

2022

Career Attainment in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Program

Asia Jones
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu.

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Asia C. Jones

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Gregory Hickman, Committee Chairperson,
Human and Social Services Faculty

Dr. Lamart Hightower, Committee Member,
Human and Social Services Faculty

Dr. Richard Rogers, University Reviewer,
Human and Social Services Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2022

Abstract

Career Attainment in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Program

by

Asia C. Jones

MA, Walden University, 2016

BS, East Carolina University, 2013

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Human and Social Services

Walden University

May 2022

Abstract

People who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent often find it difficult to financially provide for themselves and their family. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 provides career counseling to U.S. youth ages 16-24 as they obtain job training and work on their general equivalency diploma (GED). Although researchers have examined different aspects of the program, they have not yet explored the experiences of participants. The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to understand the experiences of WIOA participants who earned their GED and worked with their career counselor to achieve their goals. Social cognitive theory was used to understand how career development relates to a person's commitment to reach their career goal. Data were obtained by interviewing 10 previous WIOA participants who earned their GED and gained employment; participants, who participated in North Carolina's WIOA program, were recruited using purposeful sampling. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded. Seven themes emerged: barriers and decisions related to environment, family as a barrier and support, career attainment and satisfaction, school-related barriers, goal setting and values, barriers related to criminal activity, and WIOA benefits and recommendations. Further research from the WIOA career counselors' point of view could provide additional insights on the program. This study's implications for positive social change include furthering WIOA career counselors' understanding of effective strategies to help participants gain employment. The study may also inform program participants of how to work with WIOA counselors to achieve their goals.

Career Attainment in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Program

by

Asia C. Jones

MA, Walden University, 2016

BS, East Carolina University, 2013

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Human and Social Services

Walden University

May 2022

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Courtney, and children, Mark, Layah, and Evan, who I consider my motivation. I also want to dedicate this dissertation to my loving parents who pushed me to keep going. They have uplifted and encouraged me throughout this journey, and for that I am forever grateful.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank my family and closest friends who encouraged me with love throughout this journey to obtain my doctorate. I am forever grateful to my parents who kept my children while I worked on obtaining my degree. I want to thank my children for being understanding when I needed some quiet time to work on this dissertation. Thanks to Dr. Hickman and Dr. Hightower for their continued support and guidance to ensure my success. I am so grateful to my dissertation family, who encouraged me each term and were always willing to help me along the way.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	v
List of Figures	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Background.....	3
Problem Statement.....	5
Purpose of the Study.....	6
Research Question	6
Theoretical Framework.....	6
Nature of the Study.....	8
Definitions.....	9
Assumptions.....	10
Scope and Delimitations	10
Limitations	10
Significance.....	11
Summary	12
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	13
Literature Search Strategy.....	15
Theoretical Foundation	15
Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts	19
History of Education in Colonial America and the United States	19
An Overview of High School Dropout in the United States.....	23

Factors Contributing to High School Dropout From a Human Ecology Perspective	25
Prevention of High School Dropout	32
Job and Careers Opportunities for Individuals Who Drop Out of High School	36
The GED Program	39
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.....	47
Summary and Conclusions	57
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	60
Research Design and Rationale	60
Role of the Researcher	63
Methodology.....	65
Participant Selection Logic.....	65
Instrumentation	66
Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection.....	68
Data Analysis Plan.....	71
Issues of Trustworthiness.....	72
Credibility	72
Transferability.....	72
Dependability.....	73
Confirmability.....	74
Ethical Procedures	74

Summary	77
Chapter 4: Results	78
Introduction	78
Setting	78
Demographics	79
Data Collection	80
Data Analysis	81
Evidence of Trustworthiness	82
Credibility	82
Transferability	83
Dependability	83
Confirmability	84
Results	84
Theme 1: Barriers and Decisions Related to Environment	84
Theme 2: Family as a Barrier and Support	86
Theme 3: Career Attainment and Satisfaction	89
Theme 4: School-Related Barriers	91
Theme 5: Goal Setting and Values	92
Theme 6: Barriers Related to Criminal Activity	93
Theme 7: WIOA Benefits and Recommendations for Improvement	94
Summary	95
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations	97

Interpretation of the Findings.....	97
Limitations and Delimitations of the Study	99
Recommendations.....	100
Implications.....	101
Conclusion	102
References.....	104
Appendix: Recruitment Posting.....	141

