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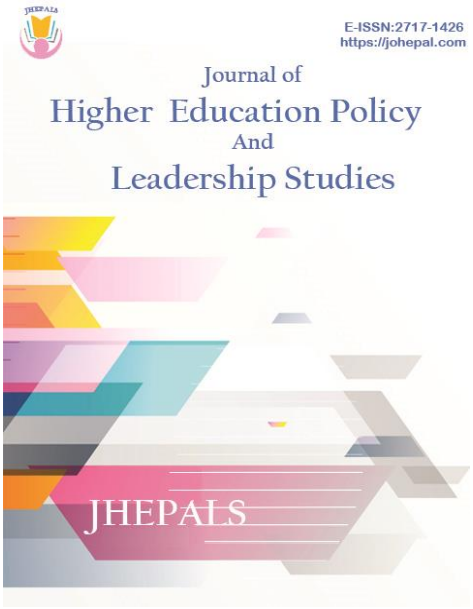
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Considerations for Andragogy in Leadership Education at HBCUs

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Abstract

Educating adult learners for decision-making in reflection of differences, fairness, and comprehension concerns will be best served through the use of andragogy, the application of unlearning theory and through self-awareness. In an often-unrecognized space for differences, fairness, and comprehension, this proposed tutelage will leverage students positioned at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). As Black college students advance in their HBCU environment, they are also developing their psychosocial Black-awareness, a theoretical process called Nigrescence. The differences, fairness, and comprehension challenges can be reduced in intensity by addressing the implicit biases. Leadership education at HBCUs remains important. Differences, fairness, and comprehension of student leadership education using the principles of andragogy within an HBCU environment is a unique perspective that allows for leveraging as much opportunity for training as possible. The self maturing student in personal development and in the experiential learning from HBCU professors applying andragogy techniques will dissect and tackle implicit biases.

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Keywords: Andragogy; HBCU; Nigrescence; Leadership Education; Unlearning

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Introduction

Leadership educators should direct future endeavors to include addressing inequities amongst people and communities. Differences, fairness, and comprehension language and leadership have migrated into the contemporary politics of today. Rationally, an increase in global connectedness and racial unrest may have supported the U.S. trending in the direction it has proclaimed to habitually reinforce as tradition, the melting pot community. Regardless of polity, business, education, and other social systems, there have been parallel adoptions of differences, fairness, and comprehension initiatives as a seemingly strategic undertaking.

Most recently there have been just as many corresponding strategic unraveling of differences, fairness, and comprehension plans. However, the discussion of differences, fairness, and comprehension – focused leadership education remains crucial. Differences, fairness, and comprehension ingenuities are implemented to encourage equal treatment and complete participation of all underrepresented groups that have been marginalized with discrimination (Harris, 2023). Providing leadership for individuals and industries with a comprehensive appreciation of differences, fairness, and comprehension concepts, underpinnings, and values is a necessary paradigm to construct educative and corrective frameworks. This importance is embedded because of the constitution of society's social stratification structure. This system categorizes people into different social levels that create a hierarchy of power, privilege, and resources. The top layer is the most powerful and the lowest has limited means (Rothschild, 2018).

As the nation experiments with accepting and challenging differences, fairness, and comprehension efforts as a meaningful organizational pillar, there must be concerted efforts to provide awareness and guidance that are as intentional as addressing differences, fairness, and comprehension issues and challenges are for social systems. Differences, fairness, and comprehension directives do not entirely saturate lifestyles and companies with shared principles. This presents a premium opportunity to connect components that will serve as structure for educating leaders to address differences, fairness, and comprehension challenges and support initiatives. For those agencies that do not support or incorporate differences, fairness, and comprehension initiatives, the foundational principle of equal treatment in differences, fairness, and comprehension initiatives remain a necessary ingredient.

