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Marsha L. Rutledge
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THE IMPACT OF A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE INTERVENTION ON PERCEIVED
CAREER BARRIERS, ETHNIC IDENTITY, STUDENT MOTIVATION AND
ENGAGEMENT AND CAREER DECISION MAKING SELF-EFFICACY OF MIDDLE
SCHOOL MINORITY FEMALES.

A dissertation submitted in partial requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Education with a concentration in Counselor Education and Supervision at Virginia
Commonwealth University

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This doctoral journey has been a long and hard process and yet rewarding at the same time. There were many occasions where I contemplated whether I had chosen the right path, pursued the right degree, chosen the right program, started at the right time, etc. However, as often as the negative thoughts invaded my mind, there were many times where I found myself empowered to continue on leading me to this time in my life where I have successfully completed this amazing project called Dissertation.

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Abstract

THE IMPACT OF A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE INTERVENTION ON PERCEIVED CAREER BARRIERS, ETHNIC IDENTITY, STUDENT MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT AND CAREER DECISION MAKING SELF EFFICACY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL MINORITY FEMALES.

By Marsha L. Rutledge

A dissertation submitted in partial requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education with a concentration in Counselor Education and Supervision at Virginia Commonwealth University

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2019

Chair: Dr. Philip B. Gnilka
Associate Professor, Department of Counseling and Special Education

This study investigated the impact of a culturally responsive intervention on perceived career barriers, ethnic identity, student motivation and engagement, and career decision making self-efficacy of middle school minority females. Specifically, the study sought to determine whether there would be differences between pre-group, mid-group, and post-group scores on career decision making self-efficacy, ethnic identity, perceived career barriers, and student motivation and engagement during participation in a culturally responsive career development program. To answer these questions, the author analyzed data from the Female Leadership Academy for Minority Excellence (FLAME) program at a local rural middle school. Data was collected from 34 Black female middle school students who participated in the program. The study was a repeated measures quasi-experimental, quantitative single group pre-test, mid-test, and post-test design. Two faculty members of color implemented the program to 34 participants over a fifteen-

week period. Data was collected over three time points (pre-group, mid-group, and post-group). Measures included the Multi-Ethnic Identity Measure, the Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy Scale (short form), the Perceived Educational and Career Barrier Scale Revised, and an adapted Student Motivation and Engagement Scale. According to results from a series of repeated measures ANOVAs, significant differences were found between pre-group, mid-group, and post-group scores. Upon further analysis, significant differences were found between specific subscales of the student motivation and engagement survey. Specifically, differences were found between pre-group and mid-group and pre-group and post-group scores on the Performance Approach Orientation (ME_PerfApproach) subscale. Differences were also found between pre-group and post-group scores on the self-efficacy subscale (ME_SelfE) as well as between pre-group and mid-group and between mid-group and post-group scores for the Engagement Behavioral subscale (ME_Bx). Regarding the last research question, significant differences were found between pre-group and post-group and mid-group and post-group scores when examining perceived career barriers. The results from the Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy and the Ethnic Identity scale did not yield significant results. These results provide initial support in suggesting that culturally responsive career development programs do impact career development of minority middle school females especially in the areas of student motivation and engagement and perceived career barriers.

Chapter One

Introduction

The American workforce has grown tremendously over the last decade. In response, school systems are reforming curriculum to address the growth and focus on career development needs. Due to many new initiatives, career development has become an integral part of the k-12 academic program. For example, new legislation, such as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), is holding schools accountable for outcomes related to career and college readiness (Bae, 2018; Vitale, 2016). Reforming the current accountability system allows school systems to improve upon and focus on programs that “promote continuous support and improvement, rather than mere compliance and efforts to avoid punishment” (Bae, 2018, p. 3). This implies that school divisions must reflect upon the factors that matter most in student success and appropriately address those needs in a variety of ways (Bae, 2018). A few of those factors include student engagement, social-emotional competency, graduation rates, indicators of career readiness, and successful transitions to post-secondary options (Bae, 2018). Similarly, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) speaks to an increased focus on career-related education as part of educational reform (ASCA, 2018). They suggest a link between learning and work, which is evidenced by the alignment between the original skills identified for student success and employability skills taught within career education. According to a compendium by The Learning First Alliance (2018), a reformed educational community is one that focuses on the goal of education, which is to develop “young people’s knowledge, skills, and attitudes so they

graduate from high school ready for college, career and citizenship” (p. 15). The main consensus is the need to include career development as one of the components attributing to student success (Vitale, 2016).

For the economy to continue to thrive, an examination of how the future workforce is being prepared is warranted. Programs should be developed that meet the needs of the current workforce. Therefore, the public-school system is a logical mechanism for these programs to be implemented. According to Learning First Alliance (2018), education is a vital component needed for the survival of and continued growth of the American society. Students need essential skills that prepare them for success in the workforce. Although there is not one clear definition, many departments of education use the term “career readiness”, while many states offer their perspective on the term. However, according to Mishkind (2014), most definitions recognize that career readiness is “multifaceted, encompassing academic readiness, as well as knowledge, abilities, and dispositions that impact academic achievement” (p. 6). Unfortunately, many educational systems are failing to accurately prepare students to be career ready (Soule & Warrick, 2015). The authors suggest that there are a set of skills that are critical 21st-century skills that students need to be successful but may be missing. These skills are referred to as the 4 C’s: creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. School systems, similar to those in Virginia, are beginning to incorporate similar concepts. According to the Virginia Department of Education (2018), Virginia’s profile of a graduate considers the 5 C’s: critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship. The majority opinion is that an educational reform to include innovative curriculum and programs is needed in preparing students for the future workforce.

Due to the diversification of the workforce, it is imperative that we focus on minority females. The documented growth in the current workforce has been found to be a result of an increase in women and minority workers (Mau, Perkins, & Mau, 2016). According to the United States Department of Labor, in 2016 56.8 % of the total women population participated in the total workforce of full-time employees. Further breakdown of that 56.8% reveal that of each ethnic group represented, 56.3 % of White female population, 59.4% of Black female population, and 55.8% of the Hispanic female population are working full time. In contrast, the percentage of the male population participating in the labor force has dropped over time from 86.6 % in 1948 to 69.2% in 2016 further confirming the increase in minority female participation. In respect to the change in demographics, Soule and Warrick (2015) suggest that educational communities engage in a dialogue where they discuss and determine the best ways to prepare students for career readiness. However, education preparation is only one of the issues that needs addressing. Unfortunately, problems with career development are not unique to educational preparation but extend to the workforce.

Career development in the 21st century is wrought with historical complexities, current disparities, and future problems that warrant a critical investigation. Despite gains in employment status, narrowing wage gaps, and a narrowing of opportunity (achievement) gaps there is still a need for support and intervention in the area of career development of our youth. Specifically, the need is magnified when it comes to students of color. There has been increased attention in this area, especially in education. Career development is currently being viewed as a pillar of a student's future success. Mandated legislations such as the former No Child Left Behind and more recently the ESSA focuses on ensuring that student's developmental needs are being met. Career development is seen as equally important as academic development in

preparing students to be not only college and career ready but life ready as well. Prior to this thought of students being “life” ready, the focus was on college and career readiness alone. However, regardless of the term, career development has been a central topic in education for some time. Traditionally, students were exposed to career-related activities such as taking interest inventories or exploring college majors and elective courses to determine interest and/or skill; an approach that seems very superficial and does not account for the many variables that have been found to impact career development (Brand, Valent, & Browning, 2013). Originally career and technical education was used as a tracking system for low achieving students, which happened to be many minority students. However, due to the recent changes in CTE, it is now a vital component for students considering options after high school (Brand et al., 2013). In addition to poor CTE programs, the theories and evidence-based programs that are traditionally used have not been proven effective with all students (Austin, 2010; Bimrose, 2001; Chartrand & Rose, 1996). The implication is that students of color were not benefiting from such practices.

As education continues to reform and change, researchers have suggested the need to look at what is called “gap” groups when reviewing academic success outcomes. Gap groups in Virginia are categorized as 1) students with disabilities 2) African American students and 3) Hispanic students (Virginia Department of Education, 2018). The same concept applies when considering career development. The needs of students of color are different from needs of their white peers and, as a result, require interventions that consider culture and diversity. Traditional programs should be replaced with culturally responsive programs to ensure that all student needs are being met.

Unfortunately, there remains educators and education systems in 2018 which do not recognize an achievement gap exists between students of color and their White peers. Data

suggests that students of color continue to fall behind in academic achievement and test scores (APA, 2012; NCES, 2016). The long-term effects of the achievement gap are also evident in adults as well (Garcia & Weiss, 2017; McKinsey & Company, 2009), and can be recognized race/ethnicity and gender gaps in wages, career attainment, high school graduation, college attendance, and graduation, to name a few.

Recognizing the current gender wage gap is one of the first steps in understanding the need for early career intervention. Although the gap has narrowed, there is still work to be done. According to the National Partnership for Women and Families (2018), career-related concerns are evident among women and specifically women of color. Statistics show that when comparing all men and women who work full time, women are paid just 80 cents for every dollar paid to men (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2018). The Institutional report further suggest that the wage gap is evident immediately upon entering the labor force and continues throughout the entire career. For women of color, the gap continues to widen in respects to race, not only gender. For example, Black women who work full time are paid only 63 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men. They also experience a wage gap at every education level regardless of degree obtained (National Partnership for Women and Families, 2018). Sadly, the specific occupation does not impact the wage gap. According to the American Association of University Women (2018), despite occupation and advance degrees, women are paid less. Additionally, in both low wage and high wage occupations, Black women are paid less than White men.

Similar statistics can be found for Latinas. Latinas working full time are typically paid only 54 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic males. According to the National Women's Law Center and Labor Council for the Latin American Advancement (NWLC, 2016),

Latinas are more likely to work in low-wage jobs such as maids, housekeepers, janitors and the like, which are viewed as one cause of the wage gap. However, they are also consistently paid less than white, non-Hispanic men overall.

Despite the advances in educational and career attainment over the years, unequal pay remains an issue that needs addressing. The NWLC (2016) shares research indicating that the pay gap has yet to be fully explained. Researchers have examined factors such as race, religion, education, occupation, and similar factors and still have difficulty fully explaining the cause of the gap. The report suggests that discrimination may be a cause worth examining.

Women of color in the workforce have faced many barriers. Glass ceilings, double jeopardy, and stereotyping are a few of those challenges. As a result of their race and gender, both often viewed as underprivileged groups, women of color often experience instances of discrimination (Cook, Heppner, & O'Brien, 2005; Reynolds-Dobbs, Thomas, & Harrison, 2008). Stereotypes often portray women of color negatively, impacting their career development as well as career advancement (Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008). These career barriers, along with others, contribute to the ever-existing gender and racial gaps found in the workforce.

Unfortunately, disparities in race and gender are not unique to the career world but can also be found in academics. This suggests that the gap begins before women enter the workforce. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), using the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data, identifies several achievement gaps existing in education today. NCES (2016) reports that over a thirteen-year span, dating back to 1992 until 2013, the average reading scores for White students in 4th and 8th grades were higher than Black and Hispanic students. According to the most recent NAEP scores as reported on the Nation's Report Card, students of color performed below their White peers (McFarland et al., 2017). The average

Grade 4 Reading scale score for White students was a 232 compared to 206 for Black students and 209 for Hispanic students. In Grade 8, the average scale score was 275 for White students, 249 for Black students, and 255 for Hispanic students. Similar reports can be found in math as well. Spanning from 1990 to 2013, the average mathematics scores for White students at all grade levels have been higher than the scores for Black and Hispanic students. Grade 4 average math score for White students were 248, 223 for Black students, and 229 for Hispanic Students. The average Grade 8 math scores showed similar disparities with the average score for White students as 293, 260 for Black students, and 269 for Hispanic students.

In addition to reading and math scores, gaps are evident in other areas. Historically, gaps have been reported in high school drop-out rates. However, those gaps have recently narrowed to where they are no longer statistically significant for some groups (McFarland, Cui, & Stark, 2018). According to the 2014 Trends in High School Dropout and Completion Rates Report, the national average of student drop-out was 5.2 percent. The report defines this statistic as “the percentage of 15- to 24-year-olds in grades 10 through 12 who leave high school between the beginning of one school year and the beginning of the next without earning a high school diploma or an alternative credential” (p. 8). This percentage (5.2%) is the percentage of students who left school without a degree compared to the total number of students in grades 10 -12 enrolled at the time. Upon disaggregation of the data, the gap becomes clearer. The dropout rate in 2014 by selected characteristics is reported as: White students (4.7%) Black students (5.7%) and Hispanic students (7.9%). Other areas of concern are the college matriculation and degree attainment rates between students of color and their White peers. According to NCES (2016), total college enrollment rate in 2013 of students ages 18 to 24 years of age increased from 32% to 40%. This includes both 2-year and 4-year institutions. However, despite the increase, they

also report a gap between White students and students of color. The 2013 total college enrollment rate for White students' ages 18- to 24-year-old (42%) was higher than the rates for their Black and Hispanic peers (34% each) (Musu-Gillette et al., 2016).

Specifically, this study focuses on a middle school population in a rural county in Virginia with an overall student membership of approximately 1700 students. The county consists of one high school, one middle school, and one elementary school. The ethnic and racial background includes students who are 68% White, 21.4% Black, 4.8% Hispanic, 5.8% comprised of two or more races, Asian and American Indian. According to a report from the Virginia Department of Education, in 2013 (2009 cohort), 63 out of 134 students earned a diploma and enrolled in an Institution of Higher Education (IHE). Out of those 63 students, 39 were White and 22 were Black. In 2016, 49% of the graduating class enrolled in an IHE with 39% of that population being Black students, 51% White students, and the remaining 10% being split between Hispanic and Asian populations. Dropout numbers for the 2017-2018 and 2016-2017 school years were fewer than 10 per year and as a result no further data was provided.

The state of Virginia also has challenges when examining achievement gaps and other related statistics comparing minority students to their White peers. In the 2018 graduating class, there were 97,958 graduates with 50,573 of those students identifying as White, 22,505 as Black, and 13,589 as Hispanic. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) reports graduation percentages for each category for the 2017-2018 school year. 94.49% of the White population, 89.60% of the Black population, and 80.87% of the Hispanic population graduated in 2018. The dropout rate for 2018 is reported as 3.12% for the total White population, 6.04% for the total Black population, and 15.97% for the total Hispanic population. Additionally, the VDOE reports the percent of students who enrolled in any Institution of Higher Education within 16 months of

earning a high school diploma. The latest results are based on 2016 graduates (2012 cohort). Seventy-two percent of the total White population graduated with a diploma and enrolled in an IHE, 64% of the total Black population enrolled in an IHE, and 62% of the Hispanic population enrolled in an IHE. These statistics offer a glimpse into the demographics of the area in which the study took place. Although these statistics do not appear strikingly alarming, there are still issues that need to be addressed. As each school district in the state of Virginia is in the process of revising existing and/or creating new programs to meet the career readiness mandates, is an ideal time to look at the incorporation of culturally responsive programs in an effort to ensure that we are continuing to reduce barriers faced by students of color.

Addressing the still present achievement gap remains a priority for school systems and boards of education throughout the United States (*“Understanding the gaps,”* n.d.). As further research on career development emerges, many researchers have been able to link successful career development and academic achievement. As a result, there is a need for more evidence-based practices for school counselors’ use, specifically with students of color. Although wage gaps and achievement gaps cannot be eliminated by traditional and non-traditional career development interventions, they can surely be reduced for women of color.

As a result of the labor and educational statistics, continued efforts are still warranted. School counselors are in an ideal position to assist in these efforts. Implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs address the fact that interventions should be based on data and should meet the needs of all students (ASCA, 2017). Therefore, school counselors are currently tasked with ensuring that they are operating from a space of multicultural competence and that competence results in culturally responsive programming. Culturally responsive programming are interventions that consider social, cultural, and environmental

factors that hinder and/or support student success. Effective interventions should reflect equity and not only equality. This is one of the primary differences between traditional and non-traditional interventions. Traditionally, all students received the same programs and the same instruction, in the same manner. Culturally responsive programming or non-traditional programming operates under the understanding that each student is unique with varying needs that should be addressed in a different way. This holds true for the career development of students of color. In particular, a focus on minority females is warranted as they face unique challenges in the workforce. Many studies have offered insight into the challenges that minorities face in their personal career development. For example, Mejia-Smith and Gushue (2017) offer that factors such as financial constraints, racial discrimination, and gender discrimination are all perceived career barriers. Other studies suggest that factors such as lack of economic resources, lack of role models, and systemic and institutional discrimination are also career barriers for minorities (Gushue, Scanlan, Pantzer, & Clarke, 2006; Kenny, Bluestein, Chaves, Grossman, & Gallagher, 2003). Therefore, social, economic, cultural, and political factors all hinder successful career development (Jackson, Potere, & Brobst, 2006; Perry, 2008).

For women of color, the intersection of race and gender is salient in terms of their career development (Cook et al., 2005). As a result, they are subject to many types of discrimination based on their racial and gender identity, which can both be viewed as underprivileged groups (Cook et al., 2005). In addition, former research and career theories failed to adequately address the needs of women of color. It was not until the 1980s that career theories began to focus on women. Thereafter, it was not until around 1994, with the emergence of Social Cognitive Career Theory, that researchers began to examine the career needs of women of color (Lent & Brown, 1996; Lindley, 2006).

Theoretical Framework

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) is based upon Bandura's social cognitive theory. The premise behind the theory is that there are cognitions that explain career behavior based upon learning experiences (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002). How one thinks, handles, reacts, as well as what one learns from these experiences are what impacts career development. The theory focuses on three main variables: self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and goals. Self-efficacy is a major construct in SCCT. Self-efficacy is defined as the confidence in one's belief to successfully execute certain career-related tasks or perform certain career-related behaviors. Research has identified career self-efficacy as an important construct in women of color's career development (Hackett & Betz, 1981; Hackett & Byars, 1996). Self-efficacy has been found to be a fluid trait that is derived from four primary sources of information: 1) personal performance accomplishments 2) vicarious learning 3) social persuasion 4) physiological and affective states (Lent et al., 2002). These sources of information are what helps a woman of color strengthen their self-efficacy. According to SCCT, their impact is situated within three career-related models of Interest, Choice, and Performance which address how women of color become interested in certain occupations, choose certain careers and how successful they are in their efforts. SCCT offers a "triadic-reciprocal view of interaction," where each factor is related to and impacts the other (Lent et al., 2002, p. 264).

SCCT is an integration and expansion of many career theories, recognizing the cyclical relationship between the person, environment, and behavior. It accounts for personal and contextual factors not previously addressed in other theories (Brown & Lent, 2017). Contextual factors could include cultural beliefs, social barriers, and lack of support (Leung, 2008). A fundamental belief according to SCCT is that occupational choice is directly impacted by self-

efficacy and outcome expectations. According to Hackett and Byars (1996), a strong sense of self-efficacy actually assists minority females in creating career related opportunities.

Needs of Minority Women

As we recognize the challenges that minority women face in their career development, it is important to understand the process of human development in an effort to help future generations. Developmentally, early childhood years are seen as a time of career exploration, ranging from fantasizing about a career to more sophisticated exploration (Hartung, Porfeli, & Vondracek, 2005). Young girls tend to fantasize about who or what they would like to be when they grow up. However, as they enter the upper elementary grades into middle school, they can begin to link interests and abilities to career options (Hartung et al., 2005). Super's 1990 theory characterizes this stage as the growth stage (birth to 14 years of age). He suggested that during this time, children begin to form a self-concept. Schultheiss, Palma, and Manzi (2005) posit that self-concept is developed through occupational exploration, identification with key figures and exploration through play. When these exploratory activities are not available to children of color, they fail to fully develop a healthy self-concept which impacts their future career development. As a part of the career development process, children come to grow, understand, and operate within a vocational identity. A vocational identity is "composed of the tasks of exploring, committing to, and reconsidering career alternatives" (Porfeli & Lee, 2012, p. 12). Career exploration begins in elementary school with students fantasizing about certain career options. Porfeli and Lee (2012) suggest that early exploration is in breadth exploring, implying that students search and discover a wide range of careers.

As students move towards middle school, career exploration becomes more focused on specific interests and skills, which lead to an in-depth exploration. Generally, in-depth inquiry is

what leads to an increase in career planning, confidence in career choice as well as a stronger commitment to a career (Code, Bernes, Gunn, & Bardick, 2006; Porfeli & Lee, 2012).

Interestingly, research has shown that despite race and gender, students' career interests and decision-making skills are similar, indicating that there are other factors that impact future career development and attainment (Fouad & Byars-Winston, 2005; Kenny et al., 2007). Research has also shown that many students, regardless of race, tend to have many concerns or perceived barriers in relation to their career development. In a study examining perceptions of career concerns, middle school students reported that they were concerned with adequate career-related training, future job security, future job satisfaction, making mistakes on the job, and an inability to decide on a career choice (Code et al., 2006). However, for students of color, this list is only a few of the barriers that they face. The concern for many students of color is that the in-depth exploration never occurs or is limited due to these and other perceived career barriers. Perceived career barriers identified by students of color are what negatively impacts the formation of a vocational identity, ultimately hindering appropriate career development (Gushue et al., 2006).

Unfortunately, perceived career barriers in youth of color are seen as early as elementary school and continue into adulthood. Over time, the identified barriers include financial constraints, gender and racial discrimination, maladaptive career beliefs, lack of educational resources, lack of career development skills, limited life and work experiences, and classism (Code et al., 2006; Gushue et al., 2006; Kenny et al., 2007; Smith-Weber, 1999). These factors are thought to limit the learning experiences of students of color. As a result, SCCT purports that limited exposure to career-related information, along with limited learning experiences, leads to a lack of self-efficacy in career-related decisions (Lindley, 2006). According to SCCT, self-efficacy is needed to mediate whether career interests, goals, and actions translate into

appropriate career decision making (Gushue et al., 2006; Mau et al., 2016). According to Lindley (2006), the concept of self-efficacy is an important variable in the career development of females of color.

Despite the current research and what is known about career development and people of color, there is limited research on the career development of students of color, especially minority females in their middle school years. Concern has been raised by many researchers for many years. Smith (1982) notes the black female adolescent as being “underrepresented in educational, psychological, and career literature” (p. 261).

Race and gender aside, many authors suggest that early adolescence is an ideal time to focus on career development. Hartung, Porfeli, and Vondracek (2005) suggest that focusing on career development early benefits students by aiding in their personal identity development and their feelings of connectedness, socially and interpersonally. A qualitative inquiry conducted on career development in middle childhood found that due to career exploration during this time and earlier, interests and aspirations are formed leading to their adult career choice (Schaefer, Rivera, & Ophals, 2010; Schultheiss et al., 2005). Although authors did not specifically seek to examine race and ethnicity in their inquiry, they did suggest that additional research is warranted on concepts such as socioeconomic status, cultural influences, and self-concept and their influences on career development. They further note that there is limited research on career decision making at this age. Watson, Nota, and McMahon (2015) report the need for future research on disadvantaged groups while also noting this developmental period as foundational and encouraging of continued exploration. According to Porfeli and Lee (2012), early to late childhood is an ideal time for students to explore career options as they have yet to make any immediate career decisions. Other researchers note middle school as a crucial time period in

which critical topics, such as career self-efficacy, should be explored (Glessner, Rockinson-Szapkiw, & Lopez, 2017; Jackson et al., 2006). Developmentally, middle school is a time where students begin to form career interests based on concrete information such as actual ability and skills. Students begin to link academic programs and course work to future career ideas (Navarro, Flores, & Worthington, 2007). As a result, career decision making during these years will have a great impact on their high school years and beyond.

School systems around the country are tasked with ensuring that all students are academically and socially prepared to be productive citizens upon graduation. ESSA has a focus on career development as a part of that preparation. Career development has been linked to academic achievement and has been found to assist in student motivation and engagement. School counselors as a part of their comprehensive program focus on three domains: academic, personal/social, and career. It is within the career domain where counselors have creative license to implement programs and interventions that support student need. According to ASCA (2017), the school counselor's role is to:

- provide opportunities to engage students in life roles including learner and worker;
- provide learning and experiential opportunities for students to acquire behaviors and skills for career readiness;
- identify gaps in college and career access and the implications of such data for addressing both intentional and unintentional biases related to college and career counseling; and
- recognize and support essential developmental factors key to future successes, such as self-efficacy and identity, motivation and perseverance.