List of Tables

Table 1. Participant Demographics..... 79

List of Figures

Figure 1. Dedoose Word Cloud 82

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

People who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent are considered at risk of not having a successful future because their educational status is associated with high unemployment and low wages (Itzhaki et al., 2018). Throughout a U.S. worker's life, failure to earn a high school diploma or equivalent means about \$680,000 is lost in income (McFarland et al., 2016). From 2002 to 2012, the median annual earnings for these individuals dropped by 10%, from \$25,500 to \$22,900 (Kena et al., 2014). People who graduated high school make, on average, at least \$5,000 more than individuals who did not graduate (Kena et al., 2014). The average income for people who have not completed high school was \$26,000 a year in 2013, compared to \$46,000 a year for people who earned at least their general equivalency diploma (GED; McFarland et al., 2016). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in the third quarter of 2019, people who worked full time, who were at least 25 years old, and who did not have a high school diploma had median weekly earnings of \$606, compared to \$749 weekly income for high school graduates (United States Department of Labor, 2019).

Although a majority of people who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent start out at low-level jobs, 31% are able to move up in their career because the work experience they gained throughout their work tenure (Kim, 2013). Starting off, students on the vocational pathway can gain work experience from completing their required internships while in school (Cabus & De Witte, 2016). Some students gain work experience by leaving school when job market opportunities increase. Although their

wages may not increase drastically, these students may find that some jobs can lead to a better position (Kim, 2013).

Yet, even though they can acquire experience on the job through different trainings, people who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent will still not make as much as a high school graduate, research shows (Campolieti et al., 2010). These U.S. workers earned 62% of what all other workers earned (United States Department of Labor, 2019). People who did not complete high school were also twice as likely to have been fired multiple times (Lansford et al., 2016). They are also unemployed at a higher rate than people who do have a high school diploma (McFarland et al., 2016).

Youth from age 16-24 years of age who want to earn their GED may receive career counseling through programming that is part of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 (Novak, 2015). President Obama signed the WIOA, which governs the workforce system on a national level (Spaulding, 2015). WIOA provides workforce services that are designed to prepare youth for competitive employment while they are a participant of the program (Moore & Friedman, 2017; Smith et al., 2017). Career counselors provide job training for their participants so they can have the necessary skills employers are seeking (Joseph et al., 2017). They use career pathways strategies to develop objectives that will help participants to reach their career goals (Holland, 2016). Also, the program's career counselors encourage students to earn their GED while providing work experience (Novak, 2015).

In this qualitative study, I addressed the experiences, through a generic qualitative research approach, of WIOA participants who had earned their GED and had gained part-

time or full-time employment. Participants who are a part of the WIOA youth program are usually not represented in postsecondary education and are not educated or experienced for jobs that are constantly changing for potential employees; therefore, it can be beneficial for the youth to complete the WIOA program to be prepared (Pappalardo & Schaffer, 2016). Community colleges partner with WIOA to provide post-secondary education to help prepare participants for the workforce (Campbell & Love, 2016). Vocational rehabilitation providers also partner with WIOA to assist students with disabilities to gain access to work-based learning experiences (Oertle & O’Leary, 2017). This study’s implications for positive social change include furthering WIOA career counselors’ understanding of effective strategies to help participants gain employment, which may further the broader efforts being undertaken to decrease the unemployment rate within this population. The study may also inform program participants of how to work with WIOA counselors to achieve their goals. In this chapter, I will provide the background of this study; state the problem, purpose, and research question of the study; provide an overview of the conceptual framework and nature of the study; define key terms; and discuss the assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance of the study.

Background

Students’ personal issues often affect their attendance in school and may lead to them not having positive relationships with school personnel (Wilkins & Bost, 2016). Smith and Thomson (2014) reported that when some students are not successful in school, they may lose interest and stop going to school. In the United States, up to 15% of

students do not attend school regularly (Geiger & Amrein-Beardsley, 2017). Mentors in the school system have been shown to positively benefit students because their presence increases the likelihood of the students graduating (Wilkins & Bost, 2016). If academic interventions are not effective, there are alternative options for students to complete their education requirements, such as earning a GED (Smith & Thomson, 2014). WIOA is designed to grant access to vocational services, education, and training that leads to successful employment (Honeycutt et al., 2017). WIOA provides participants with an individualized plan for employment that includes their career goal while they work on their GED (Joseph et al., 2017).

WIOA counselors communicate with employers to design training programs for participants (Holland, 2016). WIOA participants are offered paid training or work experience that will help them with economic barriers as well as motivate them to earn their credentials required for the job (Hossain, 2015). Employers tell the counselors what challenges they are dealing with for potential employees, and the counselors work with participants for career goal setting through their individual employment plans (Holland, 2016). WIOA staff provide workforce services that allow employers to gain access to potential employees (Smith et al., 2016). Employers benefit from the participants' training and preparation for a career that matches the employers' needs (WIOA, 2016). A qualitative study is needed to understand the experiences from the WIOA participant who earned their GED.