HBCU Andragogy, Unlearning & Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Educating adult learners for decision-making in reflection of differences, fairness, and comprehension concerns will be best served as students navigate unfamiliar territory through the use of andragogy, refute illusory truths with the application of unlearning theory and build a conscientiousness of thought through self-awareness. Differences, fairness, and comprehension is often an unrecognized space; this proposed tutelage will leverage students positioned at Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Andragogy has not been used interchangeably with the term pedagogy; the terms are used in contrast to one another as scholars are clear not to blur the lines of adult learning theories. Andragogy is younger than pedagogy, it was coined in the 1800s while pedagogy

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has been used since Ancient Greek times (Bouchrika, 2023). After Alexander Kapp coined the term Andragogy, Malcolm Knowles popularized it as the art and science of adult learning. Pedagogy teaches children or dependent personalities; andragogy focuses on self-directed learning by independent individuals striving for autonomy (Center for Online Learning, Research and Services, 2022). This independence in learning is the direction for leadership education at HBCUs, because although adulthood is not required for andragogy, participatory and hands-on learning in an adult nucleus is the arrangement.

Leadership traits in children are often described according to their natural character and behaviors. But as a learned skill, leadership is intentionally taught to adults with the expectation that demonstrated abilities of influence, vision, and decision-making will be exercised. These are not the abilities expected of children and thereby the method of teaching that externally motivates students from imposed or dumped materials would not be the most effective.

A format that connects instructors with self-motivated learners to openly address differences, fairness, and comprehension issues is essential when recognizing that the partiality for mistreatments and inequities is based on established cultures and norms, therefore selfawareness amongst the learners is essential. Recognizing societal norms, customarily Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) position student programming and systems for self-analysis to advance self-appreciation whilst recognizing hidden and obvious societal inequities and mistreatments. Despite this, HBCUs enroll a majority of marginalized and socioeconomically disadvantaged students. The descriptors of differences, fairness, and comprehension may be reviewed more like a catch phrase for the population of individuals differences, fairness, and comprehension intends to support and equalize. However, it does not dismiss the importance of differences, fairness, and comprehension principles of equity.

Black HBCU students are simultaneously maturing into young adult college students and in the process of thriving into their Blackness. Researchers of Black identity development refer to this process as Nigrescence. It is appropriate to note here because it is in student affairs, where the university often provides student development for leadership education at the collegiate level. The theory of Nigrescence, developed by William Cross in 1971, is often used to explain how the Black student develops in a predominantly white institution and transforms into their psychosocial Black awareness. However, Black students are members of a larger society, this psychosocial Black development is applicable to the world at-large by because they are first time, adults living away from home and transitioning into the larger society. Therefore, it is important for Black students that are intentionally examining aspects of their life, to become more aware of their racial identity. Nigrescence is a resocialization experience, students are transforming from a preexisting identity of non-Afrocentricity into an Afrocentric identity. This original 5-stages in 1971 were abridged to a 4-stage model in 1991 to reflect Nigrescence stages as pre-encounter, encounter, immersion and emersion, and internalization that engage Black Americans in self-actualization.

> In the pre-encounter stage Black people identify with the dominant white culture, rejecting their own culture, pro-white and anti-Black. They are unaware of the sociopolitical implications for being Black in America. The encounter stage has two steps, encounter and personalize. An event takes place (encounter) that

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> dictates the view of one's race and then the individual takes actions (personalize) based on the event. The immersion-emersion is the transition from the old and the emerging Black identity, the individual becomes immersed in Black culture. Internalization accepts Black affairs through a long-term interest, there is individual comfort in their racial identity. Now with a heightened Black awareness, they can effectively engage in cross-cultural interactions (Williamson-Ashe, Othermothering to Belongingness for HBCU College Student Success, 2023).

The ability to successfully engage in cross-cultural interactions supports the unlearning of implicit biases and paves the way for a diversity of workplace engagements. As Black HBCU students develop through psychosocial Black awareness and come into adulthood, they are able connect with the larger dimensions and differences in people. This looks like the onset of the "melting pot" proclaimed in American culture, the defaming biases are eliminated, the individuals have developed an ability to understand and recognize their thoughts and actions and the impact of their behavior on others and the world around them. Making the climate receptive for the inclusivity of all cultures.