School counselors are in a unique position as they recognize that attention should be focused on each of the three domains equally for student success. They are trained to analyze data to identify

needs based upon their specific student population and implement interventions that are developmentally appropriate for growth and development. ASCA (2015) offers insight into the school counselor's role in creating a climate that embraces cultural diversity. Seen as leaders in the building, school counselors are able to advocate for students as they "specifically address the needs of every student" (ASCA, 2015, p. 19). In referencing the needs of all students, those of color and other groups that are at a disadvantage, are highlighted as specific targets for prevention, intervention, and remediation activities. Research has suggested that interventions used for these populations should be multicultural responsive. Historically, traditional programs have not addressed the unique needs of students of color. Dahir and Stone (2012) as cited by ASCA (2015) offers suggestions on how school counselors can provide culturally responsive counseling. A few of those suggestions include:

- using data to close the gap among diverse student populations,
- practicing culturally sensitive advising and counseling,
- addressing the impact that poverty and social class has on student achievement, and
- identifying the impact of family culture on student performance.

These positions taken by ASCA clearly identifies the role of the school counselor in addressing the needs of students of color. In direct relation to career development, the need for culturally responsive programs is clear. However, there is a lack of research on evidence-based career development practices. Additional research is needed on what type of programs best meet their needs as well as the impact that culturally responsive programs have on students of color (Falco & Summers, 2017; Gushue & Whitson, 2006). However, Lent, Brown, and Hackett (2002) suggested that interventions that enhance career self-efficacy are particularly valuable in early adolescence.

Culturally Responsive Programs/Interventions

As schools continue to work on closing achievement gaps, examination of existing programs leads to new and innovative ways of educating children. The traditional program designed for the masses has given way to targeted interventions based upon data analysis and student need. According to Learning First Alliance (2018), educators now realize that in order to improve student outcomes, different learning opportunities must be provided. The implication is that programs or interventions intended to assist in student success should focus on equity and not necessarily equality (Learning First Alliance, 2018). Furthermore, they suggest that successful schools who are successful recognize and understand that some students need additional resources just to have the same level of success as other students. These recommendations propose the need for culturally responsive programming. Being culturally responsive is considering the many factors associated with diverse populations when designing and implementing programs. Brown (2007) suggests that when the curriculum is aligned with a student's culture, academic achievement increases. Gay (2002) defines culturally responsive teaching or CRT as "using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively" (p. 106). The same concept applies to counseling interventions centered on career development. Exploring lived experiences within a cultural context allows for a more meaningful and interesting approach to career development (Brown, 2007). Programs implemented through a cultural lens allows students of color to build upon their own knowledge and strengths, validating and affirming who they are as individuals (Banks & Obiakor, 2015). Related to students of color, culturally responsive career programming is one of the ways that counselors can address barriers to career development. It also fosters a sense of confidence in one's belief or ability in himself to have a successful future

career of choice. Jackson et al., (2011) suggest that a key component of the intervention should be the promotion of varied learning experiences that build self-efficacy and promotes positive development.

Career development programs that allow for exploration of culture offer additional advantages such as the ability to connect with peers, access to same-race role models, and promotion of healthy career decision making (Grier-Reed & Ganuza, 2011; Mau et al., 2016; Ojeda et al., 2012; Smith-Weber, 1999). When working with females on career-related issues, Betz and Hackett (1997) suggest that it is important to assess their self-efficacy beliefs and design the intervention to target a specific domain, resulting in an expansion of career options. Hackett and Byars (1996) suggest that counselors should address issues of racism related to self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Interventions should assist with coping skills for issues of racism and sexism. They further recommended exploring ethnic identity development as it also relates to self-efficacy and outcome expectations. The goal is to provide interventions that encourage self-efficacy so that career interest is generated, and positive outcome expectations are produced.

Career self-efficacy is predictive of future career choices. Self-efficacy is lowered as career-related barriers become significant in the lives of students of color, resulting in restricted career options (Lindley, 2006; Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001). A study conducted by Luzzo and McWhirter (2001) found that self-efficacy for coping with career-related barriers was higher for White students than for students of color. This puts students of color at a greater disadvantage with an increased number of barriers coupled with the inability to cope.

Although there are many domains related to self-efficacy, this research focuses on a culturally responsive program for minority females and its impact on their career decision-

making self-efficacy. In addition, other variables, such as ethnic identity, academic motivation and engagement, and perceived career barriers that have been proven to influence career decision-making self-efficacy, will also be examined.

Ethnic identity is an important concept to consider during the late childhood and early adolescent stage in life. Wakefield and Hudley (2007) define ethnic identity as “the sense of belonging that an adolescent feels toward a racial or ethnic group as well as the significance and qualitative meaning that the adolescent assigns to that group membership” (p. 148). It is within this developmental period that students are learning who they are and where they fit in socially. Ethnic identity is an integral part of one’s overall identity and is tied to how one understands his or her own ethnicity (Ojeda et al., 2012; Phinney, 1996). It is important to note that ethnic identity includes an acceptance of one’s group despite stereotypes, discrimination, and racism (Phinney, 1996). A healthy ethnic identity exists when a person has a strong sense of self as a member of his or her own ethnic group. This developmental period is crucial because adolescents are beginning to move away from a “received view” from parents and community to one based upon their own personal sense of what ethnicity means to them (Phinney, 1996, p. 145). As students of color move through this developmental stage and begin to explore their ethnic identity, their career/vocational identity is being shaped as well. In other words, how parents and communities perceive career barriers, career options, and work values is typically the foundational information from which students begin to form their own vocational identities (Gushue & Whitson, 2006). Their career self-efficacy is based on interpretation of these experiences. According to Griffith and Combs (2015), the processing of information and experiences, relative to a group in which one identifies with, is related to how the group is represented in society. Therefore, if the group is viewed negatively, it will be important to equip

members with the necessary resources and skills to protect them against the consequences from those barriers (Wakefield & Hudley, 2007). Many researchers have examined the relationship between ethnic identity and career decision making (Gushue, 2006; Gushue & Whitson, 2006; Lewis, Raque-Bogdan, Lee, & Rao, 2018; Ojeda et al., 2012). Findings suggest that a positive ethnic identity results in greater self-efficacy, which in turn impacts better career decision making (Gushue & Whitson, 2006; Ojeda et al., 2012).

Another factor linked to career self-efficacy is academic motivation and engagement. When implementing programs in schools, it is important to keep the overall mission and vision of the school at the forefront. The overall mission of any educational program is the academic success of all students. It is within that success that other factors, such as social and emotional learning and career development, help in achieving academic success. Specifically, motivation and engagement have been found to increase academic achievement. Focusing on career development is one way of increasing motivation and engagement (Lapan, 2004; Kenny, Blustein, Hause, Jackson, & Perry, 2006). Motivation and engagement are understood as constructs in which academic achievement is understood (Lee, Hayes, Seitz, DiStefano, & O'Connor, 2016). Vocational exploration is found to be a component of many career interventions utilized in middle school. During this process, students begin to understand the connection between school and work (Perry, Liu, & Pabian, 2010). For example, while exploring careers students begin to understand the specific requirements attached to careers of interest. Requirements typically offer the needed educational status and training needed to obtain the career. As a result, students are able to begin to link their academic studies to their future career choice. Many studies have found a positive connection between effective career exploration and planning, and an increase in student engagement (Kenney et al., 2006; Perry, 2008; Perry et al.,

2010). A study conducted by Perry, Liu, and Pabian (2010), of 285 urban high school students examining whether career preparation would have a significant and positive effect on school engagement confirmed that hypothesis. According to the results, career preparation has a significant direct impact on school engagement, which in turn significantly and directly impacted grades. The implication for students of color is that academic success increases vocational opportunities. In order to achieve success, students must obtain and maintain a certain level of motivation and engagement. In other words, students must have a positive attitude about school and be committed to investing in their education (Kenney et al., 2006). Therefore, using culturally responsive career development programs is an appropriate intervention to enhance academic achievement through an increase in motivation and engagement.

Lastly, perceived career barriers should be considered when examining career self-efficacy. Research has suggested that students are aware of the occupational and educational barriers that exist (Kenny et al., 2003). However, studies conducted on perceived career barriers have found conflicting results. Jackson, Kacanski, Rust, and Beck (2006), when studying minority youth from the inner city, found that higher beliefs in school and work barriers were significantly associated with lower educational and career aspirations. Mejia-Smith and Gushue (2017) studied the influence of ethnic identity, acculturation, and self-efficacy on the perception of career barriers on Latina and Latino college students. They found that students with greater self-efficacy perceived fewer barriers to achieving their career goals. Luzzo and McWhirter (2001) also found that minority women perceived notably more career and educational barriers and had lower self-efficacy to cope with such barriers. In contrast, McWhirter, Hackett, and Bandalos (1998) found that barrier perceptions did not significantly impact educational plans and career expectations for Mexican American high school students. Another study conducted by Ali

and Menke (2014) also concluded that there was no significant association between career barriers and career aspirations. However, they suggest that despite conflicting results, career interventions should continue to focus on self-efficacy and coping skills to overcome barriers.

Missing Literature

There is a critical need for research on females of color and even more specific is the need for early adolescent females of color. This gap in research is not new to the literature as Smith (1982) suggested that Black female youth is a population that has been missing from the research. Although Smith (1982) and Smith-Weber (1999) specifically mention Black females, research on minority adolescent females, in general, is scarce in terms of early career development (Cook et al., 2005). As career development becomes a salient component of education, the need for research on career development has increased. There are many identified areas that need addressing: empirical research on the career development needs of young minority females, as well as the impact of culturally responsive programming. According to Glessner, Rockinson-Szapkiw, and Lopez (2017), future research should include middle school student populations as well as critical topics such as career self-efficacy. They further suggest that additional research should be conducted with minority populations. In addition, missing in the current literature is research on evidence-based career programs for school counselors use that are culturally responsive (Jackson et al., 2011). Trusty, Niles, and Carney (2005) suggest that career planning programs should differ based on the specific student body and their unique needs. Miles and Naidoo (2017) recommend incorporating a cultural context to these programs, allowing for an increase in career decision making self-efficacy. Jackson et al. (2011) states that there is sufficient support for psychosocial interventions focusing on strengths, in an effort to increase learning experiences for diverse students. Their study examined career-related learning

experiences of academically underachieving urban middle school students. Upon implementing a preventative career exploration intervention, results showed a positive association between vocational interests and successful learning experiences. As a source of self-efficacy, implementing programs that focus on successful learning experiences show promise of enhancing both educational and career attainment (Jackson et al., 2011). Although there has been an increase in literature that recognizes and seeks to understand career development from a cultural context, the need for additional research remains.

Statement of Problem

Minorities continue to face disparities educationally and economically. Minority females, in particular, are subjected to a “double jeopardy” as they navigate a world still ridden with racial and gender discrimination. These barriers, along with other social and environmental factors, have been found to negatively impact career self-efficacy resulting in a lack of appropriate career decision making. Research has shown the need for addressing career-related issues with minority women. What is missing is the preventative and developmental work with young females of color. Middle school specifically, is a critical developmental period in which culturally responsive interventions are needed to address perceived career barriers and supports used to strengthen career self-efficacy (Kenney et al., 2007). Career interventions based on the specific needs of minority students are necessary, as an effort to reduce achievement gaps and increase career options (Navarro et al., 2007). Therefore, additional research is needed to understand how culturally responsive career interventions impact career decision making self-efficacy.

Implications

Research findings support the premise behind Bandura’s original self-efficacy definition, which is action based on a certain degree of confidence in career related knowledge (Smith-

Weber, 1999). This requires a level of personal judgment that, if developed correctly, allows for successful career development. Research indicates that females' career development differs from males and as a result, approaches to working with them should be different. Additionally, research has proven that ethnicity and culture are factors that also impact career development and must be considered. As the racial and ethnic composition of the country has become increasingly diverse, so has the career developmental needs of our youth (Wells, Delgado-Romero, & Shelton, 2010).

School counselors who understand the differences in minority career development and understand the barriers needed to develop a healthy vocational identity are better prepared to create and implement culturally responsive interventions. Counselors must also understand and address the intersectionality of race and gender when discussing barriers to vocational identity. Minority females have a unique need for career development due to obstacles faced by both females and minorities. In support of these needs, Lent (2005) suggests that counselors should create opportunities that build communication, leadership, and decision-making skills. Although prior research confirms the need for targeted efforts when working with minority female youth, additional research is needed to identify successful programs that are proven to have a positive impact on these students. Many programs do not include formal evaluations or indicate long-term effects (Bowman, 1993). Future research should focus on students in their middle years to better understand how they develop career self-efficacy and identify related variables that impact career self-efficacy.

School counselors hold an ethical responsibility to provide equitable services and opportunities for all students. According to House and Hayes (2002), students of color need school counselors to be advocates, mentors, and be genuinely concerned for their well-being.

ASCA holds the position that school counselors should develop and implement a comprehensive school counseling program promoting equity and access for all students (ASCA, 2012).

Considering recent legislation, career development is being recognized as an integral part of the student's academic development. As school counselors continue to work to close the achievement gap between majority and minority students, career development should be viewed as equally important to academics. As a result, counselors will have to provide appropriate programming that meets the needs of these students.

There is also a need to explore what career development should look like in the middle school years. Such information will allow for the creation of culturally responsive programs that focus on the strengths of different races and encourage positive action, all while addressing barriers to healthy career development (Sickinger, 2012). Most of the literature, however, has been conducted in high school and college populations (Koegel, Donin, Ponterotto, & Spitz, 1995). According to Oliver and Spokane (1988), career interventions that taught career skills were found to have large effects on middle school students, indicating the great impact that can be made at this age. It is during this time that students begin to explore career options and build self-efficacy based upon past and current experiences (Lent, 2005). Hackett and Byars (1996) purport that by increasing exposure to learning experiences, minority girls have an opportunity to learn a variety of skills possibly resulting in increased career self-efficacy.

Conclusion

Career development is a vital component of today's educational system. ASCA offers counselors the ASCA National Model as a guideline in creating comprehensive school counseling programs that offer students developmentally appropriate services. To offer appropriate programming, counselors should be knowledgeable about the diverse populations

with whom they work. In turn, this knowledge should drive programs that meet the needs of the students. Currently missing from the literature is proper guidance on how to create effective interventions specifically for minority female youth in middle school. Evidence-based practices are needed to ensure that these students obtain the knowledge and experiences needed to overcome occupational barriers and be prepared for their future careers.

School counselors have the responsibility to interrupt the pattern of normalized oppression. Students learn to accept oppression as a normal way of life through experiences at home, school, and in the community (Chung & Bemak, 2012). If this is the case, through a lens of social justice and advocacy, counselors can act as an ally and provide culturally appropriate interventions that address these issues. Career development and professional identity remain a critical area that needs addressing for young women of color. Early interventions are key to supporting this population in building a strong self-efficacy that allows young women of color to feel empowered and supported as they work towards their future career of choice.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to explore career decision making self-efficacy, ethnic identity, perceived career barriers and motivation and engagement of minority female youth during participating in a culturally responsive program. Many studies have shown the need to account for cultural factors when working with students of color. According to SCCT, self-efficacy is a factor that increases career decision making. Therefore, the current study continued this line of research by examining whether a culturally responsive program impacts the above-mentioned variables. This study added to the literature on minority female students, middle school career development, and the impact of culturally responsive programming. In addition,

participation in the program had a positive impact on participants' career development vocational identity.

SCCT describes four sources of information (personal performance, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional state) in which self-efficacy is derived. The current project included implementation of a career development program centered on students' access to these four sources of information. Each session included at least one of the sources for self-efficacy development. Chapter 2 references a crosswalk that aligns the FLAME program with the SCT's four sources of information as shown in Appendix B.

Intervention

The Female Leadership Academy for Minority Excellence (FLAME) program was implemented in a local rural middle school to address the need for a culturally responsive program in the area of career development. Primary researcher along with two additional support staff conducted the intervention in an after-school program. The objectives of the program were to:

- explore potential career options;
 - understand how race and gender may affect career options;
 - understand the job search and application process;
 - research and meet prominent women in particular career fields;
 - define and understand the concept of leadership development;
 - seek to increase self-efficacy regarding becoming future leaders in their field of choice;
- and
- understand how self-esteem, personal values, and positive image impacts the hiring process.

FLAME curriculum and activities closely aligned with many tenets of SCCT as it sought to build career self-efficacy in minority female participants. Information presented and accompanying activities that are described in depth in the methodology section were modeled after the four sources of information that are believed to lead to self-efficacy development. FLAME activities allowed the participants to experience success through practice activities such as mock interviews, practice with introductions, and public speaking. They were introduced to various role models in a variety of fields for exposure to different careers, as well as to learn about how women of color overcame career barriers. Lastly, facilitators constantly provided positive encouragement and motivation for students throughout the program. Students were given detailed feedback, verbal and written, about their performance in the program. Facilitators normalized the anxiety participants felt over engaging in activities and modeled expected behavior for the students. A more detailed description of the program can be found in the Methodology Chapter.

Research Questions

Based on the previous literature and the focus of the proposed study, the research questions and their respective hypotheses for this proposed study are as follow:

RQ1: Is there a difference in pre-group, mid-group, and post-group scores on career decision making self-efficacy during participation in a culturally responsive career development program?

Ho: There are no differences between the pre-group, mid-group, and post-group scores on career decision making self-efficacy.

Ha: There will be at least a difference between two of the three scores on career decision making self-efficacy.

RQ2: Is there a difference in pre-group, mid-group, and post-group scores on ethnic identity during participation in a culturally responsive career development program?

Ho: There are no differences between the pre-group, mid-group, and post-group scores on ethnic identity.

Ha: There will be at least a difference between two of the three scores on ethnic identity.

RQ3: Is there a difference in pre-group, mid-group, and post-group scores on student motivation and engagement during participation in a culturally responsive career development program?

Ho: There are no differences between the pre-group, mid-group, and post-group scores on student motivation and engagement.

Ha: There will be at least a difference between two of the three scores on student motivation and engagement.

RQ4: Is there a difference in population mean pre-group, mid-group, and post-group scores on perceived career barriers during participation in a culturally responsive career development program?

Ho: There are no differences between the pre-group, mid-group, and post-group scores on perceived career barriers.

Ha: There will be at least a difference between two of the three scores on perceived career barriers.

Methodology

This study utilized a repeated measure quasi-experimental, quantitative single group pre, mid and post-test design that examined how participation in a culturally responsive intervention

impacted career self-efficacy, ethnic identity, perceived career barriers and student academic motivation and engagement of a sample of minority adolescent females. Data used in the study was archived data from an existing program previously implemented at a local middle school. The repeated measures were pre-test, mid-test and post-tests occurring before, midway and after the intervention.

The author of the current study explored the impact of the culturally responsive career development intervention on contextual and cognitive variables. The author investigated change in scores on ethnic identity, student motivation and engagement, perceived career barriers, and career decision making self-efficacy during participation in a culturally responsive career development intervention. Resulting statistical analyses are presented in Chapter 3.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Overview of Related Areas

In the 21st century, it is imperative that students are fully prepared for the working world (Hughes & Karp, 2004; Okocha, 1994). Martinez, Baker, and Young (2016) suggest that in the near future, a college degree will be needed for at least 62% of the jobs in the U.S. Therefore, career development has become an integral part of comprehensive school counseling programs. According to new legislation such as Every Student Succeeds Act, states are focusing on career and college readiness to close opportunity gaps. A report by the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) reveals the crucial need for appropriate career development for all students. As a result, states are incorporating career development requirements in their paths to graduation (NCSL, 2011). The NCSL now mandates that schools be held to the expectation that all students will graduate being ready for success in college and careers. For example, Virginia's profile of a graduate offers four components that are critical to the future success of students. They include content knowledge, workplace skills, community and civic engagement, and career exploration (2017 SOA: Graduation Requirements, n.d). These expectations are being met through the implementation of required policies and practices, which will ensure every child has a fair opportunity to succeed in school and life (NCSL, 2011). A focus on career development is needed to meet this directive. The terminology used (success in school and life), implies that education is moving beyond college and career readiness, and towards preparing students to be life-ready. Career development, however, is a critical component of this concept. Therefore, to

ensure that all students are prepared, achievement gaps and barriers must be considered (Martinez, Baker, & Young, 2016).

NCSL among others is specifically concerned with how the disparity in dropout rates and educational attainment impact the future economy and workforce, stating that high school graduation rates must increase to improve state economies (ALL4ED, 2011; American Psychological Association, 2012; Musu-Gillette et al., 2017) They also cite that states with poorly educated students are less attractive to new businesses (NCSL, 2011). As a result, the NCSL task force offers many ways to assist with graduation requirements. One suggestion is to focus specifically on career development. They suggest that states integrate “rigorous career and technical education programs”, while also incorporating college and career standards into their K-12 programming (NCSL, 2011, p. 17). In 2018, a new law regarding career and technical education was signed which will assist in that effort. The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act is designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of students in career related programs (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). This law requires better connections between schools, colleges, and employers in preparing students for more advanced careers (All4Ed, 2018). Research indicates that participation in career programs decreases dropout rates, improves test scores, increases earning power, and increases pursuit of postsecondary education (Dougherty, 2016; Castellano, Sundell, Overman, & Aliaga, 2012; NCSL, 2011; Nield, Boccanfuso, & Byrnes, 2013; Stern, 2010). A case study conducted on five Career and Technical Education (CTE) schools found that CTE schools had greater on time graduation rates, and a higher probability of successfully completing Algebra 1, Algebra 2, and Geometry. However, the impact of CTE schools on academic achievement was statistically insignificant (Nield et al., 2013). In view of this, students should have access to, and knowledge

of career relevant information that will ready them, not only for college and career, but for life as well.

A student that is considered life ready has the necessary skills to function as a productive citizen and is prepared to successfully enter the world of work (NCSL, 2011). Typically, these individuals have had access to career knowledge and gained the applicable skills needed to develop career maturity as well as career self-efficacy. The National Career Development Association (NCDA) characterizes career development as a lifelong process of exploring, learning, and developing as an individual (NCDA, 2011). Researchers report that this developmental process is important for career decision making that ultimately impacts future plans and goals (Gushue et al., 2006). Developing a vocational identity is a vital component to overall identity development, which encompasses vocational interests, skills, and aspirations (Gushue et al., 2006). During adolescence, many students begin to examine their educational and vocational aspirations and start working towards future career paths. Unfortunately, when access to appropriate career development is missing, future career paths are limited (Smith-Weber, 1999).

In this literature review, the researcher will discuss differences found in career development in terms of gender and race and the impact those differences have on career development. Next, the idea of self-efficacy is introduced, followed by an explanation of the theoretical framework used for this study. The literature review will then focus on culturally responsive programming and the benefits of its use in career development with minorities. Following culturally responsive programming, the researcher will explain the variables used in the current project and associated literature. Lastly, the review will end with a brief description

of the current study with an emphasis on the need for this project and how it fills a gap in the literature.

Differences in career development. Many students enter and matriculate through the school system with a knowledge base or skill set that allows them to effectively navigate through the career development process. However, other students are met with challenges. Those challenges faced in grade school continue to manifest throughout college and beyond. Related to NCLS's point regarding high school dropouts, statistics show a disparity between college enrollment and degree attainment for students of color as well. Although gaps have narrowed over the years, evidence suggests that a gap still remains. The National Center for Education Statistics reveal that the college degree attainment is higher for White students (96%) than it is for Black students (92%), and the rates for both groups were higher than the rate for Hispanic students (83%) (NCES, 2017). This is important, as statistics continue to show that the higher educational attainment, the higher the median earning results, and that males continue to earn higher wages than females. Additionally, Whites earn higher wages than minorities (NCES, 2017). In fact, it is reported that the median earnings in 2014 by ethnic group were: White (\$42,900), Black (\$30,800), and Hispanic (\$30,000). According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (2017), Blacks and Hispanics also earn college degrees at lower rates than Whites. The disparity is evident in the college completion reports in 2017. NCES (2017) reports that according to the fall 2011 cohort completion rate, "Asian and white students had much higher completion rates (68.9 percent and 66.1 percent, respectively) than Hispanic and Black students (48.6 percent and 39.5 percent, respectively)" (p. 4). The minority population that is unsuccessful in degree attainment typically results in less earnings (Burrus & Roberts, 2012; Constantine, Erickson, Banks, & Timberlake, 1998).

