

## 2010 North American Society for Sport Management Conference (NASSM 2010)

### Examining the Influence of Race, Gender, and Athletic Participation on Hiring Preferences in Sport Management

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Lapchick (2008), in the Racial and Gender Report Card that reports the hiring practices of women and people of color in leading sports organizations, reported that representation of racial minorities at NCAA institutions declined in comparison to previous report cards. In addition, the majority of general managers, senior administrators, and professional administrators in major league sports continue to be dominated by White males (Lapchick). Overall, there exists significant racial inequality in the general United States labor market (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004). Studies have shown that when employers were faced with a White and a Black applicant who share similar educational backgrounds and work experience, the White applicant was more likely to be chosen for employment and that employer prejudice or the perception of race may signal lower productivity of the Black applicants (Bertrand & Mullainathan). Prejudice can arise from the relations that people perceive between the characteristics of members of a social group and the requirements of the social roles that group members occupy (Eagly & Karau, 2002). When perceivers hold a stereotype about a social group that is incongruent with the attributes that are thought to be required for success in certain classes of social roles, a potential for prejudice exists. These stereotypes may potentially affect how males and females perceive Blacks in management and could even impact how they are judged once they enter the workforce.

The implications of racial ideology for Black men are different from those for Black women (Bruening, 2005; Bruening et al. 2005; Corbett & Johnson, 2000; Daniels, 2000; Majors, 1998; Smith, 2000; Solomon, 2000; Winlock, 2000). Specific to sport, Hoberman (1997) reports that Black male athletes have been socially constructed as dangerous, frightening, and offensive. Black men are stereotyped as strong but intellectually dull. Hall (2001) referred to this perception as the "dumb Black". While it has been assumed that sport has made a contribution to racial integration, this has been offset by the unification of the athlete, the gangster rapper, and the criminal into a single Black male persona that the sports industry, music industry and advertising industry have made into the predominant image of Black masculinity (Hoberman, 1997). Further, Black female athletes have been racialized so that they exist in a "realm outside the normal range of acceptance" (Coakley 2009, p. 201). For example, Serena and Venus Williams have been pathologized as exotic yet repulsive, animalistic yet supremely athletic, unfeminine yet erotic (McKay & Johnson, 2008; Spencer, 2004).

In an attempt to explain the influence of stereotyping based on gender specifically, role congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2000) has been used to analyze expectations about the roles that men and women occupy within management and leadership. Gender expectations (being aggressive, self-confident, dominant for men, and being nurturing, affectionate, weak for women) impact whether or not women and men are perceived to successfully fulfill their stereotypical gender roles. The greater one's ability to adhere to these expectations, the more highly he/she will be rated by evaluators (Eagly & Karau). In contrast, devaluation results when characteristics misalign with role demands (Diekmann & Goodfried, 2006). Role congruity theory has been applied in a few instances to evaluate stereotyping based on race. Specifically, Blacks were more favorably evaluated as athletes and Asians were more favorably evaluated as students (Barden, Maddux, Petty, & Brewer, 2004). Blacks were also more favorably evaluated as basketball coaches when compared to Whites (Fink, Burton, & Borland, 2009). Thus, role congruity theory is an appropriate framework to use in evaluation of the influence of stereotyping based on race and gender roles.

Therefore, the current study utilized role congruity theory to compare hiring preferences of Black and White athletes and Black and White non-athletes for entry-level sport management positions. Given the research noted regarding stereotyping of Black athletes and the influence of role congruity on evaluation of appropriate roles, we proposed that Black athletes, when compared to Black non-athletes and White athletes and non-athletes, would receive lower scores on hiring preferences.

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A simulated hiring procedure was used for evaluation of the candidates. Each participant was provided a resume of a fictitious applicant for an entry-level position at a sport organization. The names used on the resumes were Lakisha and Jamal for the Black applicants, as these have been identified as stereotypical Black names ((Bertrand & Mullainathan 2004). The names used for the White applicants were Jennifer and John. All participants evaluated one applicant on a Likert type scale from 1 (not at all qualified) to 7 (very qualified) on the following dependent hiring measures (recommendation to hire, qualification applicant, applicant performance, applicant potential, and liking the applicant). Mean scores for the dependent measures for the Black candidates ranged from  $M = 1.7$  to  $M = 3.8$  and from  $M = 5.0$  to  $M = 6.0$  for the White candidates. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to test the type of resume and evaluator's gender as the independent variables and the hiring measures as the dependent variables. The overall MANOVA was not significant, however, the MANOVA for the resumes was significant,  $\lambda = .138$ ,  $F = 24.67$  (28, 942),  $p < .0001$ . Follow-up univariate analyses were significant on all dependent measures indicating that participants provided higher ratings for all White candidates compared to Black candidates on hiring preference measures. Black male and female non-athletes did not have significantly higher hiring preference measures when compared to Black male and female athletes. There were no significant differences found based on the gender of the evaluator when comparing hiring preferences across all resumes. These findings will be discussed using role congruity as a framework. In addition, limitations to the study and analyses will be discussed in detail.