There are five assumptions, and four principles Knowles associates with andragogy. Once the andragogy research expanded (Kenyon & Hase, 2001; Merriam et al., 2007; Forrest & Peterson, 2006), at least one assumption and one principle was added. The six assumptions are self-concept, learning from experience, readiness to learn, immediate application, internal motivation and need to know. These assumptions provide facilitated guidance for the learner-centered process that is not teacher-initiated instruction (Bouchrika, 2023).

Using the six assumptions, individuals attentive to differences, fairness, and comprehension issues need the independence that the assumption of self-concept andragogy assumes from the internally motivated individuals, in order that information can be challenged regardless of comfort or opposition. The assumption of learning from experience, learning what is important and why it is important, is an adult advantage of andragogy where differences, fairness, and comprehension areas can be decided as problem-centric and life-focused (Bouchrika, 2023). For HBCU students, andragogy is an appropriate tool, it is the immediate action of assumption. There is the assumption of internal personal factors that contribute to their desire, the motivational need to know how to best support differences, fairness, and comprehension efforts.

Differences, fairness, and comprehension challenges listed in the workplace are 1) differences, fairness, and comprehension is not prioritized, 2) There is no measurable strategy in place for differences, fairness, and comprehension, 3) Not enough resources are allocated to differences, fairness, and comprehension, 4) There are blind spots, 5) Importance vs. urgency, 6) Decision-makers often detached from differences, fairness, and comprehension, 7) There is not a one-size-fits-all approach to managing differences, fairness, and comprehension, and 8) The undercurrents and overhangs of implicit bias (Quantive, n.d.). An awareness of documented difficulties is critical for educating leaders to handle workplace and organizational challenges. In a broad examination of the listed workplace differences, fairness, and comprehension areas, recall that andragogy analyzes

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by centering the concern as a problem for correction that can immediately be applied to life. Essentially this may impose limitations that mean if there is not a recognized problem or recognized need in life, differences, fairness, and comprehension issues may lack relevancy. A lack of relevance ensures there is no priority or importance, no resources to support what is not prioritized, and there is not a need to strategize for appropriate management, measure, nor operations.

In examination of the 8 workplace differences, fairness, and comprehension challenges with respect to aborted differences, fairness, and comprehension programs, only the challenge of implicit biases remains viable. Implicit bias is a collection of stereotypes and attitudes towards people which will affect relationships and decision making. The relationships are marked with disruptive imbalances and behavior and unequal power favoritism. The perceptions of people are developed outside of our conscientiousness from a young age as exposure to positive and negative attitudes formulate patterns found in learned information. "Cognitive processes lead us to associate unconscious attributes with social identities" (Edgoose et al., 2019, p. 31).

Without differences, fairness, and comprehension being considered significant, the opportunity to advance differences, fairness, and comprehension as an area of importance is void. The workforce climate is submitting to the political climate by quietly diluting the programs of diversity, equity and inclusion and the differences, fairness, and comprehension acronyms are being altered and avoid being challenged and attacked (Green, 2024). Amazon, just like Walmart, McDonald's, and Ford, are terminating their differences, fairness, and comprehension initiatives after the increase in conservative retaliations (Palmer, 2025). Companies are restricting their associations related to race. The nation and how it proceeds with demographic groups, particularly race, following the police murder of George Floyd in 2020 many companies and organizations responded with efforts to be more inclusive and diverse according to race. Then, in 2023 the Supreme Court ruling determined that universities cannot use affirmative action policies in their admissions. Not surprisingly, businesses followed this direction and aborted differences, fairness, and comprehension languages from their practices. Equity is the term that is most often dropped from descriptions, because it is determined to be the most controversial (Green, 2024). Despite businesses and companies altering their policies to avoid contemporary culture cancels and legal challenges, there are some businesses that understand the core needs of differences, fairness, and comprehension and the marginalization of underrepresented populations; these industries continue to implement language adjustments to pursue the reduction of discrimination and create the continuity of leveled playing fields. This might prompt a forethought for why differences, fairness, and comprehension matter and who believes differences, fairness, and comprehension matters. As noted, implicit biases can hinder the success of differences, fairness, and comprehension strategies and programs. Biases are taught and reaffirmed without effort as they are often systematically woven into society's daily exchanges, thoughts and operations. Therefore, an intentional effort to address implicit bias should include unlearning. An intentional emphasis to tackle implicit biases as a primary charge, will aid leaders and those in leadership education, by introducing a path for the additional 7 differences, fairness, and comprehension challenges above to find resolve.