College has been thought to equalize economic disparity between races, but new reports reveal something different. Earnings of minorities, despite a college degree, still lag behind their White counterparts (American Psychological Association, 2012, Musu-Gillette et al., 2017). Unfortunately, these achievement and attainment gaps are not unique to postsecondary education and the workforce but are also found in K-12 as well. Studies have over time revealed a gap in educational and career attainment between the majority culture and students of color that continues to exist today (American Psychological Association, 2012; Musu-Gillette et al., 2017; Reid & Stephens, 1985; Rollins & Valdez, 2006; Smith, 1982). Prior research supports claims still being made today. Smith (1982) found great disparity in career development based upon race and gender. White females had higher scholastic achievement and educational attainment than Black females, even though Black and White females chose similar traditional female occupations. Inversely, Black females reported higher educational and career aspirations than both White females and Black males, but this did not result in higher occupational attainment. Black females also were found to have less knowledge about the working world as well as higher rates of unemployment.

Reid and Stephens (1985) reviewed the literature and continued to find disparity between gender, economic status, and race. Their review focused on the process of career development and included many factors such as growth, development, socialization, race, and class. Results continue to confirm that there are differences in career development based upon race and gender and that the experiences and/or backgrounds of students are important factors in understanding these differences (Reid & Stephens, 1985). For example, studies have found that the expectation of future performance is lower for females than males, especially in math and science (Reid & Stephens, 1985; Smith, 1981; Wang & Degol, 2017). According to Zittleman (2007), gender-

based stereotypes and inequities “limit the academic and social development of both females and males” (p. 9). However, this is especially true for females especially in math and science (Wang & Degol, 2017). Students with lower socioeconomic status held more stereotypical occupational perceptions than those from the middle class. Wherein, White middle-class females were found to have greater flexibility in developing a vocational identity than Black females and White females with lower SES. These groups of females were more restricted to traditional female roles. Additionally, minorities had less knowledge about careers and occupations than their White counterparts. These findings support the need for targeted career efforts with minority populations.

Diemer and Blustein (2006) report a lack of equality in resources and support for effective career development. This asymmetry leads to a missing link for students of color which extends back to the beginning of career development theories. Scholars suggest that many well-known career development theories and strategies are inadequate in addressing the needs of minority children (Okocha, 1994; Wells et al., 2010). To illustrate, Super’s developmental theory, created in 1990, refers to the need of a vocational identity that many minority youths fail to form. His life-span model does not account for race and ethnicity and is based upon a White male population, making it difficult to generalize to minority populations (Jackson & Roberts, 1996; Okocha, 1994). Due to social oppression, racial and gender biases, as well as lack of resources, adolescents of color struggle with creating a healthy occupational self-concept (Diemer, 2009; Okocha, 1994; Smith, 1981). Minority females, specifically, are susceptible to an unhealthy vocational identity which keeps them from flourishing as future leaders in their field of choice (Rollins & Valdez, 2006).

Most current research focuses on minority representation in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields. A study conducted by Wang, Degol, and Ye (2015) confirmed that females are still underrepresented in STEM occupations. According to the Society of Women Engineers (2018), freshman women majoring in engineering, math, statistics, or computer science rose from 3.5 % in 2006 to 7.9 % in 2014. Although there has been growth, Fouad and Santana (2017) continue to express concern over the underrepresentation of minorities in STEM related occupations. The National Science Foundation (NSF) report that as of 2015, 18% of White women, 7% Asian women, 2% of Black women, and 2% of Hispanic women were working in a science and engineering occupation (NSF, 2017). Authors further discuss the disparities in degree attainment in STEM related majors. For example, according to NSF (2019), 12.6 % of minority women earned a bachelor's degree in science and engineering as compared to 7.8 % in 1996. 7.8% earned a master's degree in 2016 as opposed to 4.3 % in 1996 and lastly, 5.0 % earned a doctorate degree as compared to 2.0 % in 1996. A critical component of Fouad and Santana's review is the examination of contextual factors in understanding the underrepresentation. Similarly, other researchers have confirmed the need to examine contextual factors such as socio-economic status, mentoring, ethnic identity, perceived barriers, and parental support, in career development of minority females (Fouad & Satana, 2017; Raque-Bogden, Klingaman, Martin, & Lucas, 2013; Wei-Cheng & Jiaqi, 2018).

Hackett and Byars (1996) proposed the need for investigation into the intersection of race and gender on the career self-efficacy of minority women. They suggest that the process of developing career self- efficacy begins early and is influenced by learning experiences. The expected differences in learning experiences for minority females versus their White peers are what drives the need for further research. One such difference is in how minority females

cognitively appraise their experiences. Their appraisal is often due to the inability to accurately predict environmental responses to behavior (Hackett & Byars, 1996). For example, Greene (1990) reported that minority females often receive conflicting feedback to identical behaviors. As a result, they are unable to ascertain whether their behavior will be punished or rewarded (Hackett & Byars, 1996). This dichotomy is reflected in decreased self-efficacy, which in turn results in lower outcome expectations and ultimately decreases career related behavior. Ogbu (1991) refers to the “low-effort” syndrome, which he says is a visible manifestation of the conflicting feedback.

Many studies associate the need for culturally responsive programs or targeted interventions for underrepresented populations such as minority females to help with developing a healthy vocational identity and in turn, build self-efficacy (Falco & Summers, 2017). Further, they suggest the need to incorporate a cultural context to career interventions specifically focusing on motivational factors and supports (Gushue & Whitson, 2006; Hackett & Byars, 1996; Jackson et al., 2006; Mejia-Smith & Gushue, 2017). Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) created the social cognitive career theory that has allowed for a better understanding of the career development needs of young women of color, especially as it relates to self-efficacy. An examination of social cognitive theory and the concept of self-efficacy, along with the need to further explain minority development, resulted in this theoretical expansion of Bandura’s theory termed social cognitive career theory, both of which will be explained further.

Theoretical Orientation

Career development theory has changed and evolved over the years progressing from a “concentration on what is to be chosen” to “increasing attention on the characteristics of the chooser” (Herr, 2001, p. 204). Despite work from Donald Super and his career development

work from 1950 to 1990 and subsequent theorists such as Roe (1956), Holland (1966), and Krumboltz (1979), minority related issues and concerns had yet to be addressed. Traditional career theories were thought to be developed on majority groups and were therefore inadequate for people of color (Koegel et al., 1995; Okocha, 1994). According to Gushue, Scanlan, Pantzer, and Clarke (2006), the development of a vocational identity, which has been defined and clarified by the above-named theorists, is an important part of identity development which minority youth sometimes fail to form. For this reason and others, Betz and Hackett (1986) along with Astin (1984) began an emphasis on women and minority populations (Herr, 2001). Central to Betz and Hackett's work is the focus on self-efficacy (Herr, 2001). Ultimately ongoing work around women and minorities led to the creation of social cognitive career theory (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994). Their work is based on Bandura's social cognitive theory and tenets of self-efficacy.

Social Cognitive Theory

The current project is rooted in the social cognitive career theory, which is an extension of Bandura's social cognitive theory (SCT). A description of SCT is provided to better understand its relationship to social cognitive career theory. SCT offers a model of reciprocal causality where personal, behavioral, and environmental factors all impact human behavior (Bandura, 1999). SCT is reciprocal in that these factors each affect and are affected by each other (Dewar et al., 2013) and that each factor's contribution is dependent upon opportunities, activities, and experiences (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Bandura proposes that within this reciprocal system, people contribute to their own behavior using human agency (Bandura, 1989). He suggests that "people are agentic operators in their life course, not just on looking hosts of brain mechanisms orchestrated by environmental events" (Bandura, 1999, p. 22). The difference

in SCT is that the major impact is on beliefs, self-efficacy, and motivation, while the impact on behavior is more indirect and considered a lesser influence.

Human agency is defined as one's ability to affect his or her life's events through agentic functioning (Bandura, 1989). Agency is executed in three ways: directly (personal), by proxy, or collectively. Personal agency refers to the situations and experiences that are within one's direct control. When circumstances are out of individual control, proxy agency is employed by utilizing influential people or those in power to act on one's behalf (Bandura, 1999). Collective agency is working together within a group to achieve desired outcomes.

Humans are thought to possess four functions of human agency and utilize them in their own development (Pajares, 2002). Bandura (2006) refers to these functions as: Intentionality, Forethought, Self-reactiveness, and Self-reflectiveness. Intentionality involves creating action plans for the future. Forethought is foreseeing likely outcomes to set goals. Self-reactiveness is the ability to self-regulate which implies the ability to monitor and regulate oneself through the execution of plans. Lastly, self-reflectiveness is a self-examination of functioning and the ability to make necessary adjustments (Bandura, 2006; Pajares, 2002). Within self-reflection, one examines experiences, thoughts, and beliefs and determines if changes in behavior are warranted. Bandura asserts that personal beliefs are central to the concept of human agency and are at the core of an individual's self-efficacy. Bandura refers to self-efficacy as the foundation of human agency (Bandura, 1999). He suggests that the ability to successfully execute particular tasks are based upon beliefs about their ability to do so (Betz, 2000). Bandura specifically states that "people's level of motivation, affective states, and actions are based more on what they believe than on what is objectively true" (Bandura, 1997, p. 2). Bandura proposed that there are four sources of information in which self-efficacy is developed. These sources include: mastery

experiences, vicarious learning experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological arousal (Bandura, 1999). How individuals interpret information from the above sources determines their level of self-efficacy (Pajares, 2002).

Mastery Experiences. Mastery Experiences refer to the building of a confidence level through successful completion of tasks or events. It is thought that successful outcomes raise self-efficacy and outcomes viewed as failures lower self-efficacy (Pajares, 2002). The cognitive appraisal of these outcomes is what determines the impact on efficacy level (Hackett & Byars, 1996). In looking at cultural factors, it is important to understand the differences in interpretation of experiences faced by minorities. Hackett and Byars (1996) suggest that African American girls have difficulty increasing self-efficacy despite positive accomplishments. They attribute this to the conflicting information they receive from society due to racism, biases, discrimination, sexism and other unfavorable policies and procedures. Often different standards and feedback given to minority girls versus their White peers for the same or similar tasks, results in decreased efficacy. Although their behavior could have been positive, because the feedback did not mirror their interpretation of success, it was perceived as a negative outcome (Hackett & Byars, 1996).

Vicarious Learning Experiences. Observing the success of role models and contributing that to one's own ability to have future success is the core of vicarious learning experiences. Bandura (2005) speaks to the power of modeling and suggests that much of what is learned is learned through social modeling. Several studies have been conducted with children and the cognitive process associated with vicarious learning. In one study, Bandura found that the cognitive interpretations of the modeling experience served as an example for skilled performances, allowing for necessary performance adjustments on the part of the student to experience success (Bandura, 2005).

Hackett and Byars (1996) also refer to the benefits of relevant role models. However, they further suggest that the type of role model is important for maximum success within the learning experience. Although the number of role models has increased, there is still a concern that students often have limited access to competent role models of color. Hackett and Byars (1996) further suggest that in addition to competence, students may benefit more from role models similar in age and social status.

Verbal Persuasion. Verbal persuasion is the encouragement and empowerment from others helping to build confidence in one's own ability to complete a task. Pajares (2002) terms it as social persuasions. He offers that, when positive, social persuasion helps build self-efficacy. However, when negative, it results in a weakened self-efficacy. It is important to note that verbal persuasion is effective when the feedback is congruent with capability (Hackett & Byars, 1996; Pajares, 2002). For minorities, lack of encouragement or negative feedback is of concern. Hackett and Byars (1996) suggest that verbal persuasion in conjunction with the other sources of information prove most beneficial.

Physiological Arousal. Physiological arousal is understanding how one's current physiological state impacts self-efficacy. According to Hackett and Byars (1996) stress and anxiety result in lower self-efficacy. Minority students, in particular, are faced with many challenges that negatively influence their ability to form a strong sense of self-efficacy (Hackett & Byars, 1996). When presented with maladaptive or negative cognitions, stress and anxiety ensue. This type of emotional state may result in a decrease in confidence in ability, resulting in weakened self-efficacy (Pajares, 2002). Bandura supports the notion that anxiety undermines self-efficacy (Bandura, 1999). This source of information proves complex for minorities especially at the middle school age. Hackett and Byars (1996) refer to two critical issues: anxiety

as a result of “feeling different” and the anxiety associated with transition from elementary to middle school; both issues having impact on the development of self-efficacy (p. 333). They further suggest that coping with racism is also an important factor to consider, especially as it relates to career development. Racism, unfortunately, is a relevant concern for students in today’s society. As a result, these experiences, whether direct or indirect, create feelings of anxiety which impact their physiological state. Racism aside, at this age, minorities are faced with many emotionally arousing experiences which may be combined with an already weakened self-efficacy.

Social Cognitive Theory provides a foundation for examining career development from a cultural perspective. It’s inclusion of self-efficacy provides a crucial component for examination of career decision making and beliefs. As a result, Lent, Brown and Hackett (1994) expanded upon SCT and developed the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) which will be explored next.

Social Cognitive Career Theory

SCCT is built on a constructivist approach in assuming that people are active participants in their own development (Lent & Brown, 1996). SCCT along with other social cognitive theories purport that people use human agency as a means of participation (Pajares, 2002). The theory offers a framework for understanding and explaining how human agency, as it relates to career development, is developed and used.

SCCT proposes that career choices are shaped by contextual variables and that these variables can facilitate or impede career development (Lent et al., 1994). In the context of working with minority female youth, SCCT focuses on the processes in which (a) academic and career interests develop; (b) academic and vocational plans are created; and (c) varying levels of

performance and persistence in educational and career pursuits are attained (Quimby, Wolfson, & Seyala, 2007). There are many psychosocial factors related to career development that are unique for minority female youth (Smith, 1981), and SCCT provides a needed paradigm for taking these factors into account. SCCT serves as the framework for understanding the literature on the minority population of interest, as it considers “human agency” available for students to make career related choices (Bounds, 2017). SCCT specifically considers gender, culture, and other aspects of diversity (Lent & Brown, 2013). The theory focuses on self-efficacy, expected outcomes, and goal mechanisms and how they are shaped by barriers associated with career development (Bounds, 2017). Self-efficacy is defined as the belief that one has in his or her own ability to perform certain career related tasks (Lent et al., 2002). Specifically, for career decision making, career self-efficacy is confidence in the ability to make appropriate career decisions such as choice of occupation (Bullock-Yowell, McConnell, & Schedin, 2014). Similar to SCT, SCCT supports the notion that self-efficacy is derived from the four sources of information previously described: performance accomplishments, vicarious learning experiences, social persuasion, and emotional states. Lent et al., (1994) suggest that people will choose to engage in activities that they believe will lead to positive outcomes. Lastly, goals are expectations set with the intent to engage in an activity to attain a certain level of performance.

SCCT presents three models in which the core variables (self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals) operate (Lent & Brown, 1996). The interaction between these variables within this model framework is what guides career development. The three models identified are: Interest, Choice, and Performance.

Interest Model. According to SCCT, career interests develop based upon the activities and experiences that adolescents are exposed to and participate in. Within SCCT, it is also

suggested that the types of activities are dependent upon cultural, social, and environmental factors. Therefore, exposure to appropriate and relevant career development activities, results in more and/or different interests. SCCT is somewhat cyclical in nature. As career activity increases, interests also increase. As interests increase, goals are created to help continue or affirm that interest. As a result, additional activities are sought as a means of accomplishing set goals. When participation in career related activities result in positive outcomes, self-efficacy is strengthened and leads to appropriate career related choices being made. Career interests are impacted by one's self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Interests flourish in activities in which individuals believe they are competent. In contrast, limited interested in career activities are a result of lack of exposure to career related activities and inaccurate self-efficacy (Lent & Brown, 1996).

Choice Model. Career interest is what leads to career choices. According to Lent et al., (1994) choice goals are heavily impacted by self-efficacy beliefs, performance outcomes, and environmental factors. SCCT assumes that people choose their career field based upon their interest, which is impacted by self-efficacy and outcome expectations, as previously determined (Quimby et al., 2007). Lent et al., (1994) further suggest that interests could predict choices under supportive environment conditions. However, due to factors such as socioeconomic status, discrimination, lack of educational resources, and non-supportive environments, that may not always be the case for minority women. Career choice may be restricted to certain career fields wherein the ability to choose is not always present.

Performance Model. Lastly, performance is also impacted by self-efficacy and outcome expectations. It is thought that the higher the self-efficacy and outcome expectations, the higher the performance goals (Lent & Brown, 1996). Lent and Brown (1996) offers two aspects of

performance: level of attainment and the ability to persevere despite obstacles. According to Lent et al., (1994) ability, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and performance goals combined, influence both aspects of performance. Level of attainment and perseverance are of great importance when examining minority career development. Social cognitive variables along with other cultural factors such as race, gender, and SES all work together to form interest, choice, and performance. Research has confirmed the challenges in career development faced by minority adolescents are due to issues of discrimination, perceived career barriers, limited opportunities, and lack of resources (Quimby et al., 2007), all of which can negatively impact development of a healthy level of self-efficacy. Therefore, differing levels of self-efficacy can be attributed to differing learning experiences, knowledge attainment, and support received from various groups (Quimby et al., 2007).

Byars-Winston (2006) suggest that career development is situated within a cultural context. In examining racial ideology in predicting social cognitive career variables, the study supports the influence that race-specific personal factors” have on the social cognitive variables of SCCT (p. 147). Jackson, Potere, and Brobst (2006) studied a group of at-risk urban youth who were deemed to be “vulnerable to poverty, fewer resources and discrimination” and found positive associations between successful learning experiences and occupational interests, confirming the need to consider cultural variables when working with students of color on career development (p. 347). Jackson et al., (2006) further suggest that counselors provide specific interventions that help in the development of career self-efficacy beliefs that help build resiliency when faced with barriers.

SCCT offers a means of understanding the many parts of career development for minority youth using a cyclical relationship. Whether positive or negative, the cycle continues

until there is an experience or intervention that interrupts the pattern. Appropriate theory coupled with culturally responsive programs/interventions can be a means of interrupting the negative cycle of unhealthy career development. Culturally responsive programs will hopefully allow young women of color to build career maturity, strengthen career self-efficacy, understand perceived career barriers, and lastly understand and construct their self-identity, which in turn assists in their career development. With these goals in mind, it is important to understand the impact that culturally responsive (non-traditional) career development programs or interventions have on minority female youth and their career development.

Self - Efficacy and Career Development

Hackett and Betz (1981) introduced the concept of career development self-efficacy. They proposed that self-efficacy was relative to understanding women's career development, especially in areas where women were underrepresented (Betz & Hackett, 2006). Self-efficacy is used to understand a developmental behavior in the career domain. For example, one cannot exhibit career self-efficacy. According to Betz and Hackett (2006) career self-efficacy is an "umbrella term" that should be conceptualized in terms of a behavior (p. 6). Behaviors such as career decision making, and career exploration are often examined relative to self-efficacy. Since 1981, numerous studies now confirm that self-efficacy is a critical component of tasks associated with career development and should be used in career work (Betz, 2004).

The concept of self-efficacy related to career development was first introduced on the female population but has now been expanded to people of color and other diverse groups (Betz, 2004). SCCT has been used as a framework for understanding the career development of minority women and can be used to assist in creating programs that build career self-efficacy.

Culturally Responsive Programming

As the need for appropriate career related activities increase, the need to provide relevant, meaningful, and effective supports increase as well. With the majority of career theories being normed on White males, and other research being based on non-minority populations, the need for research on culturally relevant school-based interventions that study minority populations are critical to the success of these students (Shea, Ma, & Yeh, 2007). The overall thought is that adolescents should be exposed to many career related activities that allows for exploration of interests and abilities that assist with college and career readiness (Schaefer, Rivera, & Ophals, 2010). However, Turner and Conkel (2010) suggest that when cultural factors such as race, gender, socioeconomic status are not addressed within the career developmental process, students are not adequately prepared to face career challenges. Furthermore, in an effort to meet the developmental needs of all students, contextual factors such as culture and community must be addressed as the career developmental process of minority student differs greatly based upon these factors (Coogan, 2016; Falco & Summers, 2017).

Research has clearly shown that the needs of minority students, and more specifically, female minority students, are different than those of their peers and subsequently, they may benefit from culturally responsive programming (Betz, 2004; Falco & Summers, 2017). In fact, Arbona (1990) found that minority students have lower expectations of career achievement than their White peers, which could be attributed to cultural factors. Studies conducted have found that when students participate in these types of programs, career decision self-efficacy, among many other factors, increase (Falco & Summers, 2017; Loughhead, Liu, & Middleton, 1995; Turner & Lapan, 2005). Minority populations, in particular, benefit from career interventions due to lack of information and resources, stereotypes and discrimination, as well as other societal

barriers that hinder appropriate career development (Falco & Summers, 2017). A recent study examined a group of female freshman and sophomores on career decision making self-efficacy using an intervention geared towards self-efficacy in STEM (Falco & Summers, 2017). The results indicated a positive impact on career decision making self-efficacy after participation, supporting the need for culturally responsive programming. Although self-efficacy was the focus of the study, authors noted the impact on other areas of career development that were also influenced. These areas included: career indecision, career attitudes, career exploratory behavior and career self-concept. It is important to note that this study only included White and Latina females, so generalization to all minority female populations is limited. However, it does support the need to further explore the idea of intersectionality of race and gender with minority female adolescents (Lindley, 2006).

Research has also proven the difficulties faced by women and minorities and when combined, women of color presented with a unique set of challenges that should be incorporated into career interventions (Falco & Summers, 2017). Addressing these concerns validate their unique experiences and provides support, encouragement, and motivation through a program that is sensitive to their specific need (Shea et al., 2007). Although there is clear support for the use of culturally responsive interventions, more research is needed in identifying effective programs (Falco & Summers, 2017; Lindley, 2006; Smith-Weber, 1999; Turner & Conkel, 2010). Culturally responsive programming can address many career development concepts that can aid in the future success of minority females. Self-efficacy has been identified as one such concept that can be impacted. Other factors that may be considered are ethnic identity, academic motivation and engagement, and perceived career barriers.

Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy. Career decision making self-efficacy (CDMSE) is the belief or confidence one has in their ability to make career related decisions (Taylor & Betz, 1983), which is imperative to successful career development (Bullock-Yowell et al., 2010; Choi et al., 2012). CDMSE is one component of two domains of career self-efficacy: content and process (Choi et al., 2012). CDMSE encompasses the necessary skills and tools needed in the decision-making process and as a result is considered part of the process domain of career self-efficacy. Content domain refers to self-efficacy as it relates to specific careers (Choi et al., 2012). Lack of CDMSE leads to difficulty in making career related decisions due to limited exposure and experience in career related activities (Nauta & Khan, 2007). For minority populations, it is challenging to determine the direction of the relationship. It is uncertain whether lack of exposure and participation in career related activities result in low CDMSE or if low CDMSE results in a lack of participation in career related activities. What is known is that a relationship exists, and that research is needed to understand the relationship and how to best assist in building career self-efficacy.

Additionally, minority youth are at a developmental level where identity is still being constructed and interests being developed, possibly providing an explanation for low career decision self-efficacy at this age (Nauta & Kahn, 2007). Research studies have found a positive association between identity and career decision making self-efficacy, implying that during this stage there are benefits to working on CDMSE (Nauta & Kahn, 2007). Additionally, Gianokos (1999) address identity formation and its relationship to CDMSE, suggesting that individuals who have been found to have low CDMSE typically resulted from poor identity formation.

Ethnic Identity. Ethnic Identity is referred to as the extent to which an individual identifies with his or her own ethnic group. According to Phinney (1996) ethnic identity not only

includes a sense of belonging to an ethnic group, but encompasses an evaluation of the group, knowledge about the group, and involvement in traditions of the group. Ethnic identity is a fluid concept as it very loosely follows stages that one can continuously cycle through. It is a concept that changes over time and varies depending upon social and cultural influences (Phinney, 1996). Although the notion of a minority ethnic identity and a white ethnic identity has been established, Phinney (1996) suggests that there are differences between the two. Ethnic identity for minorities is shaped by cultural and societal factors such as SES and experiences of discrimination and racism even at a young age (Phinney, 1996). In fact, Phinney (1996) further suggests that ethnic identity is formed in adolescence and young adulthood. During this developmental period, identity is typically “based on attitudes of parents, communities, or society” (Phinney, 1996, p. 145). This implies that ethnic identity is heavily influenced by these factors and as a result can create positive or negative identification, depending upon the experiences faced. Positive experiences may result in a positive image of the ethnic group, leading to a positive ethnic identity. However, negative identity is possible, especially when internalizing negative stereotypes from the majority population, media, or experiences with discrimination and/or racist practices (Phinney, 1996).

