution will be taken to protect this information.

Name identification allows your survey data to be linked with your protégé’s survey data.

Please provide your name and email address:

Your name: 

Your email address:

Please provide the name of your protégé:

Would you be willing to participate in further related research in the future? If you indicate 'yes', your contact information will be kept by the researcher.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Thank you for participating in this research study!
Appendix C: Protégé Survey

Pre-Screen

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH STUDY
"WHAT MATTERS MOST IN EXECUTIVE SPONSORSHIP"

Principal Investigator: Stephanie B. Smith – Doctoral Candidate
Institution: DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois, USA
Faculty Advisor: Jaclyn Jensen, PhD., Department of Management & Entrepreneurship

I am conducting a research study to learn more about executive sponsorship and the factors that are unique, common, and most important in the decision of executives to sponsor individuals for career mobility. I am asking you to participate in this research because you are either a White male or Black female who may be currently engaged in a sponsor-protégé relationship, and you work for a US-based organization. If you meet the aforementioned eligibility criteria, you are asked to complete the following online survey. If you do not meet the eligibility criteria, you will be exited from the survey. As a protégé, the survey is meant to collect information regarding your career motivation and some demographic data from you such as your sex, race, education, and job title. This online survey will take about 5 minutes of your time to complete.

The efficacy of this research relies on obtaining information from both you and your sponsor. Therefore, in addition to completing the survey that follows this information sheet, please forward the survey using the link in the preceding email to your sponsor along with the recommended note. The sponsor survey will include questions about his/her perceptions of your standing across a number of factors, and the importance of those factors in his/her decision to sponsor you. The factors will include bi-cultural proficiency, cultural intelligence, warmth, emotional intelligence, status distance, perceived attitudinal similarity, workplace bias, and performance attribution. The survey requests the names of the sponsor and protégé so that the sponsor and the protégé data can be linked through name identification. The research data collected from you and your sponsor will be kept confidential. In appreciation for your participation in completing the protégé survey, you will receive a copy of the research findings and you will be entered into a drawing for one of 20 Amazon e-gift cards with a value of $25 each.

You must be 18 years or older to participate in this research. Your participation in this research is voluntary which means that you can choose not to participate. There will be no negative consequences if you decide not to participate or change your mind after you begin the research. You may skip a question if you prefer not to provide a response. You can withdraw your participation at any time prior to submitting your survey. If you change your mind while answering the survey, you may simply exit the survey. You may request to have your data removed up until the time the data is collected and aggregated with other survey data. Once the data is aggregated, I will be unable to remove your data from the study because I will not know which data belongs to you.

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about this study or you want to get additional information or provide input about this research, please contact Stephanie Smith at 312-362-7552 or by email at ssmit185@depaul.edu, or Jaclyn Jensen, PhD. at 312-362-6652 or by email at jjense10@depaul.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact Susan Loess-Perez, DePaul University’s Director of Research Compliance, in the Office of Research Services at 312-362-593 or by email at sloesspe@depaul.edu. You may also contact DePaul’s Office of Research Services if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the researcher.
- You cannot reach the researcher.
- You want to talk to someone besides the researcher.

You may save or print this information for your records.

By completing the following survey, you are indicating your agreement to be included in the research. To advance through the survey, please click on the arrow at the bottom right of each page. A progress bar appears.
This research is designed to obtain information about why sponsorship occurs and to determine attributes that may or may not influence an executive’s decision to sponsor an individual (protégé). The research requires the collection of information from you and your sponsor. For the purposes of this research, it is first important to define sponsor.

**Definition of a Sponsor**

A sponsor actively guides the career of a protégé. Sponsors use their influence and advocate openly for protégés to be promoted, or to obtain enriching, coveted, or challenging assignments that position protégés for critical development and career success. Sponsors provide exposure, information, visibility, and protection. Protection allows the protégé the freedom to learn and make mistakes without fear of derailment. Sponsors are committed to the personal and profession well-being of their protégés.

Please review the statements below and indicate whether you have received the following support from a specific individual in your company or organization (Check all that apply.)

- You have been given or recommended for challenging assignments that present opportunities to learn new skills
- You have been given or recommended for assignments that required personal contact with managers in different parts of the company or organization
- You have been given or recommended for assignments that increased your contact with higher level managers
- You have been given or recommended for assignments that helped you to meet new colleagues
- You have been encouraged to prepare for advancement

Based on the definition above and your responses to the statements above, do you currently consider yourself to have a sponsor?

- Yes
- No

**Protege Sex & Race**

**What is your sex?**

- Male
- Female

**What is your race?**

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
EXECUTIVE SPONSORSHIP OF BLACK WOMEN

4/29/2019

Qualtrics Survey Software

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
☐ Other

Degree Information, Job Title & Protege Motivation

What is the highest degree you received?
☐ Elementary school diploma
☐ High school diploma or GED
☐ Associate’s degree
☐ Bachelor’s degree
☐ Master’s degree
☐ Professional degree (MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD, DD)
☐ Doctorate degree (PhD, DBA, Ed.D)

List the colleges or universities from which you graduated:

What is your current job title? Please provide the level and the description (e.g., Vice President of Marketing)

Is your position situated within 1 - 2 levels of the CEO of your organization?
☐ Yes
☐ No

How many levels are there between you and the CEO or President of your organization?
☐ 1 level
☐ 2 levels
☐ 3 or more levels

Do you have responsibility for managing profit and loss in your job?
☐ Yes
☐ No

https://depaul.ca1.qualtrics.com/StartSection/Blocks/Ajax/GetSurveyPrintPreview
Is your employer a US-based organization?