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Leadership Education at HBCUs

Implicit biases are negative in tone and affect behaviors and decisions. These judgements are prejudicial and are automatic in thought, even before a conscious endorsement, there is the unconscious social cognition of implicit bias (van Nunspeet et al., 2015).

The process of unlearning is suggested for application in leadership education to attend to the challenges of differences, fairness, and comprehension. Unconscientiously all members of society learn to attribute certain characteristics and assumptions to certain groups while also creating a preferential order and ranking for these groups, solidifying the biases. Unlearning a bias requires an awareness that a bias exists. This means that unlearning expects maturity, courage and humility; this permits the individual to reflect on past learnings creating the possibility for new views (Michael & Wilson, 2021). The humility required in unlearning supports an honest reveal of one's ideals. The courage to navigate the self-journey forwards the power in unlearning that includes, visualizing new perspectives, igniting creativity, growth, curiosity, authentic connections, and healing hurts (Plata, 2020).

There is a great deal of importance in unlearning, unlearning involves knowledge already acquired and knowledge is often attained through our everyday world living (Young, 2018). Whether unlearning involves a rejection of an old idea where the new knowledge modifies the previous information without being in complete contradiction or if the unlearning replaces simple information with complex details of new knowledge, there is a release of what was with a replacement of what is now. This can be a difficult process for the individual.

When information contradicts what is believed or valued, it is most often dismissed. As a way to be adaptive in today's society, those things that are not believed may be assumed to be false. People have a tendency to favor or search for information that confirms their current beliefs, this is referred to as confirmation bias and makes it difficult to unlearn information. The most dangerous challenge of unlearning is when a belief is challenged with accurate information, yet the doubtful status is ignored (Young, 2018). Just as challenging, is when individuals do not examine false assumptions that impact their lives, and it may be that they go unchallenged because these assumptions are used to operate society as it is accepted.

Michael and Wilson (2021) discuss the intricate process of neuroscience involving the brain as beliefs are often unconsciously learned. Brain cells make connections to communicate and maintain information.

> Memory is associative, meaning that learning is easier when you can link, or associate, new information with old information. In other words, our brains take advantage of existing neural networks (built on previous experience and learning) that contain related information, so the brain is not building from scratch every time we learn something new (Michael & Wilson, 2021).

Associative memory is an expertise of the brain used to build bridges between ideas, these bridges create new patterns after individual reflections identify missing information. Unlearning builds new patterns of communication to support different ways of thinking (Michael & Wilson, 2021) after removing the beliefs and behaviors from our socialization

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(Plata, 2020). "Unlearning is the process through which we break down the origins of our thoughts, attitudes, behaviors, feelings, and biases" (Plata, 2020). This establishes the primary position that implicit biases should first be confronted and challenged through unlearning alongside techniques of andragogy. Andragogy in leadership education at HBCUs supports the platform for high achievement in the opposition of differences, fairness, and comprehension barricades, particularly implicit biases.

Adult learners bring knowledge of their environments into the learning cubicle (Bouchrika, 2023), this means the probable experiences of inequities suffered or witnessed by HBCU students will be labored (learning from experience) in a mature self-direction (selfconcept). These students will position (readiness to learn) themselves to understand (need to know) and use (immediate application) the collaboratively developed leadership skills. HBCU leadership education addressing differences, fairness, and comprehension issues will not only meet the assumptions of andragogy, but also the principles of andragogy listed below.