Phinney (1996) offers three phases to identity development. The first stage, as previously mentioned, is characterized as identifying with the identity of parents or the values and attitudes obtained from the environment in which they live. The second stage is characterized as a time of searching for additional information about the group in which they belong. The third stage is considered the final stage in which a stable ethnic identity has been formed as individuals are confident with who they are within the ethnic group.

Ethnic identity development is an important construct in the career development of minority youth (Lewis et al., 2018). During the second stage of ethnic identity is where they begin to explore who they are relative to their ethnic group, specifically their history and customs (Gonzalez, Eades, & Supple, 2014). Minority students begin to consider who they are and what their future may look like outside of their limited view, which up until this point has been based upon parental and environmental influence (Umana-Taylor, 2018). It is also during this time that they begin to explore their interests, values, and skills relative to occupational decisions (Jackson et al., 2006; Schaefer et al., 2010). Ethnic identification has been linked to career decision self-efficacy and career outcomes (Nauta & Kahn, 2007; Lewis et al., 2018). Umana-Taylor (2018) offers that progressing through this stage of ethnic identity leads to a stronger ability to identify with values, goals, and future plans. In essence, developing a strong ethnic identity may contribute to a strong vocational identity leading to appropriate career development. Gushue and Whitson (2006) addressed the need to consider contextual supports in career development with one of those supports being ethnic identity. Ethnic identity is viewed by many as a source of strength that buffers “the pervasive effects of societal racism on career development” (Gushue & Whitson, 2006, p. 114). It is suggested that a strong ethnic identity can assist in overcoming barriers to occupational goals (Gushue & Whitson, 2006). However, it is important to note the conflicting research regarding this notion.

Gushue and Whitson (2006) conducted a study examining the relationship between many variables, two of those variables being ethnic identity and career decision self-efficacy. Although they hypothesized that there would be a positive relationship between ethnic identity and career decision self- efficacy, the results did not support the hypothesis. Ethnic identity was not found to be a significant predictor of career decision self-efficacy. This particular study was conducted

on African American high school students. Gushue (2006) conducted another study on Latino/a high school students exploring the relationship between ethnic identity, career decision making self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Results of this study suggested that ethnic identity does impact career decision self-efficacy. Both studies examined the same variables, but with different populations. Gushue and Whitson (2006) suggest that the population sampled may not have include a wide range of ethnic identity as the students attended a school of majority students of color as a reason for the conflicting results

Additional studies have confirmed the influence that ethnic identity has on career decision making self-efficacy as well. These studies (Nauta & Kahn, 2007; Ojeda et al., 2012; Smith, Walker, Fields, Brookins, & Seay, 1999) found significant relationships between ethnic identity and career self-efficacy in both African American and Latino groups. Ojeda et al. (2012) examined middle school Latino students and looked at ethnic identity among other factors impact on career decision making self-efficacy. Authors found that ethnic identity along with acculturation and conscientious had a significant impact on career decision making self-efficacy. Nauta and Kahn (2007) found in a diverse sample of college students support for a positive association between identity status and career decision making self-efficacy. Lewis, Raque-Bogdan, Lee, and Rao (2018) examined the role of ethnic identity and meaning in life on career decision making self-efficacy. They surveyed first year college students of varying racial backgrounds. Their study found that ethnic identity was positively associated with career development. Smith, Walker, Fields, Brookins and Seay (1999) found that ethnic identity was positively related to self-efficacy by examining early adolescents from varying racial and ethnic backgrounds. Authors posit that ethnic identity influences perception of ability to academic achieve and attain future goals.

Academic Motivation and Engagement. The academic success of minority students has been widely documented in the literature as an issue worthy of investigation (APA, 2012; Kenny et al., 2006; Musu-Gillette et al., 2017; Nanez Sr. & Gracia, 2015; Perry, 2008). Academic motivation and engagement are important concepts found to be related to career development. As school systems are working on graduation and retention rates, narrowing opportunity (achievement) gaps, and ensuring that students are college and career ready, school engagement is a critical area to address. Kenny et al., (2006) suggest that academic success greatly impacts future vocational success. Specifically, they refer to areas such as future educational opportunities, future career opportunities, and future wages (Kenny et al., 2006).

Trusty et al., (2005) suggest that it is within the middle school years that students begin to disengage from school. Career interventions have been found to assist middle school students in school engagement (Trusty, Niles & Carney, 2005). Perry et al., (2010) found that career preparation impacted grades through school engagement as a mediating variable. Results support the notion that focusing on career development directly and positively impacts academic performance (Kenny et. al., 2006; Perry et al., 2010). Particularly for minority populations, this concept is meaningful in understanding how to best support these students. Due to higher drop-out rates and existing achievement gaps, school achievement for this population is central to their occupational outlook. Perry (2008) offers that “school engagement can be thought of as an antidote to poor academic motivation or as a critical mediator of academic achievement and school dropout” (p. 399). According to Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), school engagement is categorized into three areas: behavior engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement. Behavior engagement consists of participation in academic and nonacademic activities. Emotional engagement refers to reactions’ students have towards

classmates and teachers. Lastly, cognitive engagement indicates how invested one is in learning. School engagement is a framework which can be used to design interventions that focus on changing the way students think, feel, and behave (Perry, 2008).

Career development interventions that are culturally responsive and focus on the three areas of school engagement provide schools with viable means of increasing student engagement (Kenney et al., 2006). Perry (2008) suggests creating interventions that lead to change in behavior, emotional, and cognitive engagement. Interventions should be designed so that they are specifically meeting the unique needs of this population (Trusty et al., 2005). Utilizing career development as a way to increase school engagement can be attributed to the role of a school counselor through their implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs. Although this is a logical expectation according to the ASCA National Model which guides school counseling programs, collaborative efforts between school counseling, teachers, and parents increases students' access to supportive systems or social capital (Perry et al., 2010). Trusty et al., (2006) confirm the thought that career planning efforts are "easier when it is integrated within the entire school" (p. 142). Pajares (2002) suggests how teachers can assist with the career development process. As teachers are at the forefront of student success, he proposes that they are challenged with improving the academic learning and confidence of the students they teach. Referring back to the social cognitive theory, Pajares (2002) shares that teachers can help with student engagement by focusing on personal, behavior, and environmental factors. Parents, too, have an important role in supporting career development. Perry et al., (2010) maintains that parental support is utilized as a protective factor that helps promote career development and in turn increases student engagement.

Perceived Career Barriers. Many factors have been found to impact a person's future career success. Minorities, in particular, are faced with insurmountable obstacles as they pursue their career goals (Kenny et al., 2003). Researchers have long noted the differences in career attainment between White students and students of color (Kenney et al., 2003; Arbona, 2000; Constantine et al., 1998). These differences are often attributed to the barriers students perceive to be keeping them from achieving career related goals. According to Kenney et al., (2007) barriers include racism, sexism, classism, and access to resources. Jackson et al., (2006) speaks to another career barrier, which is one's own belief or lack of belief in the value of education leading towards future career success. Authors suggest that many minority youth develop negative views of education, which results in limited access to educational and occupational choices. The study found that the more a student believed in the limitation of their education, the lower their educational and career aspiration. In addition, Constantine, Wallace, and Kindaichi (2005) similarly found a relationship between perceived career barriers, and lower exploration behavior and commitment to career choice.

The examination of perceived career barriers is thought to be critical to understanding career development in minority females (Lindley, 2005; Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001). Rollins and Valdez (2006) suggest that young students of color should be prepared to cope with such barriers in preparation for future career success. According to Lindley (2005), assisting females in coping with career related barriers is important in increasing occupational choice. Research suggests that if the female does not believe that her career related behavior will lead to positive outcomes, perceived career barriers could keep her from pursuing future goals (Bandura, 1997; Quimby et al., 2007). SCCT is useful in understanding the dynamics of how perceived barriers impact

career development. The theoretical framework offers ways of building career self-efficacy which helps develop coping skills leading to more positive career outcomes.

Literature on Career Development Variables

It is imperative that counselors gain a better understanding of the impact of culturally responsive career development interventions on minority female youth and their career development. However, there is a lack of literature on culturally responsive programming as well as the middle school minority female population. Literature does, however, focus on several aspects of career development, such as career self-efficacy, career aspirations, and perceived career barriers on similar populations. Previous research indicates the need for culturally responsive interventions targeted for minority students to deal with the many occupational barriers they may face (Constantine et al., 1998). According to Jackson and Roberts (1996), these students need knowledge and opportunities that are appropriate, unique, and culturally relevant. However, to effectively work with this population, counselors must be aware of racial and gender differences and the role they play in career development.

Findings further suggest that there are gender differences regarding career self-efficacy and career decision-making. Rollins and Valdez (2006) found that females had significantly greater career decision-making self-efficacy, which is similar to the Ojeda et al., (2012) findings that girls scored higher in acculturation and enculturation, which were closely related to career self-efficacy. Brown (1997) similarly found that girls scored higher in career maturity than males. These results suggest that the more students are introduced to career development information and become increasingly confident with themselves, the more confident they are in their career decision making. For example, Ojeda et al., (2012) found that when Latinos are

secure with their ethnicity, they increase their ability to successfully make career related decisions.

Similarly, Rollins and Valdez (2006) specifically examined how the perception of racism, one of the potential barriers to effective career development, impacts career self-efficacy. The study revealed that students who perceived racism had higher levels of career self-efficacy. Perceived racism refers to the knowledge students have of racism and how they perceive acts of racism against their ethnic group (Rollins & Valdez, 2006). Students who are exposed to and understand the impact of racial discrimination are better able to cope, resulting in positive self-esteem and aspirations (Rollins & Valdez, 2006). Early interventions that provide opportunities for these courageous conversations are critical components of culturally responsive programming. Student awareness of racial bias, prejudice, and stereotypes allow them to understand, identify, and prepare for possible barriers (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001). This awareness is thought to help build coping skills (Rollins & Valdez, 2006). When knowledge, awareness, and skills, which are all components of multicultural competency, are present, it results in a positive effect on career self-efficacy (Rollins & Valdez, 2006). Relatedly, participation in such programs allows students to build confidence in their vocational identity, thus opening the door for them to be equipped to make career related decisions (Bowman, 1993; Smith, 1982). Gushue et al., (2006) supports the idea that a greater self-confidence is related to better career making decisions as well as a better sense of interests, abilities, and goals. This indicates that students who have a greater career self-efficacy are more likely to possess a vocational identity and engage in career related tasks. Super, Savickas, and Super (1996) suggested that a vocational identity allows for making better occupational choices that are a better fit for the individual.

As previously noted, there are barriers that hinder the development of a vocational identity for minority youth. Due to factors such as lack of resources, role models, and discriminatory practices, students are unable to effectively imagine and plan for potential careers (Gushue et al., 2006). Results of the Gushue et al. (2006) study support the need for appropriate career interventions tailored to the needs of minority females. These authors suggest that self-efficacy is a characteristic needed to form a vocational identity. Interventions that assess students' beliefs about their ability to conduct career exploration and make career related decisions are ways to build the referenced self-efficacy (Gushue et al., 2006). In summary, exposing students early to possible barriers assists in building a vocational identity, which results in an increased self-efficacy, allowing for better career related decision making. It is through culturally responsive programs that counselors can help students navigate effectively through this process.

The Need. Sanders and Bradley (2005) suggest that to effectively understand the development of minority youth, we must consider race, gender, ethnicity, and social class (Reid & Stephens, 1985; Turner & Conkel, 2010). Career developmental barriers such as racial bias and stereotyping, curriculum tracking, achievement gaps and poverty should be addressed with this population (Constantine et al., 1998). Dunn and Veltman (1989) characterize students of color as being “vocationally handicapped” (p. 156). These students lack positive experiences related to careers, have less access to career related information, and lack access to role models. These barriers negatively impact how students of color perceive their future.

Prior literature reviews reveal developmental gaps within minority female youth which may be due to the many stereotypes and misconceptions regarding their career outlook (Smith, 1982). It is important that these misconceptions are identified and combated with racial

socialization messages given within non-traditional or culturally responsive interventions. According to Sanders and Bradley (2005), socialization messages focus on the strengths and accomplishments of minority youth and help build self-worth and confidence. Cummins (1986) created a model to be used for minorities' career development which allows an avenue for socialization messages to be relayed. The model identifies four variables that seek to empower and foster achievement (Okocha, 1994). Variables include ethnic minority generated knowledge, recognition of the ethnic minority culture, involvement of the minority community, and advocacy for the ethnic minority. These components should be included in programs that address career development with minority populations. The minority voice must be represented, and to do so, requires a shift from an all-inclusive career development thought process generalized to everyone that recognizes and addresses the realities of people of color (Sanders & Bradley, 2005).

Many studies have been conducted on the career development of minority youth but there is still a need for research with this population, especially minority females in the middle school years (Flores et al., 2006). According to an analysis conducted by Wells, Delgado-Romero, and Shelton (2010), research conducted between 1990 and 1997 did not include minority populations representative of the U.S. population, although research conducted from 2000 to 2007 did increase in its inclusion of minorities. While this sounds promising, they also found that the number of studies that did not appropriately report race or ethnicity was "staggering" (Wells et al., 2010, p. 512). This, along with small sample sizes, causes concern for generalizing results to minority populations (Flores, et al., 2006).

More recently, Lee et al., (2017) conducted another review of the literature on racial/ethnic minority, multicultural and international trends. They found similar results as

previous reviews. One finding that confirms the continued need of research on minority populations is that out “of the 1,896 articles published in four journals from 2005 to 2015, 166 (8.8%) pertained to career development of REMs” (Lee et al., 2017, p. 291). This percentage was only slightly higher than a previous review conducted by Flores et al. (2006) at 7%. Populations used in the studies mostly included undergraduates and high school students. According to the analysis, the majority of the research has been conducted on African Americans. However, proportionately across groups, research on African Americans have decreased while studies on Latino/a populations have increased. Most importantly, authors suggest a trend in decreasing articles on minority populations since 2007 and suggest that additional research is needed to fully understand their career development (Lee et al., 2017).

In addition, while previous research has focused on understanding the factors hindering career development and the needs of the population, little research has been directed towards the effectiveness of career development interventions and their impact on minority female youth (Bowman, 1993; Flores et al., 2006; Hughes & Karp, 2004). In fact, one of the analyses previously mentioned discovered that between 1969 and 2004 and out of 281 studies published, only 20 of them focused on evaluation of career services (Flores et al., 2006). Research suggests that minority female adolescents need access to career related information and exposure to the world of work, which confirms the continued need for evidence-based practices (Rollins & Valdez, 2006; Smith, 1981). Non-traditional interventions allow for such opportunities, along with the space to connect students with role models. They also require time for interactions with these role models, which consequently, has been found to have a positive impact (Smith, 1981). Additionally, peer group reinforcement has been found to be helpful (Smith, 1981).

Although many programs such as Upward Bound, Gear Up, and I Am The One exist to assist minorities in academic, college, and career readiness, it is still important to ensure that girls are enrolled in a program that directly addresses their career development needs (Smith, 1981). One solution is to offer school-based initiatives that collaborate with agencies, communities, and other institutions to offer the most comprehensive program possible (Hawks & Muha, 1991; Okocha, 1994). Essentially, to effectively address the needs of the population, school counselors will need to be creative in the development, implementation, and delivery of such a program. Educational research that validates the effectiveness of such programs is needed to assist counselors in providing interventions that will result in positive outcomes for students.

Current Programs and Interventions. There are a few programs that currently are being implemented that target underrepresented populations regarding college and career readiness. Unfortunately, little research has been conducted to affirm their effectiveness. However, with the research that has been done, many similarities and themes are common among them. According to Fouad and Bingham (1995) a culturally appropriate career development model consists of the following:

- Establishment of a culturally appropriate relationship
- Information gathering that is culturally encompassing
- Identification of cognitive, social, emotional, environmental, behavioral, and external influences
- Assessment of cultural spheres of influence on career choice
- Assessment of cultural, gender, and efficacy variables
- Traditional career assessments
- Selection, administration, and interpretation of culturally appropriate instruments

- Career development practitioners' awareness of their own world views, identity salience, values, and attitudes.

Nakkula, Danylchuk, Miller, and Tamerler (2008) studied four programs funded by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation's Minority High-Achievement Initiative in New England. Their results confirmed five themes common within the program. These themes included: breaking down barriers, providing the right fit, high expectations and high support, role modeling and adult guidance, and kin-like peer group. The authors suggest that the inclusion of the above-named elements provides for an effective culturally sensitive career development program. The American Association of Speech-Language-Hearing Association recently conducted a literature review on the recruitment, retention, and career transition of minority students and professionals with a focus on programs that are currently implemented to assist minority students. This review further confirms the need to "support and strengthen the education of minority students at the k-12 levels" (p. 6). It is suggested that early intervention programs are needed to assist in expanding students career choices. One example provided is the Parents and Counselors Together (PACT) program which targets middle school students and their parents and help prepare them for pursuing an appropriate academic curriculum as well as transitioning to college. In addition, the review offers the idea of summer research and bridge programs that are utilized by many universities as a way to strengthen students' ability to be successful on the college level. These types of programs are typically used for students who are borderline and need help adjusting to college level work. Although there is an academic success component, typically career development is not included. Other early intervention programs are more geared towards specific career fields. For example, The Pre-collegiate programs in Engineering, Nursing, and Environmental Science at George Mason University, Hampton University's National Summer

Transportation Institute, William and Mary's summer enrichment programs, and Virginia Tech's C-Tech program geared towards females. Although they may be career specific, there are two remaining concerns; the amount of focus on actual career development and the degree of cultural sensitivity.

Mekinda (2012) provided an overview of four career programs commonly used with youth populations. The four programs include: Citizen Schools, After School Matters, career academies, and Job Corps. Each program is unique but is considered to use evidence-based practices. These particular programs are not geared specifically towards minority students; however, they do provide further evidence that supports the impact of targeted career efforts. Each program provides opportunities for "project-based or experiential learning; integration of academic, social, and technical skills; the creation of networks of supportive adults and peers; and partnerships among institutions" (Mekinda, 2012, p. 45). Citizen schools are for low income middle school students and is designed to assist academic achievement while focusing on career development. Prior evaluations of the program provide promising results for an increase in school engagement, academic performance, and graduation rates. Unfortunately, the evaluation did not include a specific career related measure. However, according to Mekinda (2012), the result of the evaluation suggest that this program does help students assist with future college and career goals. After School Matters (ASM), another career program model for high school students focuses on developing appropriate job skills. Mekinda (2012) cite a study conducted by Hirsch and colleagues that found that the ASM program had a positive impact on self-regulation and problem behavior. Regarding career development, no significant impact was found. The third program model, career academies, is an in-school college and career readiness program. The three major components of this model are: small learning community, career and academic

curriculum integration, and established partnerships with local employers. This model is distinct in that it does not solely target at risk students but enrolls students with varying academic abilities. According to an evaluation conducted in 2008, career academies had a positive impact on high school students' interpersonal support and participation in career related activities. Additionally, over an eight-year period, students were reported to have significant gains in earnings upon graduation indicating positive long-term impact as a result of the academy. However, no significant impact was found on test scores, graduation rates, or post-secondary enrollment. The last program model evaluated was Job Corps. According to Mekinda (2012), Job Corps is the "largest educational and vocational training program for disadvantaged youth in the country" (p. 51). The difference with Job Corps is that is geared towards students who are already disengaged from the school. Although the program provides vocational preparation, it does not assist in the developmental process leading to entry in the work force as is the focus of this project. An evaluation conducted in the 1990's suggests that those who were a part of the Job Corps experience received great educational and employment benefits. When compared to a control group, participants left with more training, an increase in GED and vocational certificate attainment resulting in increased earnings within four years of being in the program.

The above-mentioned programs are examples of career programs that are being implemented in various parts of the country. Each are unique in their focus and implementation. However, each program offers a framework for how to address career needs for varying developmental stages (Mekinda, 2012). Although each program resulted in some level of positive significance, research is still needed to understand the impact on minority populations. Despite efforts, there is still a lack of empirical evidence that abovementioned programs are

effective and therefore there is still a continued need to work on career development from a culturally responsive context.

Missing Literature. Based upon the previously mentioned review of literature, there are many things that we know about minority populations and career development. We know that there are confirmed differences between majority and minority career self-efficacy. We know that in addition to differences between race and ethnicity, differences in gender exist. Research has documented the unique challenges of women of color. We know that culturally responsive interventions impact career self-efficacy. We know that other factors such as ethnic identity and motivation and engagement also impact career self-efficacy. It has been established that career development is a relevant topic that is pertinent to the work of school counselors. However, a collaborative effort between counselors, teachers, and parents in career development is important for student success. Lastly, middle school is a crucial time where career development should be explored.

Despite what is currently presented in the literature, there are many unknowns as well. For example, we don't know how culturally responsive programs impact career self-efficacy among other contextual factors. We also lack confirmation of gender differences and racial differences on certain variables related to career development due to conflicting results. We are missing sufficient research on minorities at the middle school level. Most of the current research is being conducted on either high school students or undergraduate populations (Lee et al., 2017). We are unsure of the impact of culturally responsive programs on middle school minority students due to a lack of research. Lastly, we are missing examples of culturally responsive programs that have been proven to work with this population. As a result, it is imperative that

researchers continue to examine the needs of this population and advocate for empirical research that assists in their career development process.

Due to the changing demographics of society to a more diverse workforce, employers, educators, and other professionals will be forced to examine and adjust their policies, procedures, and practices that consider the needs of the emerging workforce (Ojeda et al., 2012). Although there is research on career decision making self-efficacy, Austin (2010) purports that it still misunderstood for minority students. In addition, the empirical evidence to date has offered conflicting results, which warrants further investigation. As Byars-Winston (2006) suggests, academic and career behavior is directed by cognitive appraisal of social variables such as efficacy beliefs, career barriers, access to opportunities and ethnic identity. Cultural factors should be a focus of future research attention (Gushue, 2006; Park-Taylor & Vargas, 2012). Two of the main concepts found to be sparse in the literature are research on middle school aged students, specifically minority middle school students, and effective career development programs. Many studies cite the need for culturally responsive programs that increase self-efficacy (Ali & Menke, 2010; Grier-Reed & Ganuza, 2010; Kenney et al., 2006; Ojeda et al., 2012; Pulliam, Ieva, & Burlew, 2017; Smith-Weber, 1999). More research on students of color in relation to career development is needed in general (Gushue & Whitson, 2006). Earlier works by Smith (1981), Reid and Stephens (1985) and Sanders and Bradley (2005) suggest the need for research on minority females in particular, with Smith (1981) going so far as to label them as “the forgotten” group (p. 277). Smith-Weber (1999) reiterates thoughts dating back to Beale (1970) and others (Brown, 1996; Hackett & Byars, 1996) regarding how young women of color are deficient in their occupational and educational attainment due to race and gender. Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, and Pastorelli (1999) imply that students in their middle school years

begin to form occupational interests based on their personal self-efficacy. Yet, little research has been conducted on this population.

Current literature not only implies the need for culturally responsive interventions, but it calls for early intervention and has done so for some time. Reid and Stephens (1985), after reviewing the literature on girls and careers, called for intervening as “early as possible” (p. 281). More recently, Falco and Summers (2017) study of high school girls, suggests the importance of career self-efficacy interventions beginning as early as middle school. The literature is clear about the need for appropriate career development in early adolescence, as it is during this time that students begin to make important career related decisions that may impact them in high school and beyond (Park-Taylor & Vargas, 2012; Schaefer et al., 2010). Research conducted by the American College Testing (ACT) report that a student’s college and career readiness could be predicted by their achievement in eighth grade (ACT, 2008). Even Bandura (1995) suggest the importance of decisions made in middle school and their impact on future outcomes. As a result, this study addressed (1) the continuation of research on cultural variables related to career decision self-efficacy (2) the career developmental needs of minority middle school females and (3) the impact of a culturally responsive program on career decision making self-efficacy, ethnic identity, perceived career barriers and motivation and engagement of this population.