Problem Statement

Students who drop out of high school are more prone than high school graduates to have a criminal record and be unemployed, which may lead to economic and social issues (Youngsik et al., 2018). There are different factors that contribute to dropping out of high school, such as becoming pregnant, contracting health scares, failing a grade, and having a lack of interest (Cabus & De Witte, 2016). Other factors related to dropping out of high school are low scores in math and reading, excessive absences, low self-esteem, anxiety related to socializing, aggression, and depression (Branson et al., 2013). Youngsik et al. (2018) reported that on a national level, the dropout rate for high school students is an estimated 1.6%, as compared to the dropout rate of middle school children at 0.79%.

Students from families with a lower socioeconomic status are at a higher risk for an unsuccessful future than those whose families are a part of a higher socioeconomic status (Neely & Vaquera, 2017). Students who come from single family homes and unemployed parents are also more likely to drop out of high school (Branson et al., 2013). Further, students who are not participating in extracurricular activities are more likely to drop out of high school, due to poor academic achievement (Neely & Vaquera, 2017). The authors further noted that students who participate in school athletics are more likely to do well academically because that is the only way that they can continue playing sports in school. Parents who have dropped out of high school are more likely to have children who do not graduate from a traditional high school, as well as children who move due to eviction or parents being divorced (Branson et al., 2013).

Although this research illuminates important findings, I have found no research on the experiences of youth who do not graduate from high school or have an equivalent credential who participated in the WIOA program in an effort to gain employment. Given this lack of knowledge, additional research is warranted on the experiences of individuals who participated in the WIOA program. This knowledge is needed to address the documented problem of individuals who do not acquire a high school credential not being prepared for the workforce due to lack of education (Joseph et al., 2017).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to understand the experiences of WIOA participants who earned their GED and worked with their career counselor. These participants worked with their career counselor to set employment goals and objectives in order to gain employment within a year of exiting the program while developing problem-solving skills. They also benefited from the career readiness training. After conducting this research, there was an understanding of WIOA career counselors working with their participants to set and achieve goals related to gaining employment.

Research Question

The research question for this study was as follows: What are the experiences of WIOA participants who earned their GED and worked with their career counselor to set employment goals and objectives?

Theoretical Framework

Social cognitive theory explains how humans develop, through their actions from being influenced by other people and experiences and by working collectively with others

(Bandura, 2002). Researchers using social cognitive theory examine human behavior as a product of individuals' interactions with their environment, cognitive factors, and personal factors (Dooley & Schreckhise, 2016.). This theory explains how one behaves and thinks based on life events, which influence behavior (Bandura, 1999).

Environmental influences influence individual behavior, according to social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989).

Social cognitive theory has three environmental structures, which are the environment that an individual does not choose, the environment that an individual chooses, and the environment that an individual creates (Bandura, 1999). Although one's environment can influence an outcome, personal efficacy shows that people may avoid certain tasks and strategies if they feel like they will not be successful at a certain task (Rubenstein et al., 2018). How people develop is influenced by their environment and the changes they go through over time; therefore, people who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent can be the producers of their new environment, not just products (Dooley & Schreckhise, 2016). This theory is influenced by how in control a person is in their thoughts and actions and how motivated they are to achieve their goals (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Social cognitive theory can extend from an individual perspective to a collective one when an individual works with others to achieve a goal (Bandura, 2001).

By using social cognitive theory, I sought to understand how career development relates to self-efficacy and a person's commitment to reach their career goal (Schoenfeld et al., 2017). Social cognitive theory is premised on the notion that people's social and physical environments shape their motivation and actions (Wang et al., 2019). The

framework is the foundation of a study and supports the research questions used in a study (Osanloo & Grant, 2016). The theory also supported the interview questions that I posed to participants about their experience with WIOA. This theory is used for goal setting, and the participant bases their self-efficacy on achieving set goals (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020).

Nature of the Study

I used a generic qualitative method to explore the experiences of WIOA participants gaining employment and preparing for employment. Career counselors prepare comprehensive assessments for their clients to prepare them for the workforce (Joseph et al., 2017). I used purposive sampling, by interviewing only participants who earned their GED and gained employment through the WIOA program. WIOA career counselors are there to serve the employer and the job seeker (Holland, 2016). The career counselors prepare the participant for employment by providing training and working with the participant to set goals and objectives. The career counselor also assists the participants on getting adequate training to ensure they are good candidates for employers. Career counselors use a career assessment database, O*NET, to inform their participants of job requirements (Holland, 2016).