Adult education must focus on solving specific problems.
Adult education must rely on the experience of teachers.
Teachers should gain significant knowledge and experience from training.
Teachers should be able to analyze and check teaching material.
Teachers should receive feedback about their progress (Bouchrika, 2023).

The workplace differences, fairness, and comprehension issues are problematic for organizations and adult education will provide a venue for successful resolutions. Of HBCU students, 76% are Black students; these students are most often taught by faculty members that resemble them, approximately 60% are Black faculty members (Williamson-Ashe, Othermothering to Belongingness for U.S. Historically Black Colleges and Universities College Student Success, 2023). Based on the andragogy principles, it is likely that relying on the experience of the faculty members demonstrates relevance within HBCUs, Black faculty members are likely to have had exposure to negative mistreatments aligned with implicit biases. This personal exposure creates a grand opportunity for faculty members to gain important knowledge useful for themselves, analyze materials, and evaluate the progression of this methodology. These are the andragogical principles at work.

The inclusion of differences, fairness, and comprehension elements in leadership education adds to a more holistic preparation for complexities that will be encountered in the workforce, regardless of whether the policies and programming measures evade direct connection to differences, fairness, and comprehension initiatives. The foundational components of differences, fairness, and comprehension provide a supportive launch area for proper leadership and humane treatment that promotes encouraging morale. A supervisor's observation of differences, fairness, and comprehension value reinforcement by employees afforded differences, fairness, and comprehension leadership education, will demonstrate meaningful leadership skills to position the trained employee with a pathway into workplace promotions. With expectation, company resources seek to prioritize the recruitment and retention of employees through traditional means. The workplace differences, fairness, and comprehension issues that plague organizations are even more complex with the great resignation movement assumed by employee's post-pandemic. This post-pandemic climate of adversity, and shifts in politically acceptable commentary and

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behaviors, in other words compliance with microaggressions adds to the employee movement. This makes an unprecedented undertaking to invest more resources to avert differences, fairness, and comprehension implementation issues that may not be the immediate resolve for organizations' employee attrition, though leadership training to include differences, fairness, and comprehension hesitancy could change this. This corroborates the need for differences, fairness, and comprehension initiatives to become a permanent part of the agency culture. In an effort to cement differences, fairness, and comprehension arrangements in organizations, necessary steps for structure can be included. The following key differences, fairness, and comprehension issues facing employers are noted as areas that signify steps that may be embedded to provide the antidote for challenges.

Momentum and consistency
Transparency
Senior leadership
Inclusion challenges amidst remote workforces
Broadening the discussion (Weisenfeld, 2022)

Leaders should be aware that momentum and consistency aligns with employee retention. Employees must see progress and feel respected. It is important for agencies to recruit with diversity in mind but if the workforce does not operate with inclusion, it will be worthless (Weisenfeld, 2022). Feeling valued and connected with a sense of belonging reduces employee turnover. Self-awareness aids in belongingness, at HBCUs building individual student value is a by-product of self-awareness development that highlights diversity and improves selfconfidence, significant building blocks for leaders (Srivastava, 2015). Suggestions for the momentum of expanding the workforce with differences, fairness, and comprehension consistency includes reassessing degree requirements with direct work responsibilities, making group connections and interview teams diverse, the widening of geographical search spaces and directly recruiting from HBCUs for talent.

It has become increasingly important that agencies provide information that is open knowledge to their employees and the community. Embracing the well-known and the backroom information provides a welcoming atmosphere and an opportunity for inclusivity. This type of transparency will help eliminate barriers that shelter and appear restrictive. Publicizing employee representation incentivizes good behavior, and this level of transparency encourages hesitant employees to self-identify (Weisenfeld, 2022).