Operational Definitions of Variables

The following terms are integral to the current study and are referenced throughout this dissertation.

FLAME - The Female Leadership Academy for Minority Excellence is an intervention used to assist in the career development of minority female youth.

Adolescent Minority Female - Adolescent minority female is defined as any identified racial and ethnic minority female in grades 6 - 8.

Career Self-Efficacy - Career self- efficacy is defined as the degree of belief one has in his or her ability to perform career-related tasks. Self-efficacy will be measured using the Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form

Perceived Career Barriers - Perceived career barriers are considered any obstacle that is perceived as impeding student's career decision-making process. Perceived career barriers will be measured using the Perceived Barriers to Education and Career Scale-Revised.

Ethnic Identity - Ethnic Identity is defined as the degree to which the participants identify with their racial and ethnic cultural group. Ethnic identity will be measured using the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure.

Culturally Responsive program– a program that takes into consideration contextual factors such as culture, race, gender, barriers, and other factors unique to women of color.

Student Motivation and Engagement – students' energy and drive to engage, learn, work effectively, and achieve their potential at school (Stephens, 2015).

Career Development – the process of engaging in appropriate career exploring, planning, and managing activities that lead to career readiness.

Career Readiness – the attainment and demonstration of knowledge and skills that prepare students to transition into the workplace.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Design

The purpose of this research study was to understand the possible impact of a culturally responsive career development program on contextual variables (ethnic identity, perceived career barriers, school motivation and engagement) and the cognitive variable (career decision making self-efficacy) of minority female middle school youth. This study utilized a repeated measures quasi-experimental, quantitative single group pre-, mid-, and post-test design that was used to examine differences in measures over time. The research methodology presented in this chapter includes the participants, instruments, intervention, and limitations. The design implementation is outlined in the following steps: 1. Group of participants was given a pretest measuring dependent variables 2. Intervention was implemented for 9 weeks. 3. Another data collection took place at the midpoint of the program. 4. The remaining 6 weeks of the intervention was implemented. 5. A post-test was administered at the end of the program. The researcher chose a quantitative design because the information sought was differences in mean scores on career decision making self-efficacy, ethnic identity, perceived barriers, and school engagement which could best be represented using examination of quantitative data. In addition, there are previously constructed reliable measures to assist in accurately measuring career decision making self-efficacy among other variables that can be used for this project.

A series of repeated measure ANOVAs were used to compare differences between pre-scores, mid-scores, and post-test scores. The dependent variables were the degree of CDMSE, ethnic identity, perceived career barriers, and student motivation and engagement. The independent variable was identified as participation in the FLAME program with measurements at the beginning, middle, and end of the group. The study sought to determine positive change between scores on variables such as increased ethnic identity, decreased perceived career barriers, increased student motivation and engagement and increased career decision making self-efficacy during participation in a culturally responsive career development program. As a result, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: Is there a difference in pre-group, mid-group, and post-group scores on career decision making self-efficacy during participation in a culturally responsive career development program?

Ho: There are no differences between the pre-group, mid-group, and post-group scores on career decision making self-efficacy.

Ha: There will be at least a difference between two of the three scores on career decision making self-efficacy.

RQ2: Is there a difference in pre-group, mid-group, and post-group scores on ethnic identity during participation in a culturally responsive career development program?

Ho: There are no differences between the pre-group, mid-group, and post-group scores on ethnic identity.

H_a: There will be at least a difference between two of the three scores on ethnic identity.

RQ3: Is there a difference in pre-group, mid-group, and post- group scores on student motivation and engagement during participation in a culturally responsive career development program?

H_o: There are no differences between the pre-group, mid-group, and post-group scores on student motivation and engagement.

H_a: There will be at least a difference between two of the three scores on student motivation and engagement.

RQ4: Is there a difference in population mean pre-group, mid-group, and post- group scores on perceived career barriers during participation in a culturally responsive career development program?

H_o: There are no differences between the pre-group, mid-group, and post-group scores on perceived career barriers.

H_a: There will be at least a difference between two of the three scores on perceived career barriers.

Participants

Participants included 34 minority female middle school students from a public middle school in a rural southwest community. This middle school's demographics are 69% White, 26% Black, 4% Hispanic, and 1% Other (American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian and Pacific Islander). The percentage of students on free and reduced lunch is approximately 53%. The school is located in a rural county with a population of approximately 13,000. The average median household income as of July 2018 was 58,000 with the per capita income as 26,118

(United States Census Bureau, 2019). The racial and ethnic breakdown of the county includes 75.9 % White, 21.1% Black, 3% Hispanic or Latino, and less than 1% other (Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, two or more races). Due to the demographics of the school and the nature of the program, purposeful sampling was used for the selection of the participants which included any identified minority female in grades six through eight. Using the above-mentioned criteria, approximately 58 students were eligible for participation. The researcher cautiously expected a participation rate of 60% which was interpreted as 34 students. Ethnic breakdown of participants is majority African American and a minority of Hispanic female students with an age range of 11 to 14. Participation was voluntary, and parents were required to provide parental consent for participation in the program.

In evaluating this study, a power analysis for repeated measures within group ANOVA was conducted to determine if the sample size would result in adequate statistical power. The number of groups was set to one with an assumed effect size of medium. The significance level was set at .05. The power level was set at .80. Additionally, it was assumed that there would be three measurements across a period of time. A priori power analyses revealed a sample size of at least 28 provided sufficient power for detecting any change in pre-group, mid-group, and post-group scores.

Instruments

Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy Scale - Short Form (CDMSES-SF; Betz, Klein, & Taylor, 1996). The CDMSES, now a 25-item scale, measures an individual's degree of belief that he or she can successfully complete tasks necessary to making career decisions. The CDMSES is comprised of five subscales: accurate self-appraisal, gathering occupational information, goal selection, making plans for the future, and problem-solving. The scale utilized

a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) no confidence at all to (5) complete confidence. Multiple studies have found the results from the CDMSES to be reliable (e.g., Austin, 2010; Betz, Klein, & Taylor, 1996) with Cronbach's coefficients alphas for the subscales and total scale ranging between .73 and .94. Betz, Klein & Taylor (1996) surveyed a diverse group of college students whereas Austin (2010) surveyed African American high school students. Therefore the measure has been used with varying populations and have been found to be reliable.

Perceived Barriers to Education and Career Scale Revised (POB; Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001) consists of 32 questions broken into two categories: Career related barriers and Educational barriers. The first version of the scale was created in 1992 for high school students; however, it was pilot tested on a group of first-semester ethnic minority college freshman and modified based upon results of that testing (McWhirter, 1997). For this sample population, a Cronbach's coefficients alpha of .75 was reported (McWhirter, 1997). The second version was established through a study conducted by McWhirter (1997) using a sample of 1139 Mexican American and European American junior and senior high school students resulting in a Cronbach's coefficients alpha of .87. This version of the scale was also, a modification to the original scale created by McWhirter in 1997. Modifications included an additional three items to the Career barriers subscale. Questions on the career barriers subscale refer to anticipated ethnic and gender discrimination in the future as well as the addition of child care items (McWhirter, 2001). In 2001, the educational barriers subscale was revamped from the original 1997 study with the deletion of 19 items, the addition of nine items, and question format restructuring (McWhirter, 2001). Luzzo & McWhirter (2001) report reliability statistics based upon the revised scale as a Cronbach's coefficients alpha of .90 for the total scale and between .86 and .88 for the Career Related Barriers and Educational Barriers subscales. The current version consists

of 32 questions utilizing a Likert scale response ranging from (5) strongly agree to (1) strongly disagree. Questions one to eleven comprised the career barriers scale and questions 12 to 32 made up the educational barriers subscale. For purposes of this study, only the career barriers subscale was used in data analysis.

Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, J. 1992) is a 14-item scale measuring ethnic identity. The scale was used on 417 high school students and 136 college students. The MEIM consists of 14 items based on three subscales: Affirmation and Belonging, Ethnic Identity Achievement, and Ethnic Behaviors. According to Phinney (1992), the measure has been used across a wide range of ethnic groups and ages and has consistently shown good reliability. Specific to the 1992 study, reliability coefficients were calculated separately for each sample and was reported as .81 for the high school sample and .90 for the college sample (Phinney, 1992). The college sample included “58 Hispanics, 35 Asians, 23 Whites, 11 Blacks, 8 of mixed backgrounds, and 1 American Indian” (p. 164). The high school population included “14 Asian Americans, 25 Blacks, and 25 Hispanics” (p. 275). The scale utilized a 4-point Likert response system ranging from (4) strongly agree to (1) strongly disagree.

Motivation and Engagement Survey -Short Form Revised (MES) was adapted from the motivation and engagement survey created by Lee, Hayes, Seitz, DiStefano and O’Connor (2016). Whereas the original survey was utilized for motivation and engagement in science, the revised form was tailored towards general academic motivation and engagement in all subjects. The wording of the questions was revised to remove the word science. For example, instead of “One of my goals is to show others that science class work is easy for me.”, the question read “One of my goals is to show others that class work is easy for me.” The survey consisted of 21 questions with responses measured using a Likert-type scale ranging from not at all true (1) to

very true (5). The measure was divided into three categories: (1) goal orientations (mastery, performance approach, and performance avoid), (2) self-efficacy, and (3) three types of engagement (behavioral, affective, and cognitive). Lee et al., (2016) report a Cronbach's coefficients alpha ranging from .67 to .85, providing evidence for the internal reliability of the short survey. The original survey was given to a diverse population of middle school students. Authors report a minority participant percentage ranging from 26.3 to 99.3 from 8 districts and 30 schools (Lee et al., 2016).

Intervention

Students participated in the Female Leadership Academy of Minority Excellence (FLAME) program as a part of the comprehensive school counseling program. Counseling director, also principal investigator, identified a need for a culturally responsive career development program for students at participating middle school. As a result, FLAME was designed and implemented to foster growth and development in career exploration and leadership. The academy provided students with career related knowledge and tools in which they applied in practice exercises. The goal was to empower these young women to become future leaders in their career of choice. Group activities included mentorship, resume writing, career exploration, mock-interviewing, shadowing experiences, creation of goals and vision boards, practice public speaking, and building of leadership skills. Students were also presented with opportunities for discussion of career development barriers based on race and gender. Students participated in mock interviews and public speaking exercises where they received valuable feedback that will help in future job searches. Guest speakers and field trips were used for additional experiential learning.

FLAME consisted of fifteen after school sessions conducted throughout the school year by the principal investigator. Sessions lasted for an hour and a half every other week. It is important to note that due to the career focus of the program, FLAME was funded through Carl Perkins funds from the Career and Technical Education Department. This may prove beneficial for school systems with limited resources for school counseling programs. An outline of sessions offered is listed below. Detailed forms regarding the program can be found in Appendix A.

Session I - Introductions, Program Overview, Pretest

In this session, students participated in icebreaker activities as an effort to build a cohesive group where students feel comfortable sharing and participating. Facilitators gave an overview of the program, established program goals and rules, and shared expectation with the group. Students were then given pretests for all measurements in the study.

Session II - This session was dedicated to courageous conversations centered on self-efficacy for minority females, stereotypes by women of color, obstacles based upon the intersection of race and gender as well as ethnic identity development.

Session III – Students participated in a field experience to James Madison University where they experienced college life, toured the campus and learned about college admissions. In addition, students were able to meet and dialogue with the first African American mayor of Harrisonburg, Deana Reed.

Session IV - Students hosted a visit from former Secretary of Education, Deitre Trent an African American female who shared her career journey, obstacles she faced, and how she overcame them. She also offered words of wisdom and encouragement to the participants.

Session V - This session was dedicated to goal setting. Students participated in a vision board activity where they were able to creatively and visually represent their goals.

Session VI - In this session students learned about making positive first impressions and self-encouragement through positive affirmations. This session also included dialogue about career exploration and conclude with students taking a career interest inventory.

Session VII - Students met with role model, Megan Clark, the first African American commonwealth attorney for Prince Edward County Virginia.

Session VIII - The theme for this session was Girl Empowerment. Students participated in a group discussion after watching Oprah Winfrey's golden globe award speech and after hearing from motivational speaker, Sandra Parker.

Session IX – Students met with another role model, Nedra Banks, an alumnus of the school, and a motivational speaker. This session also included the mid-evaluation for the program prior to the session beginning. All measures will be assessed (T2).

Session X - Longwood Career Services provided information on career exploration, resume writing and interviewing skills. Students were introduced to the SMART method for answering questions in an interview.

Session XI – Students participated in groups where interviewing skills, eye contact, handshakes, introductions, etc. learned from previous sessions were practiced. Students prepared for upcoming mock interviews.

Session XII - Students met with role model, Jane Henderson, an African American female from the local 4-H Extension Office.

Session XIII - Students participated in mock interviews. Students were evaluated on their introduction, eye contact, their verbal responses, appearance, and closing of the interview. Students were provided with valuable feedback about their interview that will allow them to improve their interviewing skills and become more confident when presenting themselves.

Session XIV - Students hosted a visit from Paula Robinson of the State Council of Higher Education (SCHEV) who discussed college admissions, financial aid, test preparation, and offered advice on how students can prepare now for their future college entrance.

Session XV - This last session, we followed up on the visit from SCHEV with a college jeopardy game, followed by a review of the program, closing with post testing of all measures.

Procedure

The following steps will detail how the study was implemented. For the current study, the author gained permission from the local school board to use collected data from the existing FLAME group for the current study. With permission from the participating school system, the researcher submitted an IRB request to analyze the dataset collected by the FLAME research team. The dataset is secondary data looking at variables such as career decision making self-efficacy, ethnic identity, perceived career barriers, and academic motivation and engagement of students who participated in the FLAME program. Researcher obtained a list of eligible students using the student information system at the identified middle school participating in the study. The demographic information reviewed for participation included race and gender through self or parental identification at the beginning of the school year. Any student who was labeled as female and minority was invited to participate. Each student was also invited to an interest meeting outlining the purpose of the program, program logistics, and program eligibility and requirements. Students were given informational packets to take home and share with parents (Appendix A). Parental permission was required through signed consent forms. Group sessions began in October and ended in April with bi-monthly meetings after school. Facilitators included the principal researcher and two other co-facilitators which included the Special Education Coordinator and a paraprofessional, both of whom are African American females.

The first meeting consisted of the preliminary data collection to establish baseline data. Students were administered all four scales (CDMSES, MEIM, POB, and SME) in a group setting before beginning the first session. Any student not present on the first day was given the scales shortly thereafter in the researcher's office during the school day. After the pre-group assessment, subsequent meetings consisted of FLAME content. It is important to note that attendance was not consistent among all students due to sport team and other commitments. Subsequent data collections took place in the middle and end of the program. Therefore, there were three data collection points used in the study (pre, mid, and post). Every attempt was made to obtain data from absent students as soon as possible after any missed meeting when data was collected.

Data Analysis

The following procedure was used for data analysis. The researcher utilized Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software for all data analysis (IBM Corp., 2017). Data was first reviewed for missing and incorrect data. Little's MCAR test was conducted to determine the type of missing data. Next, with confirmed Missing Completely at Random or Missing at Random, a Full-information Maximum Likelihood (FIML) was used to account for missing data. In addition, data was examined for any outliers and to ensure that the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homogeneity of variance were met. Descriptive statistics including mean and standard deviations for each of the scales and subscales as obtained as a way of summarizing data from this sample. Next, a series of repeated measure ANOVAs were conducted to determine if mean scores differed statistically significantly between time points. Lastly, if a statistically significant difference was found, post hoc testing using a pairwise comparison was

conducted to determine which specific means were significantly different from one another. All results are fully reported in Chapter 4.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a description of the research design that guided the study. It described in detail the procedures that was followed by the researcher as well as the process for data analysis. This project added to the minimal research on middle school aged minority females and the impact of a culturally responsive career intervention on various factors related to career development.

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was positive change between mean scores on variables such as ethnic identity, perceived career barriers, student motivation and engagement and career decision making self-efficacy during participation in a culturally responsive career development program. Chapter III provided the rationale for using a quantitative research design, described the researcher's processes, and described study participants and intervention. Chapter III also explained the study's data collection and data analysis procedures. Chapter IV focuses on reporting the study's findings based on the data analysis. This chapter begins with a description of the preliminary analysis, including how the author addressed missing data. Next, the chapter describes descriptive statistics including means and standard deviations. Following descriptive statistics will be results of the reliability analyses that was conducted on each of the assessments. Lastly, the results of the repeated measures ANOVA along with results of the post hoc testing will be reported.

The goal of determining mean differences between time points was realized by performing a series of repeated measures ANOVAs. Coolidge (2013) states that an ANOVA is a statistical analysis used for determining whether means of the independent variable are significantly different from each other. Therefore, this analysis was used to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: Is there a difference in pre-group, mid-group, and post-group scores on career decision making self-efficacy during participation in a culturally responsive career development program?

RQ2: Is there a difference in pre-group, mid-group, and post-group scores on ethnic identity during participation in a culturally responsive career development program?

RQ3: Is there a difference in pre-group, mid-group, and post- group scores on student motivation and engagement during participation in a culturally responsive career development program?

RQ4: Is there a difference in population mean pre-group, mid-group, and post- group scores on perceived career barriers during participation in a culturally responsive career development program?

The intervention consisted of 34 minority female participants. 91% were classified as Black and 9% were classified as Hispanic. Students were in grades six, seven, and eight.

Preliminary Analysis

Data was collected at three time points throughout the intervention. After an analysis of the data, it was determined that the dataset had missing data. As a result, the researcher conducted a Little's MCAR analysis to determine if the data was missing at random. The Little's MCAR test was not significant ($X = 11.95$ ($df = 5922$; $p > .05$)). This non-significant result indicated that the missing data was missing completely at random. Next a Full Maximum Imputation was conducted to account for the missing data resulting in a complete dataset of 34 participants with scores for each assessment at each time point which was then used for further

analysis. In addition to missing data, the preliminary analysis also included screening to ensure that all assumptions for the repeated measures ANOVA were met.

Sphericity. Mauchly’s Test of Sphericity indicated that the assumption of sphericity had not been violated except for the Mastery subscale of the Motivation and Engagement Scale. To correct for this, researcher used the Greenhouse-Geisser correction for the sphericity violation. Specific results of the Mauchly’s test for each scale is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Mauchly’s Test of Sphericity

| Within Subjects Effect | Measure | Mauchley’s W | Chi-Square | df | Sig. |
|------------------------|-----------------|--------------|------------|----|-------|
| Time | CDMSE | .931 | 2.299 | 2 | .317 |
| | MEIM_Total | .843 | 5.453 | 2 | .065 |
| | MEIM_Search | .924 | 2.531 | 2 | .282 |
| | MEIM_Affirm | .875 | 4.284 | 2 | .117 |
| | ME_Mastery | .766 | 8.510 | 2 | .014* |
| | ME_PerfApproach | .876 | 4.328 | 2 | .115 |
| | ME_PerfAvoid | .939 | 2.018 | 2 | .365 |
| | ME_SelfE | .944 | 1.859 | 2 | .395 |
| | ME_Bx | .985 | .494 | 2 | .781 |
| | ME_Affect | .947 | 1.754 | 2 | .416 |
| | ME_Cog | .919 | 2.714 | 2 | .257 |
| | POB | .962 | 1.256 | 2 | .534 |

Note. * $p < .05$. CDMSE = Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy Scale Short Form (Betz et. al., 1996). MEM = Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992). ME = Motivation and Engagement survey (Lee et. al., 2016); Subscales include Mastery, Performance Approach, Performance Avoid, Self-Efficacy, Behavioral Engagement, Affective Engagement, and Cognitive Engagement. Perceived Career Barriers (POB) adapted from the Perceived Barriers to Education and Career Scale Revised (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001).

Once the assumption of sphericity was met, the next step of the preliminary data analysis included running of reliability tests for all the scales to obtain mean scores, standard deviations, and Cronbach's Coefficients Alpha. Analyses revealed that the reliability coefficients for each scale generally ranged from .54 to .94. There were two subscales of the Motivation and Engagement Survey that were found to have less than sufficient internal reliability. The reliability coefficient for the Mastery Approach subscale pre-group (T1) is reported as ($\alpha = .35$) and the Engagement Behavior subscale post-group (T3) reliability is reported as ($\alpha = .25$). According to Lee et al., (2016), the survey, when used in the original study, reported a Cronbach's α range for goal orientations and self-efficacy as .74 to .89. For the behavioral component, the reported Cronbach's α in previous studies were .77 for behavioral, .83 for affective, and .77 for cognitive subscales. In comparison to another study where this scale was used, the reliability was found to range between .67 and .85 (Lee et. al, 2016). Although results on these two subparts of the scale were presented and interpreted, they must be done with caution as the above results indicate that they may be unreliable measures. However, this is only the case for certain time points. After conducting an individual item analysis, a pattern could not be detected to account for the low reliability. Therefore, to correct for this, a paired samples *t*-test analysis was conducted for the Mastery Approach subscale between T1 and T2 as well as the Behavior Engagement subscale between T2 and T3 instead of the ANOVA to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between means. All reliability coefficients for this specific study are reported in Table 2.

Table 2

Reliability Analysis

| Scale | Cronbach's Coefficients Alpha | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|------|------|
| | T1 | T2 | T3 |
| POB | .877 | .889 | .828 |
| CSE | .878 | .892 | .900 |
| MEIM_Total | .833 | .837 | .932 |
| MEIM_Search | .544 | .567 | .772 |
| MEIM_Affirm | .848 | .873 | .953 |
| Mastery Approach | .353 | .941 | .856 |
| Perf Approach | .727 | .857 | .882 |
| Perf Avoid | .858 | .828 | .781 |
| Self_Eff | .861 | .818 | .773 |
| Engage_Bx | .779 | .653 | .253 |
| Engage_Affect | .733 | .642 | .748 |
| Engage_Cog | .822 | .599 | .595 |

Note. Perceived Career Barriers (POB) adapted from the Perceived Barriers to Education and Career Scale Revised, (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001). Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy Scale Short Form (Betz et. al., 1996). MEIM = Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992). ME = Motivation and Engagement survey (Lee et. al., 2016). Subscales include Mastery, Performance Approach, Performance Avoid, Self-Efficacy, Behavioral Engagement, Affective Engagement, and Cognitive Engagement.

Descriptive Analysis

Mean scores and standard deviations for each variable at each time point was calculated and is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics

| Scale | M | | | SD | | |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | T1 | T2 | T3 | T1 | T2 | T3 |
| POB | 36.08 | 37.17 | 32.77 | 9.62 | 9.26 | 7.09 |
| CSE | 92.73 | 94.38 | 97.09 | 15.42 | 13.01 | 12.13 |
| MEIM_Total | 2.46 | 2.48 | 2.37 | 0.71 | 0.68 | 0.88 |
| MEIM_Search | 2.81 | 2.72 | 2.54 | 0.73 | 0.68 | 0.78 |
| MEIM_Affirm | 2.21 | 2.30 | 2.24 | 0.86 | 0.86 | 1.07 |
| Mastery Approach | 4.65 | 4.35 | 4.62 | 0.30 | 0.84 | 0.58 |
| Perf Approach | 2.81 | 3.40 | 3.40 | 0.95 | 1.11 | 1.05 |
| Perf Avoid | 3.26 | 3.56 | 3.08 | 1.10 | 1.18 | 1.04 |
| Self_Eff | 4.16 | 4.36 | 4.52 | 0.67 | 0.59 | 0.53 |
| Engage_Bx | 3.96 | 3.58 | 3.91 | 0.66 | 0.79 | 0.53 |
| Engage_Affect | 3.12 | 3.01 | 3.02 | 0.80 | 0.83 | 0.90 |
| Engage_Cog | 3.46 | 3.51 | 3.72 | 0.79 | 0.78 | 0.73 |

Note. Perceived Career Barriers (POB) adapted from the Perceived Barriers to Education and Career Scale Revised, (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001). Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy Scale Short Form (Betz et. al., 1996). MEIM = Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992). ME = Motivation and Engagement survey (Lee et. al., 2016). Subscales include Mastery, Performance Approach, Performance Avoid, Self-Efficacy, Behavioral Engagement, Affective Engagement, and Cognitive Engagement.