- Yes
- No

Using the scale below, please review each of the following statements and indicate the degree to which each statement reflects the reasons for which you are doing your current job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Very little</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Very Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because I enjoy this work very much</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because I have fun doing my job</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the moments of pleasure that this job brings me</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I chose this job because it allows me to reach my life goals</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because this job fulfills my career plans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because this job fits my personal values</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because I have to be the best in my job, I have to be a winner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because my work is my life and I don't want to fail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because my reputation depends on it</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because this job affords me a certain standard of living</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because it allows me to make a lot of money</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do this job for the paycheck</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Protege Contact Information

This research study is confidential, but not anonymous. The efficacy of the study requires information from both you and your sponsor; therefore, please provide your name and email information and your sponsor's name. Every precaution will be taken to protect the confidentiality of this information.

Name identification allows your survey data to be linked with your sponsor's survey data.

Please provide your name and email address:

- Your name: __________________________
- Your email address: ___________________
Appendix D: Email Invitation to Recruit Black Female Protégés

Dear ____________,

I hope that you will accept my invitation to participate in a potentially important research project. I am currently a doctoral candidate in business administration with an emphasis on leadership and organizational development. My doctoral thesis pertains to executive sponsorship with a focus on what is common, unique, and important in the executive sponsorship of Black women. One of the discoveries that I have made as a researcher is the scarcity of research on Black women. The only way to overcome this challenge is to increase the number of researchers, like myself, who have an interest in topics affecting Black women, and for Black women to participate in research that pertains to them. For these reasons, I would like to request your participation. The efficacy of this research relies on obtaining data from you as well as your executive sponsor, if applicable.

To be of greatest assistance with this research, I ask you to do the following:

First, forward the note and survey link in the box below to your sponsor. The survey will measure your sponsor’s perceptions of you across a number of factors, and the importance of those factors in his/her decision to provide sponsorship.

**Sample Note to Sponsor**

Dear ____________,

I am participating in a confidential research project that focuses on the executive sponsorship of Black women. As my sponsor, the integrity of the research relies on obtaining information from you. The survey should take approximately 20 minutes. The results will be submitted to an independent researcher. Thank you in advance for your participation!

Please click on the following link to obtain access to the survey: (LINK)

Second, participate in this research by clicking on the following link to gain access to the survey: (LINK). This survey will inquire about job motivation and collect some basic demographic information, such as sex, race, education, and job title. The survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. I am requesting that you complete the survey within the next three business days. If you complete the survey and your sponsor completes their survey, you will be entered into a drawing for one of 20 Amazon electronic gift cards with a value of $25 each. A reminder email will be sent to you within two weeks, if you have not submitted a survey.

3) Finally, forward this email and invite other Black executive women within your network to participate in this research. To be eligible for participation, a woman must be engaged in an active sponsor-protégé relationship and work for a US-based organization.

Thank you and best regards,
Appendix E: Recruitment Email for Sponsors of White Males and Black Females

Dear ________________,

[Example #1 (direct): It has been awhile since our days at (company) and I hope this note finds you well.]

[Example #2 (indirect): As a follow-up to the note that you received from (name), I am inviting you to participate in a very important research project that I am conducting. My name is Stephanie Smith and...]

I am currently a doctoral candidate in business administration with an emphasis on leadership and organizational development. My doctoral thesis pertains to executive sponsorship with a focus on what is common, unique, and important in the realm of executive sponsorship. Given your career success, there is a high probability that you have experienced the benefit of executive sponsorship, and equally likely that you have provided sponsorship to others. For the purposes of this research, I am interested in obtaining data from the sponsors of White males or Black females who are currently engaged in a sponsor-protégé relationship and who work for US-based organizations. To be of greatest assistance with my research, I ask your assistance with the following:

First, I would like you to forward a brief survey to your protégé with the following note. This survey will only take 5 minutes to complete, and will simply ask questions regarding career motivation, and collect some demographic data such as sex, race, education, and job title.

Sample Note to Protégé

I am participating in a **confidential** research project that focuses on executive sponsorship. As an individual who has benefited from my sponsorship, I would appreciate it if you would complete and submit a brief survey that should only take about 5 minutes. The results will be submitted to an independent researcher. Thanks in advance for your participation!

Please click on the following link to obtain access to the survey: (LINK)

Second, I would appreciate your participation in a survey that will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The survey will measure your perceptions of your protégé across a number of factors, and the importance of those factors in your decision to provide sponsorship. The survey will also ask for some demographic information. I am requesting that you complete the survey within the next three business days. To participate in this research, please click on the following link to gain access to the survey: (LINK). If you complete the survey, you will be entered into a drawing for one of 20 Amazon electronic gift cards with a value of $25 each.

Finally, forward this email and invite other sponsors of White executive males or Black executive females within your network to participate in this research. Again, to be eligible for participation, a White male or Black female must be engaged in an active sponsor-protégé relationship, and work for a US-based organization.

Thank you and best regards,
Appendix F: LinkedIn Post

Looking for Champions!

I am currently pursuing a doctorate in business administration with an emphasis on leadership and organizational development. My dissertation focuses on factors that are unique, common, and most important in the decision of executives to sponsor/champion White males and Black females. An executive sponsor is one who champions or uses their influence to advocate openly for others to enable critical development and career success.

I am currently recruiting sponsors and their protégés to participate in brief confidential surveys of their experiences, and could use your help in the following ways:

1. If you are currently sponsoring a White male or Black female protégé, please use the below link to complete a confidential sponsor survey:
   https://tinyurl.com/DBA sponsor

2. If you are a White male or Black female who has an executive sponsor, please use the below link to complete a confidential protégé survey:
   https://tinyurl.com/DBA protege

3. Connect me with individuals who are executive sponsors of White males or Black females. Ideally, sponsors will be high-level individuals (C-suite or executive-level members).