Senior leadership cabinet members may emulate the diversity of the employee pool, but can also be very different, for instance 70% of NFL players are Black while Black NFL coaches' number only 2 percent (Weisenfeld, 2022). It is admirable for leadership to create differences, fairness, and comprehension statements and train leaders to include strategic plans that include differences, fairness, and comprehension initiatives, but what people see is what the budget lines define. In the NFL it appears that the highest paid and greatest decision-makers do not look like the least paid nor the subordinates. Top leaders should not only prioritize the strategies for differences, fairness, and comprehension, but they should also be visible implementing differences, fairness, and comprehension initiatives and utilize empathy in the process of leadership. Using andragogy, HBCU professors of experience may

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reflect on moments of exclusion and invisibility that may have impeded their ascension. HBCU students noted classroom learning to be a valuable process to build empathy levels (Williamson-Ashe, 2019). The teachings should include empathy to address the repercussions of judgements emulating from blind spots and implicit biases, this development of empathy will aid the inclusivity built into differences, fairness, and comprehension strategy.

Though the pandemic created increased remote working conditions, some of which continue, it should be noted that supervisors believe there is higher work performance from office workers and possibly related, there are more promotions granted to employees that work in-office. Inclusivity in a remote operation remains valuable and leaders must work to ensure the viability of inclusivity. One way to start is to intentionally assess whether those persons that are disproportionately affected by negative stereotypes in society may be the most vulnerable group to be disproportionately affected in a remote environment. In the trendy remote work environment, communication remains important but also perception (Weisenfeld, 2022). With more written messages and reduced facial contact, there are less body movements associated with communication, leaving perceptions to land at the discretion of the receiver. Self-awareness emphasized in the HBCU education prepares students to recognize the intent of one's behavior in opposition to the impact, possibly reducing miscommunications.

Critical in leadership is inclusivity, everyone matters, all viewpoints should feel heard, otherwise the amplified bad practices are louder and more prevalent, particularly poor personality performances while those sufferers of unconscious bias are buried (Weisenfeld, 2022).

Conclusion

HBCUs have a long history of producing leaders, an education in this venue has a foundation of values that is then birthed through the programs offered at HBCUs. To intentionally combine the necessary organizational forecast for differences, fairness, and comprehension initiatives with the HBCU learning format that encourages self-analysis amid identifying historical origins and hidden systems that support societal inequities and mistreatments, creates a climate for the advancement of leadership from an oftenunacknowledged resource. It is important to expose all areas of diversity education to all genres in education using the most advantageous methodology, adults experienced for adults experiencing as principled in andragogy. The maturation of college students into adulthood at HBCUs has an important and significant development occurring alongside the Black student's engagement in the differences, fairness, and comprehension leadership education process, it's the process of Black self-actualization, Nigrescence. As the Black student advances into recognizing their posture in society while increasing their knowledge of an Afrocentric presence that they were unaware of any existence previously, creates the uniqueness of the HBCU student differences, fairness, and comprehension leadership education.

Essential in the process of leadership education that involves the in and out groups of society, that is the groups according to race, socioeconomic levels, organizational hierarchies and polities of power, and gender, is the unlearning needed to properly filter

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information for accuracy verses the blind spots unchallenged as a result of the socialization practices from families, social systems, polity, schools, and religious enterprises.

Establishing the best amalgamation of techniques and procedures to create a successful process for differences, fairness, and comprehension in leadership education, can begin with the assurance that leaders are prepared by incorporating the challenges that organizations struggle with in their differences, fairness, and comprehension implementations. The differences, fairness, and comprehension concerns demonstrate a lack of prioritization, strategy, resources, importance, omission, visibility, and management. Contemporary day responses will attend to momentum, clarity, primary guidance, expansiveness, and detachment. The noted challenges can all be reduced in intensity and repeated occurrences by first tackling the underlying influence each difficulty encompasses, recognized as implicit bias. The consistency and discipline required in the leadership endeavors for successful differences, fairness, and comprehension implementation, from education to organization, is worth the balance and integrity it will deliver.

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