Next, correlation analyses were conducted to determine how related each scale was to the varying time points in which it was given. As reported, there were positive and negative correlations found. Positive correlations suggest that both variables change in the same direction as opposed to a negative correlation where they move in opposite directions (Coolidge, 2013).

Correlations for each scale, at each time point, is presented in Tables 4-6. Following in Tables 7-9 are the differences in correlations between each time point.

Table 4

Correlations Time 1

| Measure | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|--------------|----|------|------|-------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1.POB | -- | -.04 | .20 | .20 | -.13 | -.32 | .00 | .15 | .18 | .15 |
| 2.MEIM | | -- | .35* | -.43* | .05 | .28 | -.17 | -.15 | -.19 | -.11 |
| 3.CSE | | | -- | .21 | .04 | -.09 | .12 | .17 | .17 | .05 |
| 4.ME_Mastery | | | | -- | -.11 | -.15 | .51** | .51** | .37* | .24 |
| 5.ME_PerfApp | | | | | -- | .16 | -.04 | -.11 | .38* | -.29 |
| 6.ME_PerfAv | | | | | | -- | -.18 | -.42* | -.34 | .29 |
| 7.ME_SelfEff | | | | | | | -- | .81** | .57** | .44** |
| 8.ME_Bx | | | | | | | | -- | .72** | .22 |
| 9.ME_Affect | | | | | | | | | -- | .19 |
| 10.ME_Cog | | | | | | | | | | -- |

Note. Time 1 variables are on left column; Time 2 variables are on top row. * $p < .05$; ** $p < 0.01$. Perceived Career Barriers (POB) adapted from the Perceived Barriers to Education and Career Scale Revised, (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001). Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy Scale Short Form (Betz et. al., 1996). MEIM = Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992). ME = Motivation and Engagement survey (Lee et. al., 2016). Subscales include Mastery, Performance Approach, Performance Avoid, Self-Efficacy, Behavioral Engagement, Affective Engagement, and Cognitive Engagement.

Table 5

Correlations Time 2

| Measure | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|----------------|----|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1.POB | -- | -.14 | .25 | .39* | -.23 | -.06 | -.15 | -.04 | -.06 | .05 |
| 2.MEIM | | -- | -.34 | -.10 | .04 | -.11 | -.13 | .09 | -.10 | -.28 |
| 3.CSE | | | -- | -.09 | .20 | .49** | .14 | -.37* | -.39* | .04 |
| 4.ME_Mastery | | | | -- | -.27 | .48** | .20 | .28 | .23 | -.36* |
| 5.ME_PerfApp | | | | | -- | .54** | -.36* | -.29 | -.14 | .26 |
| 6.ME_PerfAvoid | | | | | | -- | .01 | .47** | -.22 | .44** |
| 7.ME_SelfEff | | | | | | | -- | -.06 | -.23 | .03 |
| 8.ME_Bx | | | | | | | | -- | .73** | -.06 |
| 9.ME_Affect | | | | | | | | | -- | .15 |
| 10.ME_Cog | | | | | | | | | | -- |

Note. Time 1 variables are on left column; Time 2 variables are on top row. * $p < .05$; ** $p < 0.01$. Perceived Career Barriers (POB) adapted from the Perceived Barriers to Education and Career Scale Revised, (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001). Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy Scale Short Form (Betz et. al., 1996). MEIM = Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992). ME = Motivation and Engagement survey (Lee et. al., 2016). Subscales include Mastery, Performance Approach, Performance Avoid, Self-Efficacy, Behavioral Engagement, Affective Engagement, and Cognitive Engagement.

Table 6

Correlations Time 3

| Measure | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|----------------|----|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|
| 1.POB | -- | -.05 | .04 | -.30 | -.05 | -.12 | -.30 | -.12 | .03 | -.25 |
| 2.MEIM | | -- | -.18 | -.14 | -.09 | -.17 | -.06 | .07 | .04 | -.35* |
| 3.CSE | | | -- | -.02 | .19 | .14 | .07 | -.10 | -.15 | .33 |
| 4.ME_Mastery | | | | -- | -.00 | .29 | .70** | -.07 | .26 | .15 |
| 5.ME_PerfApp | | | | | -- | .66** | -.08 | .11 | .10 | .20 |
| 6.ME_PerfAvoid | | | | | | -- | -.07 | .09 | .10 | .20 |
| 7.ME_SelfEff | | | | | | | -- | .00 | .11 | .40* |
| 8.ME_Bx | | | | | | | | -- | .57** | .13 |
| 9.ME_Affect | | | | | | | | | -- | -.03 |
| 10.ME_Cog | | | | | | | | | | -- |

Note. Time 1 variables are on left column; Time 2 variables are on top row. * $p < .05$; ** $p < 0.01$. Perceived Career Barriers (POB) adapted from the Perceived Barriers to Education and Career Scale Revised, (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001). Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy Scale Short Form (Betz et. al., 1996). MEIM = Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992). ME = Motivation and Engagement survey (Lee et. al., 2016). Subscales include Mastery, Performance Approach, Performance Avoid, Self-Efficacy, Behavioral Engagement, Affective Engagement, and Cognitive Engagement.

Table 7

Differences in Correlations T1-T2

| Measure | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|--------------|-------|--------|-------|------|--------|--------|-------|------|------|------|
| 1.POB | .45** | -.29 | .09 | .30 | .06 | -.16 | -.25 | .23 | .31 | .17 |
| 2.MEIM | .00 | .38* | -.14 | .05 | .06 | .02 | -.05 | .04 | -.01 | .13 |
| 3.CSE | .15 | -.27 | .28 | -.12 | -.18 | .09 | -.06 | .06 | .11 | .01 |
| 4.ME_Mastery | -.08 | -.27 | .24 | .11 | -.34* | -.26 | .23 | .19 | .14 | -.12 |
| 5.ME_PerfApp | -.25 | .32 | -.42* | -.02 | -.10 | -.31 | -.11 | -.07 | .02 | -.29 |
| 6.ME_PerfAv | -.18 | -.11 | .08 | -.27 | -.07 | .17 | .07 | -.11 | -.20 | .19 |
| 7.ME_SelfEff | -.28 | -.19 | -.08 | -.01 | -.45** | -.26 | .58** | .15 | .07 | .14 |
| 8.ME_Bx | -.12 | -.01 | -.16 | .03 | -.44** | -.41* | .37* | .39* | .24 | .01 |
| 9.ME_Affect | -.12 | -.05 | -.39* | .18 | -.45** | -.63** | .08 | .36* | .40* | -.16 |
| 10.ME_Cog | -.06 | -.68** | .15 | -.07 | -.10 | -.08 | .18 | .11 | .09 | .39* |

Note. Time 1 variables are on left column; Time 2 variables are on top row. * $p < .05$; ** $p < 0.01$. Perceived Career Barriers (POB) adapted from the Perceived Barriers to Education and Career Scale Revised, (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001). Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy Scale Short Form (Betz et. al., 1996). MEIM = Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992). ME = Motivation and Engagement survey (Lee et. al., 2016). Subscales include Mastery, Performance Approach, Performance Avoid, Self-Efficacy, Behavioral Engagement, Affective Engagement, and Cognitive Engagement.

Table 8

Differences in Correlations T2-T3

| Measure | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|--------------|-------|--------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|
| 1.POB | .50** | .08 | -.16 | .10 | -.26 | -.11 | .01 | .21 | -.04 | -.12 |
| 2.MEIM | -.30 | -.00 | -.15 | -.00 | .20 | .19 | -.16 | .28 | .11 | -.24 |
| 3.CSE | .28 | .04 | .36* | -.03 | -.01 | -.26 | .20 | -.17 | -.25 | .06 |
| 4.ME_Mastery | .39* | -.18 | .08 | .17 | -.06 | .19 | .12 | -.03 | .21 | .19 |
| 5.ME_PerfApp | .14 | .00 | -.18 | -.18 | .23 | .03 | -.21 | .32 | -.03 | -.12 |
| 6.ME_PerfAv | -.13 | -.15 | .07 | .14 | .04 | -.03 | .23 | -.02 | -.18 | .14 |
| 7.ME_SelfEff | -.19 | .35* | .23 | .30 | -.33 | -.15 | .48** | -.19 | -.06 | .19 |
| 8.ME_Bx | .11 | -.25 | -.05 | .03 | .10 | .15 | -.11 | .23 | .23 | .06 |
| 9.ME_Affect | .07 | -.47** | -.04 | .14 | .13 | .27 | -.20 | .14 | .30 | .14 |
| 10.ME_Cog | -.16 | .01 | -.29 | .15 | -.30 | -.30 | .15 | -.12 | -.20 | .24 |

Note. Time 1 variables are on left column; Time 2 variables are on top row. * $p < .05$; ** $p < 0.01$. Perceived Career Barriers (POB) adapted from the Perceived Barriers to Education and Career Scale Revised, (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001). Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy Scale Short Form (Betz et. al., 1996). MEIM = Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992). ME = Motivation and Engagement survey (Lee et. al., 2016). Subscales include Mastery, Performance Approach, Performance Avoid, Self-Efficacy, Behavioral Engagement, Affective Engagement, and Cognitive Engagement.

Table 9

Differences in Correlations T1-T3

| Measure | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|--------------|-------|------|------|------|-------|-------|------|------|-------|------|
| 1.POB | .47** | -.23 | -.03 | .10 | -.02 | -.17 | .07 | .18 | .29 | .25 |
| 2.MEIM | .08 | .08 | -.20 | .12 | .16 | .28 | -.00 | -.08 | .03 | -.10 |
| 3.CSE | .12 | -.10 | .17 | .10 | .03 | -.14 | .11 | -.13 | -.10 | .11 |
| 4.ME_Mastery | -.16 | -.07 | .28 | .22 | .08 | -.23 | .33 | -.04 | .10 | .12 |
| 5.ME_PerfApp | -.32 | .03 | .07 | .02 | .38* | .38* | -.25 | .01 | .20 | .07 |
| 6.ME_PerfAv | -.14 | .11 | .27 | -.04 | .13 | .28 | -.04 | -.20 | -.25 | .13 |
| 7.ME_SelfEff | -.22 | .21 | -.13 | .14 | -.36* | -.50* | .37* | -.09 | .17 | -.01 |
| 8.ME_Bx | -.20 | .20 | -.12 | .20 | -.23 | -.36* | .31 | .21 | .34* | -.07 |
| 9.ME_Affect | -.13 | .10 | -.11 | .10 | -.08 | -.10 | -.02 | .18 | .51** | -.08 |
| 10.ME_Cog | .25 | .20 | .07 | -.09 | -.34* | -.38* | .05 | -.23 | -.03 | -.05 |

Note. Time 1 variables are on left column; Time 2 variables are on top row. * $p < .05$; ** $p < 0.01$. Perceived Career Barriers (POB) adapted from the Perceived Barriers to Education and Career Scale Revised, (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001). Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy Scale Short Form (Betz et. al., 1996). MEIM = Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992). ME = Motivation and Engagement survey (Lee et. al., 2016). Subscales include Mastery, Performance Approach, Performance Avoid, Self-Efficacy, Behavioral Engagement, Affective Engagement, and Cognitive Engagement.

ANOVA and Repeated Measures T-test

A series of repeated measure ANOVA's were conducted to determine mean score differences between time points on career self-efficacy, ethnic identity, perceived career barriers, and student motivation and engagement. Results of the ANOVA's are reported on Table 10.

Table 10

Repeated Measure ANOVA and Effect Size Results for T1-T3

| Predictor | Sum of Squares | <i>df</i> | Mean Square | F | <i>p</i> | <i>partial η²</i> |
|-------------|----------------|-----------|-------------|------|----------|------------------------------|
| CSE | 329.49 | 2 | 164.74 | 1.21 | .31 | .04 |
| MEIM_Total | .24 | 2 | .12 | .24 | .79 | .01 |
| MEIM_Search | 1.31 | 2 | .66 | 1.61 | .21 | .05 |
| MEIM_Affirm | .16 | 2 | .08 | .11 | .90 | .00 |
| ME_PerfApp | 8.07 | 2 | 4.03 | 4.45 | .02* | .12 |
| ME_PerfAv | 3.98 | 2 | 1.99 | 1.87 | .16 | .05 |
| ME_SelfE | 2.20 | 2 | 1.10 | 5.72 | .00* | .15 |
| ME_Cog | 1.29 | 2 | .64 | 1.34 | .27 | .04 |
| ME_Affect | .25 | 2 | .13 | .29 | .75 | .01 |
| POB | 356.98 | 2 | 178.49 | 4.34 | .02* | .12 |

Note: * $p < .05$

Post Hoc Results

As a result of a significant ANOVA, post hoc testing was completed. Post hoc testing was done using pairwise comparisons to determine which means actually differed and to answer the research questions. Results are broken down by each research question.

Research Question 1

Career decision making self-efficacy. According to the results, there does not appear to be a significant difference in CDSE between pre-group and mid-group, mid-group and post-group nor between pre-group and post-group scores ($p > .05$). However, CDMSE actual mean scores did slightly increase between pre-group mid-group, and post-group scores. Table 11

reports the mean scores, the standard deviations, and the pairwise comparison result for each time point.

Table 11

Pairwise Comparisons for Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE)

| Variable | Time 1 | | Time 2 | | Time 3 | | Class Comparisons ^a |
|----------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------------------------------|
| | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | |
| CDMSE | 92.73 | 15.42 | 94.38 | 13.01 | 97.09 | 12.13 | None |

Note. ^aAll class comparisons noted had p values $< .05$.

Research Question 2

Ethnic Identity. According to the results, there does not appear to be a significant difference in ethnic identity between pre-group and mid-group, mid-group and post-group, nor between pre-group and post-group scores ($p > .05$). Additionally, there does not appear to be an increase in actual mean scores between pre-group, mid-group and post-group scores. Table 12 reports the mean scores, standard deviation and the pairwise comparison results for each time point.

Table 12

Pairwise Comparison for Multiple Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)

| Variable | Time 1 | | Time 2 | | Time 3 | | Class Comparisons ^a |
|----------|--------|-----|--------|-----|--------|------|--------------------------------|
| | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | |
| Total | 2.46 | .71 | 2.48 | .68 | 2.37 | .88 | None |
| Search | 2.81 | .73 | 2.72 | .68 | 2.54 | .78 | None |
| Affirm | 2.21 | .86 | 2.30 | .86 | 2.24 | 1.07 | None |

Note. ^aAll class comparisons noted had p values $< .05$.

Research Question 3

Student Motivation and Engagement. According to the results, a significant difference was found in student motivation and engagement between time points in certain constructs. Significant results were reported for the Performance Approach Orientation (ME_PerfApproach) subscale between pre-group and mid-group and between pre-group and post-group scores ($p < .05$). Scores between mid-group and post-group were not found to be statistically significant ($p > .05$). Results of the self-efficacy subscale (ME_SelfE) suggest that there was a difference in mean scores between pre-group and post-group scores ($p < .05$). However, no difference was indicated between pre-group and mid-group as well as between mid-group and post-group scores ($p > .05$).

To account for the low reliability found on the Mastery and Behavior subscales of the Motivation and Engagement Survey, a paired samples t-test was analyzed to determine mean differences for affected subscales. A significant difference was found between pre-group and mid-group mean scores on the Motivation and Engagement Mastery subscale $t(33) = 2.05$, $p < .05$ as well as between mid-group and post-group scores on the Behavior subscale $t(33) = -2.25$, $p < .05$. No other significant results were identified for student motivation and engagement as outlined in Table 13 which presents the mean scores, standard deviations, and pairwise comparison results for subscales and time points.

Table 13

Pairwise Comparison for Student Motivation and Engagement

| Variable | Time 1 | | Time 2 | | Time 3 | | Class Comparisons ^a |
|------------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------------------------------|
| | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | |
| Mastery | 4.65 | .30 | 4.35 | .84 | 4.62 | .58 | T1 > T2 |
| Perf_App | 2.81 | .95 | 3.40 | 1.11 | 3.40 | 1.05 | T1 < (T2 = T3) |
| Perf_Avoid | 3.26 | 1.10 | 3.56 | 1.18 | 3.08 | 1.04 | None |
| SelfE | 4.16 | .67 | 4.36 | .59 | 4.52 | .53 | T1 < T3 |
| Bx | 3.96 | .66 | 3.58 | .79 | 3.91 | .53 | T2 < T3 |
| Affect | 3.12 | .80 | 3.01 | .83 | 3.02 | .90 | None |
| Cog | 3.46 | .79 | 3.51 | .78 | 3.72 | .73 | None |

Note. ^aAll class comparisons noted had $p < .05$. Motivation and Engagement survey adapted from Lee et. al., 2016. Subscales include Mastery, Performance Approach, Performance Avoid, Self-Efficacy, Behavioral Engagement, Affective Engagement, and Cognitive Engagement.

Research Question 4

Perceived Career Barriers. Significant results were found for the Perceived Career Barriers scale. Mean differences were identified between pre-group and post-group and mid-group and post-group ($p < .05$). Mean differences were not identified between pre-group and mid-group scores ($p > .05$). However, although non-significant, the results indicate that POB mean scores did slightly increase between pre-group ($m = 36.08$) and mid-group ($m = 37.17$) then decreased for post-group scores ($m = 32.77$). Table 14 reports all of the mean scores, standard deviations, and the pairwise comparison results for each time point.

Table 14

Pairwise Comparison For Perceived Career Barriers (POB)

| Variable | Time 1 | | Time 2 | | Time 3 | | Class Comparisons ^a |
|----------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------------------------------|
| | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | |
| POB | 36.08 | 9.62 | 37.17 | 9.26 | 32.77 | 7.09 | T3 < (T1 = T2) |

Note. ^aAll class comparisons noted had *p* values < .05.

Conclusion

This chapter presented several statistical analyses, including descriptive statistics, correlation analyses, ANOVA results, and results from post hoc testing. Overall, results indicate mean differences between time points during the culturally responsive career development intervention. Regarding the first research question, statistical significance was not found between mean scores suggesting that career decision making self-efficacy scores did not significantly change during participation. However, an examination of actual scores between time points did result in a slight increase at each data collection period. Analysis of the second research question did not result in statistically significant evidence of mean score differences. Participant's ethnic identity scores did not change over time. Statistical significance was found for the third research question regarding student motivation and engagement in specific areas. Post hoc testing revealed differences between pre-group and mid-group and pre-group and post-group scores on the Performance Approach Orientation (ME_PerfApproach) subscale. Additional significance was found between pre-group and post-group scores on the self-efficacy subscale (ME_SelfE). Lastly, significant results were also found for the Engagement Behavioral subscale (ME_Bx) between pre-group and mid-group and between mid-group and post-group scores. No other

subscale of the motivation and engagement survey resulted in statistical significance. Regarding the last research question, statistical significance was identified between pre-group and post-group and mid-group and post-group scores when examining perceived career barriers.

These results provide initial support in suggesting that culturally responsive career development programs do impact career development of minority females especially in the areas of student motivation and engagement and perceived career barriers. Chapter 5 provides further explanation of the results as it relates specifically to career development of minority female youth and the work of professional school counselors. Chapter 5 also includes a discussion of limitations to the study and direction for future research.

Chapter Five

Discussion

College and career readiness is a prominent topic that is included in many school counseling curriculums. In assisting students to become career ready upon graduating high school, counselors should understand the diverse needs of the populations in which they serve. This suggests that cultural responsiveness is a necessity in meeting those needs. This study examined the impact of a culturally responsive career development intervention on career decision making self-efficacy, perceived career barriers, ethnic identity, and student motivation and engagement. The theoretical framework guiding this study was the social cognitive career theory which asserts that career choices are made as a result of the impact of a variety of variables that can encourage or impede career development (Lent et al., 1994). The intervention used in this study focused on how confident students were in making career related decisions, how they identified with their ethnic group, what career barriers they perceived, as well as how academically motivated they were. The intervention emphasized Bandura's four sources of information in which self-efficacy is developed: Mastery Experiences, Vicarious Learning Experiences, Verbal Persuasion, and Physiological Arousal. Most importantly, the study was grounded in cultural responsiveness, applying a cultural context to a school counseling career curriculum designed to address the career related needs of minority females. Research previously conducted found that culturally responsive programs offer great benefits to students of color such as academic achievement, increases in self-efficacy and increases in coping skills (Banks & Obiakor, 2015; Jackson et al., 2011; Lent et al., 2002).

In accordance with previous work, results of this study provided support for the use of culturally responsive career development programming with middle school minority females. The overall significance implies that there was change over time. Additional results indicate that change specifically occurred in perceived career barriers and student motivation and engagement. In contrast, significant change was not found in career decision making self-efficacy and ethnic identity. Although this study did not result in mean differences in every area examined, there are some relevant implications to discuss.

Research Question One

Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy

Pursuant to the first research question, this study examined whether there would be mean differences in career decision making self-efficacy during a culturally responsive career development program. The hypothesis that there would be positive mean differences between time points while participation in the program was not supported. Results of the ANOVA suggest that no significant differences were found indicating that mean scores did not differ between time points. Additionally, data analysis of the results of the CDMSE measurement used in the study resulted in a small effect size indicating that the study may not have had enough power to detect a significance. Increasing sample size should better assist with accurately detecting any significant changes. The current study consisted of 34 participants out of 58 eligible. In the future, particular attention should be paid to recruitment efforts to increase participation rate. In spite of the lack of statistical significance, it may be important to examine the actual mean scores of the participants over time.

Despite the results indicating no statistically significant difference, the average mean scores were $m = 92.73$ (T1), $m = 94.38$ (T2), and $m = 97.09$ (T3). Review of these scores reveals

that the self-efficacy levels increased over time for participants. For a practitioner, this would signal that, with continued efforts, it is possible for the intervention to have a significant impact on the career self-efficacy of the participants. The increase of mean scores over time indicates that the structure of the program may be conducive to supporting self-efficacy. As noted by the crosswalk found in Appendix B, the FLAME intervention was strategically designed around Bandura's sources of self-efficacy. Participants had the opportunity to interact with and participate in specific activities related to each source of information.

As suggested by Bandura, the FLAME program sought to increase career decision making self-efficacy through experiences that allowed students access to information needed to help build confidence in their career decision making. For example, vicarious learning experiences allowed students to learn from the experiences of women of color. These role models served as an example of future success and offered participants hope in their ability to make appropriate choices resulting in positive outcomes.

Participants also had the opportunity to participate in several mastery experiences that could have contributed to the increase in mean scores over time. Students participated in mock interviews and received constructive feedback on their interviewing skills which helped them become more confident in their ability to be successful in future job searches. Activities that contributed to the reframing of negative thoughts regarding themselves and future outcomes, such as the creation of vision boards, was utilized as a way to address the physiological arousal source. Normalizing anxiety regarding future career related decisions was critical to the student's increase in self-efficacy (Scott & Ciani, 2008). In addition, the feedback offered and information presented to the participants provided encouragement and motivation that could be utilized in future career decision making. It is likely that these experiences resulted in an increase in mean

scores although the change was not enough to be found statistically significant. These results both confirm and contradict earlier works on career decision making self-efficacy.

The reported results for this study mainly contradict earlier works as many studies report significant gains in career decision making self-efficacy after career related interventions. However, similar to this study, Kraus and Hughey (1999) examined CDMSE scores after participating in a career development intervention and did not find significant results. High school juniors were randomly assigned to two groups (treatment and control) with the treatment group receiving the career intervention. No significant results were found in career decision making self-efficacy nor career indecision between treatment and control groups.

In contrast to Kraus and Hughey (1999) where career decision making self-efficacy was not impacted by career interventions, there is research that indicates otherwise. Studies such as Falco and Summers (2017) and Glessner, Rockinson-Szapkiw, and Lopez (2017) did find significant results when examining the impact of a career development intervention on career decision making self-efficacy. Falco and Summers (2017) was very similar to this study in that they looked at gender issues, perceived barriers and utilized Bandura's sources of self-efficacy in the career intervention. Upon review of this particular study, there are a few noteworthy components of the intervention that could be utilized in FLAME in the future. For example, the sharing of positive affirmations about the participants were shared as way of incorporating verbal persuasions into the group. The FLAME program did cover positive self-image and other empowerment activities; however, the use of affirmations directly related to the career decision process is a great way to "give and receive positive feedback" as well as offer positive thoughts about individual group members (Falco & Summers, 2017, p. 7). Another useful component of the study was the use of short-term goals. FLAME was more future focused and did not allow for

students to set a more current career related goal which may have been helpful in practicing decision making skills. Although not consistent with the current study's findings, these studies offer support for the continued efforts of the FLAME intervention. As a result, researcher should continue to examine the structure of the program to see where modifications can be made to further strengthen the program.

Upon review of the actual interventions used in the group, the lack of direct career decision making focus was a noted concern. The career aspect was general in nature and incorporated within other aspects of the program; therefore, it may not have been explicitly addressed. The FLAME intervention was designed to address the career related needs of a minority population in a culturally responsive manner. Although the program was based on current literature about barriers for the minority female population, cultural factors to consider, and appropriate ways for addressing their needs, it is also important to understand the unique students within the group and their varying needs. Self-efficacy work may require different activities for those who may come into the program with a higher or lower levels of self-efficacy than others. In the field of education this is called differential instruction to ensure that you are accurately meeting the needs of all the participants (Shyman, 2011). Related to this study, students had the opportunity to explore careers, but did not have to make any career related decisions in terms of picking a career, choosing relative coursework, or post-secondary options. This could be included in a future program as a mastery experience where more opportunities for career decision making activities are included.

To strengthen the program, facilitators could take into consideration some of the following activities that will help build career self-efficacy. First, students can conduct career exploration that would include an interest inventory, research on various career options, college

research, and career salary. This information would lead participants to completing a career action plan. Completion of this plan would allow students to practice making career related decisions. As a result, students will then be able to create a short-term goal to be achieved within the time frame of the program with the anticipation of reaching a small level of success and ultimately providing them with a sense of accomplishment.

Second, the program should focus on identifying and creating protective factors and sources of encouragement for participants. Students should leave the program with an understanding of the career related resources available to them. Additionally, negative and self-defeating cognitions should be examined that may inhibit the development of self-efficacy beliefs. For example, self-defeating thoughts such as “I’m not good enough” or “I can never be this or I can never be that” often negatively impact career behaviors and decision making (Atta, Akhter, Shujja, Shujaat, 2013; Austin, Dahl, & Wagner, 2010). Students could utilize reflective journaling to identify those thoughts that may hinder career success. The program should attempt to challenge those negative career thoughts and provide students with opportunities to change those thoughts into a more positive narrative. The current FLAME program offered opportunities through vision boards, positive affirmations, and hearing the stories of minority women. However, effectively addressing negative thoughts may require more attention to and addressing of the student’s own personal thoughts, allowing for an increased focus on verbal persuasion. Another suggestion is to incorporate a job shadowing experience as a vicarious learning and mastery opportunity that could help bring together much of what was presented within the program. This experience would allow students to practice many career related skills as well as build confidence in decision making. Also, it could continue to assist in their successful career development and connect them to people who are currently in the job role.

Third, the program should include a mentoring component. Mentoring has been found to increase academic success, increase motivation, and decrease dropout rates (Hernandez et al., 2017). In regard to career development, many researchers suggest mentorship as a recruitment and retention strategy for minority females. For minority women, mentorship assists with socialization, networking, and relationship building. It is believed that socialization along with networking creates social capital that minority females can use when trying to advance their careers (Chang, Welton, Martinez & Cortez, 2013; Davis, Reynolds & Jones, 2011; Behar-Horenstein, West-Olatunji, Moore, Houchen & Roberts, 2012). With this in mind, minority female students may also benefit from mentoring experiences in building career self-efficacy. Mentoring relationships can be used as a vicarious learning experience that according to Bandura is a source of self-efficacy.

Lastly, an introduction to student wellness and coping with anxiety is worth including. Bandura (1999) suggests that anxiety weakens self-efficacy. Therefore, it would be beneficial for participants to deal with any anxious feelings related to career development and understand how their own personal wellness impacts their decision making. This could be accomplished through stress reduction activities, mindfulness activities, and/or the creation of a wellness wheel. Overall, the FLAME program can be modified to include more intense work on career decision making and be re-evaluated to offer support to the literature on the impact of culturally responsive programming on career decision making self-efficacy.

Research Question Two

Ethnic Identity

Utilizing the Multi-Ethnic Identity Measure, this study also examined the impact of a culturally responsive program on ethnic identity. The Multi-Ethnic Identity Measure examined

two factors: ethnic identity search (search) and affirmation, belonging, and commitment (affirmation). Search speaks to their level of engagement in learning about and participating in one's group (National Mentoring Research Center, 2019). Affirmation is the level of commitment students have towards their ethnic group. The second research question hypothesized that there would be positive change in mean scores of ethnic identities. Data analysis reveals that this hypothesis was not supported as mean differences were not found. ANOVA results indicated that the total mean scores ranged from 2.46 (T1) to 2.48 (T2) and 2.37 (T3), indicating no statistical change in scores between T1 – T3. Results further suggested a decline in mean scores from T1 (2.46) to T3 (2.37).

Phinney (1996) speaks to the stages of ethnic identity development and suggested that ethnic identity development is influenced by family, community, environment, and personal experiences. Young adolescents are typically in the initial stage where they have not given much thought to how they identify ethnically. This may be the case with participants in this study. It is possible that this intervention was the first time any thought was given to how they make meaning of and give value to their cultural group.

Although the main purpose of the program was not geared towards ethnic identity, there were components that spoke to their identification within their cultural group and could have strengthened that connection. An example is the use of role models. Yet, it appears that students did not have an increase in their ethnic identity during the program. Phinney (1992) found that ethnic identity was higher for college students than high school students and suggested that with an increase in age, ethnic identity may become stronger as students grow, mature, and age. This may suggest that scores could possibly be lower for middle school students if Phinney's findings are consistent with student development. It is also possible that participants did not have enough

time to process all of the information related to ethnic identity and make meaningful connections to their ethnic group as evidenced in the decrease of overall mean scores from T1 to T3. The purpose of the FLAME program was introductory in nature, therefore possibly implementing a follow up measurement offering students' additional time to process the knowledge obtained and connect that information to their own personal cultural groups would have been better in determining if there was growth in this area.

Many researchers report relationships between ethnic identity and self-efficacy (Booth, Abercrombie, & Frey, 2017; Gushue, 2006; Lewis et al., 2018; Ojeda et al., 2012, Phinney, 1992). According to Gloria and Hird (1999), ethnic identity is an important factor needed for career decision making. Ethnic group identification is seen as a source of strength which in turn builds self-concept and allows for an increased confidence in the ability to make career related decisions (Lewis et al., 2018). In the current study, researcher found that both ethnic identity and self-efficacy were not significantly different, which may support the notion that the two concepts are related and that one may impact the other. In this case, if positive ethnic identity is needed for effective career decision making as authors suggest, then it would make sense that neither of these factors were found significant in the current study. Consequently, the researcher suggests additional changes to the FLAME program that may help reinforce student's ethnic identification.

One such change is in the structure of the FLAME intervention. It may have been helpful to begin the program with more information about cultural groups and increased work on understanding how students identify with their own cultural group. For example, teachingtolerance.org offers many developmentally appropriate activities that could be included that will allow for a deeper exploration into ethnic identity. This would allow participants to

make mental connections between the program material being introduced and their own personal experiences. Examples of activities that could be included are: Identity Self-Portraits where students identify and visually represent their cultural beliefs, values, and interests; use of bibliotherapy with students understanding how they are similar to or different than the book characters and really examining their own cultural identity; My Multicultural self is where students identify different aspects of their identity that are important to them and then relate those aspects to their own culture while understanding how their culture contributed to who they are. Since much of this was missing from the intervention, it is possible that students may not have understood the survey questions being asked. Consequently, ethnic identity should be intentionally and directly addressed in future planning.

Research Question Three

Student Motivation and Engagement

Research question three referenced whether there would be a difference in mean scores in student's motivation and engagement during participation in a culturally responsive career development program. The hypothesis that mean scores would differ between time points during the culturally responsive career development program was supported, as ANOVA results indicate statistical significance in four of the seven subscales. The measure was comprised of three categories: goal orientation, self-efficacy, and engagement with supporting subscales for each category. The goal orientation category was considered as a motivational construct and consisted of mastery, performance approach, and performance avoidance. The engagement construct consisted of behavioral, affective, and cognitive. Mean score differences were found for at least one component of each category (goal orientation, self-efficacy, and engagement).

Specifically, significance was identified for the Mastery, Performance Approach, Self-Efficacy, and Behavioral Engagement subscales.

Mastery mean scores fluctuated between time points resulting in a decline from T1 to T2 and then an increase in T3. Mastery orientation is viewed as a direct effort to learn and understand new material, and it is the ability to master a concept through strategies and skills. In relation to this study, an explanation for the decline from T1 to T2 could be attributed to the information presented in the beginning of the program. The first half (weeks one and two) of the intervention was an introduction to some difficult material including courageous conversations about the struggles of minority females in the work force and possible barriers faced. This information could have contributed to students' decrease in how they perceived their ability and/or motivation to learn (Center on Education Policy, 2012). It may have been difficult for students to see past the negative impact that barriers could have on their future career development. In turn, it may have been equally as difficult to then link the importance of academic success to a future career barring the uncertainty of possible attainment. However, by the end of the program, mean scores returned to their original state.

The remaining thirteen weeks included access to pertinent career related knowledge, motivational work towards self-growth and experiential work that offered opportunities for students to build their self-confidence. This trend in scores implies that as students learned coping strategies and career development skills, their confidence in their ability to be successful returned or increased. More specifically, the increase in confidence allowed students to connect the information they learned in the program with their ability to be successful in the classroom. This could be due to their ability to reframe negative cognitions about school to more positive ones, or it could have been their ability to apply coping strategies directly to academic scenarios

within the classroom. For example, when learning how to overcome career barriers for future occupational success, students may have considered how they could apply those same coping strategies to their academic work. Therefore, this information could have resulted in a renewed level of school engagement.

Similarly, learning career development skills made it possible to connect current academic work with the ability to achieve future goals. The college readiness portion of FLAME addressed how students' academic achievement impacts future college and career opportunities. Upon learning this information, students were better able to connect how their level of motivation and engagement was linked to career development.

The same trend was found for the behavioral subscale which is the "conscientious completion of tasks" (Lee et al., 2015, p. 6). One possible reason for this decline could be the material that was presented between T1 and T2. A possible reason for this initial drop followed by a recovery in scores of mastery and behavior is that participants were introduced during week two to barriers in career attainment, issues regarding discrimination, the idea of double jeopardy, and the impact of gender and race intersection on future career choice and attainment. This may have been new information for students who never considered how race and gender is viewed as barriers to personal career choices. These discussions could have resulted in a period of disengagement as students work through how they can overcome barriers and be successful. Additionally, it may have been difficult to find meaning in how school and academic success will be beneficial after learning about career related barriers. The middle part of the program, weeks five through eight, included motivational aspects such as goal setting, positive self-image, and empowerment strategies. The remaining time in the group during weeks 10 through 14 was spent on practice and application activities. The increase in scores from T2 to T3 on the behavior

subscale could possibly be attributed to the skills and knowledge acquired in effectively dealing with barriers and having the ability to practice career related activities. The disengagement period was replaced with a renewed sense of motivation and engagement in pursuit of recently created career goals.

Results of this study is consistent with previous studies conducted on student motivation and engagement. Froiland and Worrell (2016) found in studying intrinsic motivation and engagement in a population of diverse high school students that motivation and engagement positively impacted academic achievement. They suggest that the relationship between motivation and engagement is especially true for minority students citing that “intrinsic motivation to learn provides the fuel for sustained engagement” (p. 332). To further this concept, sustained engagement leads to increased academic achievement resulting in more college and/or career options. This progression is crucial for students of color who have historically been subjected to negative experiences related to gaps in academic achievement. As suggested as a future addition to FLAME and confirmed by Froiland and Worrell (2016), adding a teacher report to the assessment of engagement will be beneficial in confirming significant change.

Abbott (2017) reports several ways to foster engagement in student development. This article specifically references middle school students as is the population used in FLAME. As noted in research, middle school tends to see a period of decline in student engagement and interventions such as FLAME can be used as counteractive measure (Abbott, 2017; Orthner et al., 2010; Woolley & Bowen, 2007) Valentine and Collins (2011) suggests that by providing meaningful learning experiences, middle schools become more engaged resulting in increased achievement levels. A study conducted by Orthner et al. (2010) on a middle school population after conducting a student engagement program (CareerStart) found a positive relationship

between the program and student engagement in class. Students were able to recall specific career related information learned within the curriculum. They further recalled how they were able to connect what they were learning with future careers. Orthner, Jones-Sanpei, Akos, and Rose (2013) conducted further research on the CareerStart program and found that that students who participated in the program had significantly higher levels of school engagement. Woolley and Bowen (2007) assert that environmental factors such as home life is associated with student engagement. Authors examined the relationship between student engagement and supportive home, school, and community environments and found that when minority students had supportive adults in these environments, the more engaged they were. It is FLAME's purpose to provide culturally relevant experiences that promote positive and healthy career development, which in turn will hopefully result in increased motivation and engagement. With further research and modifications, FLAME can better support students in this effort.

Despite the significance found on four sections of the motivation and engagement survey, there are suggested changes that could be made to the FLAME intervention that would further support the current findings. One suggestion is to include additional data such as student grades and teacher feedback to further confirm students' actual level of motivation and engagement. Also, ensuring that each of the concepts presented in the intervention can be related to academic achievement is important in improving student motivation and engagement (Curry, Belser, & Binns, 2013). For example, CareerStart is a career program that integrates career relevant skills and core course content. Each lesson utilizes career related examples and illustrations to teach required academic content (Orthner, Jones-Sanpei, Akos, & Rose, 2013). It is suggested that using the same strategy, connecting course content to career examples, can assist in improving student motivation and engagement. These suggestions could be incorporated to further confirm

the impact of a culturally responsive career development program on student motivation and engagement.

Research Question Four

Perceived Career Barriers

The Perceived Barriers Scale was used to identify perceived career barriers of participants. The hypothesis was that there would be mean differences between time points during participation in the career development program. Results indicate that mean differences were found. The mean score increased from T1 ($m = 36.08$) to T2 ($m = 37.17$). The mean score for T3 ($m = 32.77$) was lower than both T1 and T2. This indicates that participants started out with a certain level of perceived barriers. Similar to the motivation and engagement results, after participating in discussions around barriers, by T2, the number of barriers increased. However, by the end of the program, students' level of perceived barriers decreased from the original number.

In regard to the stable level of perceived barriers scores for T1 and T2, there are several possible reasons. At this developmental stage, students may not be fully aware of how their gender and race play a part in their future career development sparking an increase in knowledge of perceived career barriers that could be faced in the future. Information about barriers due to gender and ethnicity was specifically discussed during the several group sessions including weeks one, two, four, seven, nine, and 12. For example each role model presented on her own experience with career barriers and how they successfully achieved their career goals. Additionally, the beginning of the program (week two) began with a rich discussion on possible barriers they may face and how race and gender may impact their future career attainment. This exposure and exploration of these barriers may have resulted in a flat level of scores.

A different trend emerged as scores declined from T2 to T3. This component of the FLAME program from Weeks six to 13, allowed students to begin building confidence in their ability to still be successful despite possible barriers. There were several specific interventions that may have helped lower their perception of barriers they may face such as the interaction with role models, creations of positive vision boards, college and career readiness discussions, and mock interviews.

Role models that interacted with students, and who spoke about their specific strategies in the work force and barriers they faced was potentially beneficial. In particular, they ended with how they worked through some of those challenges and were still successful in their career attainment and trajectory. This is consistent with earlier research which has previously found that discussion of various barriers in addition to how to cope with those barriers can be effective (Jackson et al., 2006; McWhirter, 1997; & Quimby & O'Brien, 2004). Therefore, the FLAME intervention may have assisted students in gaining knowledge and skills that allowed them to reduce perceived barriers to their career development.

FLAME attempted to provide students with the attitudes, skills, and knowledge (ASK) needed to cope with future barriers. This was achieved through courageous conversations regarding stereotypes, racism, and discrimination; narratives from role models about how they overcame barriers; and participation in activities where necessary skills could be developed. Although there is a lack of literature specific to how culturally responsive programs impact perceived barriers, results from this study provide support for conducting culturally responsive career development programs and is consistent with earlier studies on perceived career barriers. For example, Jackson et al., (2006) reported that as perceived barriers increased, career aspirations decreased. Understanding what students perceive as barriers at this developmental

stage is important as they can be viewed as precursors to future career related decisions (McWhirter, 1997). It has been widely noted that perceived barriers negatively impact career self-efficacy as well as academic achievement and occupational attainment (Quimby & O'Brien, 2004). Career barriers are what distinguishes aspirations from expectations and ultimately attainment (National Association of Career Development, n.d.). In contrast, there are researchers who report a reversed perspective on perceived barriers suggesting that the more students of color perceive barriers, racism for example, the greater their self-efficacy (Rollins & Valdez, 2006). Lindley (2005) found that perceived career barriers was positively correlated with outcome expectations. The current study adds to the research regarding career barriers on minority middle school students. Further research is needed to continue to understand how perceived career barriers impact career development. Despite conflicting results regarding the impact of perceived career barriers, there are some suggestions that are agreed upon regarding minority students and career barriers.

Interventions that allow students to learn and understand what the barriers are prior to acquiring coping skills to deal with those barriers are proving successful in many areas of development (Jackson et al., 2006; Kenny et al., 2003). Particularly for females of color where many barriers exist, it is vital that they are provided with opportunities that address their unique career development needs (Betz, 2004; Falco & Summers, 2017). The FLAME intervention could continue to focus on activities that allow students to obtain and build coping skills that will serve them in their future career pursuits. Jackson et al. (2006) suggest focusing on problem solving, resiliency, and building positive motivational beliefs. All of these concepts can be easily incorporated into the FLAME program and emphasized through the existing activities.

Additionally, adding previously mentioned activities will also help participants continue building knowledge and skills that will further decrease future barriers to career attainment and success.

Upon further discussion of the results found in this study, another cultural factor that could be considered is the rural status of the participants. Although rural status was not a variable used in the study, it is important to note that the FLAME program was implemented in a rural school division and may have impacted results. Consequently, factors related to students from rural backgrounds have strikingly similar experiences to students who come from low socio-economic statuses and minority students. In fact, rural students face some of the same career related barriers as minority females. Achievement gaps resulting in low graduation rates, college attendance, and degree attainment are a few of those similarities (Means et al., 2016).

Upon further examination of a rural student population, additional barriers include lack of parental education and parental income, and fewer resources (Means et al., 2016). Additionally, often schools in rural locations are plagued with lack of resources, lack of highly qualified teachers, and lack of businesses and industry for career related experiences. These conditions are similar to those found in some regions of poverty which tend to be heavily minority populated. Kannapel and Flory (2017) suggest that geographic isolation is an impediment to preparing students for future career readiness. To think about isolation in a larger context suggests that the term isolation could represent both rural and minority students. Regarding location, rural students are geographically isolated from a variety of job opportunities, however, minority rural students may also find themselves isolated from their peers. Achievement gaps that are still evident in the K-12 educational structure tend to isolate students from their peers in terms of opportunities for success.

As the concept of college and career readiness continues to drive programs in public education, and as the work force becomes increasingly technologically advanced, the need for post-secondary education is evident. As a result, students are feeling additional pressure to pursue some level of educational training after high school. For minority rural students, pursuing post-secondary options has great implications. Students from rural areas may not have the financial means to pursue a college degree putting them at a possible disadvantage compared to their wealthier peers. In addition, pursuit of a degree through financial aid such as loans, could put an either further financial strain on the family. Furthermore, students who do attend a college or university have shown to experience many challenges upon enrollment (Kannapel & Flory, 2017). Each of these facts impact student's self-efficacy in career decision making.

Krumboltz suggests that behavior is guided by beliefs and how societal customs and rules are interpreted (Schnorr & Ware, 2001). Rural students often operate with limited exposure to career information, options, and experiences which impacts their career related behavior. Lack of resources is then internalized as an inability to reach career related goals. Krumboltz posits that the environment, in this case the environment is a rural location, heavily impacts career behavior. Experiences within this environment are what keeps students from being able to successfully make career related decisions and ultimately achieving their goals (Schnorr & Ware, 2001).

One aspect related to career behavior, decision making, and self-efficacy is career maturity which is how prepared students are to complete career related tasks required to make career related decisions (Anderson & Brown, 1997). Research has reported rural students as having lower career maturity (Sahu & Agarwal, 2016). However, there is conflicting results in the literature. According to Schnorr and Ware (2001) lower career maturity of minority students is a misrepresentation and leads to certain "assumptions and generalizations" which negatively

influences career behavior (p. 248). These assumptions and generalizations or stereotypes and acts of discrimination are some of the perceived barriers faced by minority rural students that hinder successful career development and lower career decision making self-efficacy. As a result, minority students from a rural environment are another population along with the minority female population examined in this study worthy of targeted career interventions. The needs of both populations are similar enough to where both groups would benefit from culturally responsive programming.

Although this study did not directly focus on the rural status of the students, it is an important characteristic that bears mentioning. Upon examination of ways to address career related needs of rural students, authors offer suggestions which are similar to those when working with minority students. However, Means et al. (2016) offers additional suggestions that may be additional components to the FLAME program in the future. For example, authors suggest that students need the opportunity to practice the information learned in the program. FLAME provided these opportunities through activities such as practicing public speaking and interviewing skills. What was missing was more “tangible” preparation (p. 564). Students need instruction on filling out job and college applications. FLAME participants were able to create resumes as a part of the program, but further practice is needed in ensuring that students know how to appropriately present themselves in the application process.

As suggested, financial constraint is an immediate concern for many students. Focusing more on the cost of college attendance and financial aid options are critical components. FLAME did provide a session on college options and invited a representative from the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia to present to students regarding the college process. However, focusing more on how to pay for college may be of benefit. Furthermore, to fully capture career

readiness and options available, other avenues must not be neglected. For example, students should have knowledge of military options, community college, apprenticeships, certificates, licensures, and high school dual enrollment or trade programs that lead to work. These options were not discussed as a part of the FLAME program and should be included to better provide a variety of career related options for students.

Overall the findings in this study provide positive support for the use of culturally responsive programming. Although significant results were not identified in every variable examined, enough evidence exists that future research is warranted. The current study utilized secondary data and therefore future research should take into account modifications to the intervention. Suggestions offered should be considered in continuation of the FLAME program to strengthen the overall program, expand the career focus, and ensure that variables are being measured accurately. One final suggestion that will help bring each component together is the use of digital stories. A digital story is a brief multimedia presentation that combines many elements such as pictures, music, and text (Radcliffe & Bos, 2013). These digital stories could be a culminating activity that allows students to express their gained knowledge and skills in a creative way. It can also be used as a way of examining growth and development and identifying areas that still need attention. Instructions should be created in such a way that presentations include ways for participants to share their experience relative to each of Bandura's four sources of self-efficacy. Along with recommendations to future research, evaluation of the intervention is suggested. Accountability is a major component of comprehensive school counseling programs requiring evaluation of programs to determine if they are successfully meeting the needs of the students. The intervention used in this study should be properly evaluated to ensure that it meets the needs intended. Currently, this project provided evidence that mean score differences did

exist during a culturally responsive program between pre-group, mid- group, and post-group scores in student motivation and engagement and in perceived career barriers. However, measures used in the future should be examined for reliability, developmentally appropriateness, and overall effective measurement of construct.

The variables examined in this study, career decision making self-efficacy, ethnic identity, student motivation and engagement, and perceived career barriers are considered person and contextual variables according to social cognitive career theory. However, other variables have to be taken into consideration when discussing this population. Person inputs such as gender and race along with contextual variables such as culture and environment are all important factors contributing to effective career development (Fouad & Byars-Winston, 2005). SCCT suggests that the cyclical interaction of person, environment, and behavior are what drives career development. The variables examined in this study all influenced how the students cognitively interpreted their ability to achieve career related success. Further, the environment or culture in which the students live heavily influenced their beliefs about career choices and attainment. Lastly these factors also impacted their behavior resulting in whether they will be successful at making career related decisions and executing career related tasks. Lent et al. (2016) speaks to many of the activities that were implemented in the FLAME program as ways to address the career needs of minority female students. They suggest addressing barriers and offering strategies to “prevent or manage” barriers (p. 290), they further suggest including activities that help foster growth in self-efficacy. They speak to not only focusing on interests and values but also on the cognitive aspects behind the interests and values (Lent et al., 2016). Furthermore, they speak to culturally responsive interventions that allow for discussions around racism and discrimination, providing encouragement and empowering participants to expand and

pursue career options, and providing role models that help build self-efficacy. All of the above mentioned suggestions were vital components of the FLAME intervention. However, with suggested modifications, this program can be enhanced to more effectively address the career development needs of minority female students. Continued research efforts are also needed to confirm what those needs are and the best intervention methods for counselors use.

Limitations

Despite best efforts, there are additional limitations to the study that require mention. The first limitation is that the sample population was not randomly selected but was purposely chosen for convenience. The current study is an extension of an existing program and therefore used the sample population and data that was accessible. The second limitation is the number of participants. The current study consisted of 34 students, however there were 58 eligible. It should be noted that there may have been differences in students that chose to participate versus those who did not. The third limitation is student absenteeism. The program conflicted with sport practices and games resulting in missed meetings for some students. As a result, students were not able to fully experience the program in its entirety. Every effort was made to provide students with a summary of information missed. In addition, every effort was made to administer surveys from missed data collections shortly thereafter. Another limitation is the lack of Hispanic representation in the program. Students were exposed to many role models, with most of them being African American females. Future research should include intentional efforts to provide a diverse group of role models so that a more diverse perspective is gained. However, views from other ethnic groups were included in discussion and activities. Regarding data collection, there was the potential for students to skip questions or to mark answers without giving thought to the questions. Facilitators took time to explain the importance of reading each question and

answering honestly. For this age group, the number of surveys may have been overwhelming which may have resulted in the limitation of marking answers without completely reading the questions. Future research should consider the number of surveys administered for this population. To assist with some of the above-mentioned limitations, researchers attempted to collect data from each participant in a timely manner. Incentives were offered for perfect attendance and completion of every assessment.

Other limitations include threats to the validity of the study. One of the major threats to this study was a testing threat where participants' scores on posttest may improve merely by having taken a pretest. Another threat previously mentioned is participant's effect where participant's answer questions out of social desirability or if other students are observed simply marking answers, other students may follow suite. In addition, history or maturation cannot be ruled out. Experiences could have occurred throughout the intervention that may have impacted students' knowledge or awareness outside of the intervention that in turn may have impacted posttest scores. Lastly, the intervention should be fully evaluated in content and structure to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the participants and provides adequate focus on each of the constructs intended. Despite the limitations and due to the scarcity of current research with this population, this project should spark additional studies that support the need for culturally responsive work with minority females while in middle school.

Implications

The results of this study show promise for continuing to pursue research in the area of career readiness for minority female students. Data show that mean differences occurred during participation in a culturally responsive programming. This provides many implications for practitioners (school counselors), administrators, and policy makers.

Practitioners: School Counselors

College and career readiness have become a major component in educational curriculum. Career development, specifically, is also one of the three domains in which school counselors operate. The ASCA National Model provides school counselors with a framework for implementing comprehensive school counseling programs used to address career development needs. A comprehensive program is designed to provide developmentally appropriate interventions that meets the needs of all students. However, it does not speak to how these interventions should be constructed so that they are culturally responsive (Howard, Solberg, Kantamneni, & Smothers, 2008). School counselors must, themselves, participate in trainings and professional development to ensure that they are competent in their ability to provide culturally responsive counseling. Multicultural competent school counselors are critical in ensuring that minority students are exposed to experiences that provide “equal levels of success” (Howard et al., 2008, p. 271). In order to effectively address the needs of minority students, females in particular, one must address the ever-present disparity between students of color and their White peers (Garcia & Weiss, 2017). Much of the discussion around achievement gaps have been centered around the impact that environmental and cultural influences have on student achievement. However, consideration should also be given to ideas such as disparities in resources, funding, academic preparation, school experiences and such. Educational professionals, to include school counselors, should examine how effective they are in working with diverse students. This study, among others, suggest the need for culturally relevant work that makes learning experiences more meaningful and effective for students of color (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Gay (2002) offers six dimensions of culturally responsive teaching that, when summarized, share that culturally responsive teaching should:

- Be socially and academically empowering by setting high expectations
- Be multidimensional engaging cultural knowledge, experiences, contributions, and perspectives
- Validate every student's culture
- Be socially, emotionally, and politically comprehensive seeking to educate the whole child
- Be transformative using students' existing strengths to drive curriculum design
- Be emancipatory and liberating from oppressive educational practices and ideologies

Ladson-Billings (1994) also offers a definition of culturally relevant pedagogy as instruction “that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 16). Although cultural relevant pedagogy has been discussed in the academic realm, there isn't evidence of the same conversations happening in school counseling in terms of what culturally responsive interventions look like.

According to Nakkula, Danylchuk, Miller, and Tamerler (2008), research in the early 2000's suggested that school counselors desired to increase the time they spent on career development. In 2019, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is intended to address equity issues surrounding access and participation for traditionally underserved populations (Malin, Bragg, & Hackmann, 2017). ESSA emphasizes the need to improve how students are prepared to transition to college and the workforce. It is important to note that this act gives states the power to decide what post-secondary preparation looks like and the opportunity to reform their programs and practices as they see fit. Many educational systems offer a combined view of college and career readiness with much of the effort being focused on college (Malin et al., 2017). The impact of a career development program is often lost in the college and career

readiness preparatory efforts. However, it is widely known that successful employment will be focused on an increase in educational status and workforce training (Tamborini, Kim, & Sakamoto, 2015; Torpey, 2018). This signals a great need to closely align what college and career readiness preparation looks like for students. Conley (2012) suggests that although college and career readiness are similar, they are separate components, and both are equally important. Therefore, the importance of career development in our minority female students cannot be underestimated in preparing them for the future workforce. As suggested by Malin, Bragg, and Hackmann (2017) school systems should go beyond ESSA's minimal requirements and specifically examine underrepresented groups such as students of color, gender, and first-generation college students when addressing barriers that may negatively impact access to or participation in necessary college and/or career related programs, coursework, or activities. School counselors, as agents of change, are at the forefront of leading such a charge. In their advocacy work, school counselors are tasked with reducing barriers such as systemic policies and practices that have historically hindered students of color from pursuing advanced course work or being limited to career and technical tracks that have been viewed as less rigorous than other tracks. In addition to advocacy, they must then create opportunities for students to gain the necessary attitude, knowledge, and skills needed to meet the career readiness expectation. This requires the implementation of culturally responsive programs that meet career developmental needs. Similar to the FLAME intervention, school counselors should collaborate with Career and Technical Education Directors in implementation of such programs as it is possible that career and technical funds could be used to fund the intervention. Providing funding for the program could reduce participation barriers such as transportation and field trip costs and allow for a more meaningful experience.

Similar to this intervention, culturally responsive programming has been found to be a critical part of the career development of minority females. Nakkula et al. (2008) suggests that there are not one size fits all models when it comes to effective interventions for students of color. Howard et al. (2008) report that comprehensive school counseling programs result in positive outcomes such as increases in grades, test scores, positive school climate, and increased school engagement. However, what was not found was a decrease in the achievement gap between students of color and White students. These findings continue to support the need for tailoring career development interventions to the specific population (Trusty et al., 2005). Howard et al. (2008) reviewed several meta-analyses of career intervention efficacy and found that school-based career interventions were effective, especially at the middle school level. It is further suggested that these career interventions are made even stronger when a cultural context is applied. Social cognitive theory and social cognitive career theory are two salient theories to assist in this effort. The intervention used in this study utilized the four sources of building self-efficacy when creating each session. Hanover Research (2012) submitted a report on effective career awareness and development programs for K-8 students and offered that mentoring and contextualized learning, along with others, are important components to include in a middle school career development program. Jackson et al. (2011) also report that incorporating Bandura's sources of self-efficacy is positively associated with increased interest in career related tasks. Although this study only found significance in areas of student motivation and engagement and perceived career barriers, there is much data that continues to support the use of culturally responsive career interventions with minority females. There is still great need to continue this line of research, with this population so that school counselors can have access to evidence based practices that will better ensure that these students are college and career ready.

In doing so, as career interventions have been shown to impact achievement, also reducing achievement gaps. The promising results of this study helps to offer research on a topic and a population that is currently lacking in the current literature. Jackson et al. (2011) confirm that most research has been based on college and high school students, leaving a gap in the literature regarding middle school students. Most research on career development points to middle school as a crucial time in development for improving career self-efficacy (Glessner et al., 2017). Therefore, the career development of middle school minority female population studied in this project is an area in need of further examination through empirical research.

School Administrators

As school systems craft what career development looks like on a local level, they should insist that cultural responsiveness be a part of the discussion and the plans. This can be done in a variety of ways. First, administrators should know and understand the research behind cultural responsiveness and its impact. Research reveals that cultural responsive pedagogy results in positive outcomes such as academic achievement and persistence, improved attendance, and greater interest in school (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Dee & Penner, 2016). New America, an organization designed to assist in innovative resolutions to today's educational challenges, offers eight competencies that promote culturally responsive teaching (Muniz, 2019). One of the competencies is to identify and correct issues within the system. This means reducing barriers to student success. Administrators on the school level should review practices, procedures, and policies to ensure that all students have access to and representation in programs and experiences that build career self-efficacy. Integrating cultural responsiveness in all aspects of the school's daily operations helps to recognize and address barriers.

Focusing on culturally responsiveness in the career domain could have far reaching impact on other student outcomes. Researchers suggest that cultural responsiveness starts with a belief that all students are capable of success. Administrators should support that notion and make it a focus of the building. An all students can succeed mentality allows counselors and educators to provide instruction that mimics that philosophy. The positive impact of cultural responsiveness is widely known and is reflected in studies such as the ethnic studies curriculum study conducted by Dee and Penner (2016). This study examined the impact of an ethnic studies course on at risk ninth grade students from diverse backgrounds. Authors found that students who participated in the culturally responsive course had significant better outcomes in attendance, gpa, and credits earned. This type of research, according to Dee and Penner (2016) “emphasized the capacity of CRP to unlock the educational potential of historically marginalized students” (p. 24).

Specifically related to careers, there is the idea of curriculum integration where career education is embedded into the core curriculum. Curriculum integration allows students to make real life connections to the material while also allowing for practical application of knowledge (Curry, Belser, & Binns, 2013). Integrating career curriculum into core curriculum is especially useful if career readiness is used as an accountability measure for accreditation. Therefore, it would be beneficial for administrators to encourage cultural responsive pedagogy among all faculty.

This study has the potential to offer school systems an evidence-based practice that will help in a variety of ways. First, it allows schools to meet the requirements of ESSA and state career readiness mandates. Second, it provides targeted interventions for better academic outcomes to help with achievement gaps. Third, it can assist in state accountability measures, if

career is used as one of the indicators. Lastly, it offers an opportunity to reshape curriculum that is more meaningful and relevant for students of color. Learning takes place when students can connect with the material. Culturally responsive teaching and programming offers the needed opportunities for those connections.

Policy Makers

The American School Counselors Association (ASCA) should consider how to provide a direct focus on cultural responsiveness pedagogy in school counselor's work. ASCA offers in its positions statements guidance on how to understand and appreciate cultural diversity (ASCA, 2015). They also share the importance in incorporating culturally responsive interventions. However, what is missing is providing counselors with practical strategies to carry out this ideal. School counselors lack the guidance on how to effectively implement cultural responsiveness throughout the comprehensive school counseling program. School counselors question what these services should look like in the school, in the classroom, and in the counseling office. Although culturally relevant pedagogy has been discussed in the academic realm, there isn't evidence of the same conversations happening in school counseling, in terms of the development and implementation of culturally responsive interventions.

The ASCA National Model is a framework used often by practicing school counselors, to guide creation and implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs. The model offers four components of a comprehensive school counseling program: foundation, management, delivery, and accountability. The delivery component is where culturally responsive interventions would be discussed. However, upon review of the model, a direct focus on culturally responsive programming is missing. The model suggests that the interventions should meet the needs of students and be developmentally appropriate, it does not offer any

reference to cultural relevance. This may be the case for school counseling education programs as well.

Curriculum that teaches cultural responsiveness is not found in school counseling programs. School counseling educators and accrediting bodies should be intentional about incorporating cultural responsiveness into school counseling standards. Many graduate level programs offer courses in multiculturalism and social justice and advocacy. However, they do not have a direct focus on preparing future school counselors on how to deliver culturally responsive programming. Therefore adding instruction on cultural responsive programming is warranted for effective incorporation into comprehensive school counseling programs.

Another relevant policy maker is the Department of Education. Similar to how school systems are required to document how they are providing targeted academic interventions to underrepresented students and underperforming students, the same concept can be applied to career development. Creating a way to hold systems accountable for this work is a way to ensure that it is considered and implemented with fidelity. Career and technical education programs should support teachers in how to teach their content in a culturally responsive way. In fact, states should include culturally responsive teaching (CRT) and strategies into all teaching and counseling standards. A 50 state survey of teaching standards found that while all states do incorporate some aspects of CRT, the standards are not clear or comprehensive (Muniz, 2019). The report indicates that a follow up or evaluative measure to ensure that practices being followed is needed.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are many options for future research regarding this study. First, the author suggests replicating the study with a few adjustments to the intervention itself. As noted in the limitation

section, it is important to make sure that the program meets the needs of all participants. Facilitators should make sure that there is representation from a diverse pool of women of color and not just African American women. To continue to support career self-efficacy, the intervention should have a strong emphasis on career related tasks that allow for successful experiences. In addition, the fidelity of the program should be examined to ensure that the program is being implemented according to protocol ensuring accurate data. Specifically, the way in which the program is delivered, the expertise of the facilitators, and the manner in which the data is collected should be reviewed. Second, to strengthen the design of the study, future studies could include the use of a control group to control for any confounding variables. A control group would help support the magnitude of any effect found. Third, a replicated study could examine the interaction between variables. This would allow researchers to understand how each variable (career self-efficacy, ethnic identity, perceived career barriers, and student motivation and engagement) impacts the other. The current study simply examined whether a difference was found and if so, identified which variables were different. Additional research could examine those differences, further identifying how each variable relates to one another. Fourth, a longitudinal study may be beneficial to look at the long-term effects of participation in the study. A longitudinal study would allow the researcher to look at career behavior over time and its impact on such things as academic achievement, post-secondary plans, college enrollment, and career attainment. Additionally, a qualitative component could be added to strengthen the results of the study. Using students' narrative about their experience in the intervention may provide meaningful information and support any significant results. Hearing from the participants could allow for a deeper analysis of results and provide recommendations for future areas of research. Lastly, possibly examining the impact of a culturally responsive

program in an urban versus a rural environment. Due to economic resources, business partnerships, and access to a variety of employment options, results may differ based upon geographical location and environment.

Conclusion

This study offers promising results for the use of culturally responsive career development interventions with minority female youth. The minority female population is one that is scarce in the literature yet deserving of our focus and attention. This study adds to this gap in the literature by examining a culturally responsive program that, with modifications, can be used in comprehensive school counseling programs. With the increasing diversity of the nation's population and workforce, it is clear that cultural responsiveness is a critical component of educational practices. Students of color, with many of them being female, will be a major addition to the future workforce. As a result, the negative impact that cultural barriers such as racism and discrimination, achievement gaps, lack of resources, lack of support, lack of career related knowledge and others, will have on the economy cannot be ignored. As school systems continue to reform their curriculum to align with college and career readiness standards as put forth by ESSA, it is imperative that school counselors utilize this opportunity to strengthen their comprehensive programming. School counselors must be intentional in their work to closing the gap and meeting the needs of all students. Each of the three counseling domains require equal attention and career development is one that is receiving growing attention. Positive outcomes related to effective career development is clearly delineated in the literature and offers counselors means of implementing programs targeted to students of color. Preparing students for the world of work in the 21st century requires them to have the necessary skills needed to be competitive in a job market. It also means exposing students to the wide array of career options

available to them despite their gender or race. It means reducing barriers currently in place that keeps female students of color from taking the necessary course work or participating in the necessary programs needed to obtain the educational credentials for the careers sought. It also means equipping female students of color with the necessary experiences that build their career decision-making self-efficacy, leading to confidence in their ability to attain their career of choice. School counselors, through culturally responsive comprehensive programming, can work towards equitable career development services that will result in positive career outcomes for minority women in the future.

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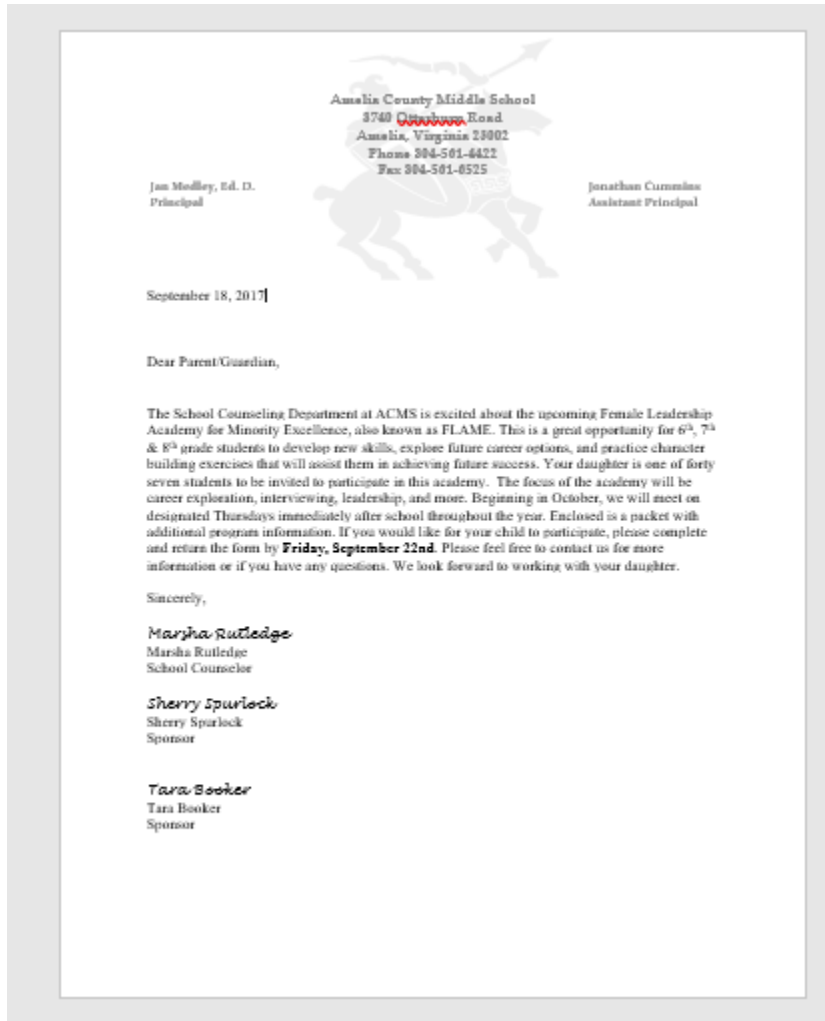
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Appendices

Appendix A. FLAME Registration Packet





Student Name: _____ Grade Level: _____

D.O.B.: _____ Age: _____

Parent Name:

_____ Father Phone: _____

_____ Mother Phone: _____

Student cell no: _____

Mailing Address:

Parent email: _____ Student email: _____

Race/Ethnicity:

Black or African American

Native American/Indian

Hispanic/Latino

Other: _____

Asian



Please note that students must have their own transportation and be picked up from each meeting promptly at 4:45 p.m. This program is free of charge, but may require occasional funds for meals. Students are expected to fully participate and attend each session. Meetings will be held on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month except for October where we will meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursday.

I have reviewed the guidelines and FLAME information and I give permission for my daughter to participate. I understand that I am responsible for picking my child up promptly at 4:45 on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month unless otherwise noted.

Parent Signature

Date

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY:

.....

| | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> SES | <input type="checkbox"/> SPED | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Other factor</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LEP | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | _____ |



Guidelines:

- Students must be in the 6th, 7th or 8th grade
- Students must identify as a minority
- Students can identify with other criteria that will need to be documented such as: **[please mark any and all that may apply]** Information will be kept confidential!
 - Single parent household
 - Low socio-economic status
 - Migrant family
 - Homeless
 - Educational disability
 - Physical disability
 - Unemployed parent
 - LEP
 - Non-traditional household

Meeting dates:

- 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month – ACMS Library – 3:05 – 4:45

Sponsors:

- Marsha Rutledge, Sherry Spurlock, Tara Booker



Program description:

The purpose of the Female Leadership Academy for Minority Excellence (FLAME) is to foster growth and development in the area of career exploration and leadership. The academy provides students with career related knowledge and tools in which they will apply in practice exercises. The ultimate goal is to empower these young women to become future leaders in their career of choice. Students are introduced to the barriers and obstacles faced as a result of gender and race. They will also gain valuable information regarding career exploration, resume writing, and interviewing skills. Students will participate in mock interviews and job shadowing experiences where they will receive valuable feedback that will help in future job searches.

Program goals:

- Students will explore potential career options
- Students will understand how race and gender may effect career options
- Students will understand the job search and application process
- Students will research and meet prominent women in particular career fields
- Students will define and understand the concept of leadership development
- Students will seek to increase self-efficacy regarding becoming future leaders in their field of choice
- Students will understand how self-esteem, personal values, and positive image impacts the hiring process



Data collection & program evaluation: (Data will be collected on each participant and will include, but not limited to, the following items)

- Pre/Post Test
- Student program evaluation
- Facilitator program evaluation
- Career Interest Inventory
- Self-efficacy scale
- Grades
- Discipline
- Attendance
- Parent report
- Teacher report



Schedule of events: (Dates and topics are subject to change)

| First Semester | Second Semester |
|--|---|
| October 5th Program Introduction Pre-testing Icebreakers Career/Leadership background Info Activity | January 11 Guest - Sandra Parker |
| October 18th Career/Leadership background Info Self-efficacy Stereotypes & obstacles Racial identity development College/Career Aspirations Activity | January 25 Guest - Nedra Banks |
| Oct. 27th - JMU Trip | February 8 Guest - Longwood Career Services |
| November 8 Guest - Sandra Parker | February 22 Resume Writing Interviewing Skills |
| November 30 Mid-program evaluation Career Interest Inventory | March 8 Guest - Pat Smith |
| December 14 Guest - Megan Clark | March 22 Mock Interviews |
| | April 12 Guest - Fabima Smith |
| | April 28 Interview Review Program Review Post Testing |

Appendix B

FLAME Session Content

| FLAME Session | Intervention/Content | SCT Alignment | SCCT Alignment | Type of Engagement |
|----------------------|--|--|--|---|
| 1 | Program Overview Data Collection | Verbal Persuasion Emotional State | Choice Interest Performance | Cognitive Emotional Behavior |
| 2 | Discussion on barriers and self-efficacy | Verbal Persuasion | Choice Interest Performance | Cognitive Emotional |
| 3 | College/Career Readiness Role Model | Vicarious Learning Experience Verbal Persuasion | Choice Interest | Behavior Cognitive |
| 4 | Role Model | Vicarious Learning Experience Verbal Persuasion | Interest | Cognitive |
| 5 | Goal Setting | Verbal Persuasion Mastery Experience | Cognitive Performance | Behavior Cognitive |
| 6 | Positive Self-Image | Verbal Persuasion Emotional State | Performance | Cognitive Behavior Emotional |
| 7 | Role Model | Vicarious Learning Experience Verbal Persuasion | Interest | Cognitive |
| 8 | Girl Empowerment | Verbal Persuasion Mastery Experience | Performance | Cognitive Emotional |
| 9 | Role Model Mid data collection | Vicarious Learning Experience Verbal Persuasion | Interest | Cognitive Behavior |
| 10 | Career Exploration | Verbal Persuasion Mastery Experience | Choice Performance | Cognitive Behavior |
| 11 | Career Readiness | Master Experience Verbal Persuasion | Choice Performance | Cognitive Behavior |
| 12 | Role Model | Vicarious Learning Experience Verbal Persuasion | Interest | Cognitive |
| 13 | Mock Interviews | Mastery Experiences Verbal Persuasion | Performance | Behavior Cognitive |
| 14 | College Readiness Role Model | Vicarious Learning Experience Verbal Persuasion | Choice Interest Performance | Behavior Cognitive |
| 15 | <i>College Readiness Review of Program Final data collection</i> | <i>Verbal Persuasion Emotional State</i> | <i>Choice Interest Performance</i> | <i>Behavior Cognitive Emotional</i> |