In North Carolina, 19% of people between the ages of 25 and 34 without a high school diploma or GED were unemployed as of 2015 (Educational Attainment and Unemployment, 2015). In the United States, the unemployment rate for students who were between the ages of 16 and 24 was - 8.4% in 2018, which is double the unemployment rate for those who were 25 years old or over (Hampton & Edelman,

2019). I decided to recruit up to 10 participants in this study based on the sample sizes used in similar research. Drewry et al. (2010) conducted interviews with five participants to learn more about their lived experiences of dropping out of high school. Similarly, Tas et al. (2013) interviewed 19 participants to learn more about their reasons for dropping out of high school. Wilson et al. (2017) chose 12 youth ages 18-21 who were transitioning to employment for their study. I conducted in-depth interviews with each participant because my focus was on their experiences.

Definitions

In this section, I define terms related to this study.

Comprehensive guidance: Counseling services that can help participants with drug abuse or family matters or provide referrals for resources in the community (Gurkin, 2018).

Dropout recovery: An alternative to secondary school, such as GED or an adult high school program (Gurkin, 2018).

Eligible youth: A participant between the ages of 16 and 24 who does not have a high school diploma (Gurkin, 2018).

School dropout: A student under the age of 23 who leaves school before earning a secondary certificate (Cabus & De Witte, 2016).

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA): An act that guarantees employment and training services are provided to those who are looking for an advancement in their career (What to Know about WIOA, 2015).

Assumptions

Key tenets of qualitative research is that people interpret their experiences differently and that everyone's perceptions are not the same (Merriam, 1995). The evidence from research needs to be clear and meaningful since people decide on what to believe (Hagger et al., 2017). For this study, I assumed that each participant would honestly answer the interview questions. I also assumed that all participants would be able to remember their experiences being a WIOA participant. Another assumption was that participants would be available for the duration of the study and would be available for follow-up questions. Another assumption was that the participants would understand their reason or reasons for participating in this study.

Scope and Delimitations

Everyone interviewed was either a past or present WIOA Out of School Youth participants. I chose these participants for the interviews because they have gained employment after obtaining a GED. Also, each person was a previous WIOA participant living in Eastern North Carolina.

Limitations

The use of interviews resulted in some limitations for this qualitative research study. I developed the codes based on the participants' answers to the interview questions. These interviews were not mandatory, and participants were able to refuse to participate in the interviews. Time constraints are also a limitation when interviewing participants who are voluntarily giving their time (Fazli et al., 2018). Also, the findings from qualitative research cannot be tested for their statistical significance (Rahman,

2020). There may also be responses that do not line up with the majority of the interview responses. Each person's experiences and perspective are unique (Heimola, 2019). One limitation may be that some participants may not have had access to the use of video during a virtual interview. I am used a small sample size for this research; therefore, the results of this study cannot be assumed for the majority population. WIOA Out of School Youth program is fairly new, so that might have complicated my ability to find participants willing to participate. Further, the sample only represents one part of North Carolina, and since I cannot generalize to a larger population, a limitation would be that the sample will not represent one entire state (Amsden et al., 2018).

Significance

Conducting research on the participants' experiences may provide knowledge that helps WIOA career counselors to identify participants' skills and help participants to develop problem-solving skills to be successful in the workforce. With this knowledge, WIOA counselors may be able to improve WIOA participants' understanding of what is expected of them and how the WIOA counselors can work with them to achieve their goals. The study findings may also inform the leaders of local community colleges about how they can train their WIOA counselors on how to recruit, retain, and advocate for their participants.

The responses from the interview questions may help the career counselors to understand the most effective ways to help their participants gain employment. In the past, WIOA coordinators went to employers to address why participants were having a difficult time getting a job, but now there is more work done with employers to meet the

employer needs as it relates to gaining employees (LaRose, 2015). WIOA now works with employers in a proactive way by using a customer resource management tool, a database about businesses (LaRose, 2015). Future participants may benefit from this study, due to the career counselors having a better understanding of effective strategies to help participants gain employment.

Summary

In this chapter, I addressed the issue of students leaving high school early and provided background information on WIOA's program aims of helping participants become part of the workforce. The chapter included an overview of the research that I undertook to investigate the study phenomenon, including the research process and conceptual framework. Chapter 2 will consist of literature review on the issue of high school dropout and the benefits of WIOA for job placements and skill attainment. I will also address the history of education in Colonia America and the United States, the causes and effects of dropping out of high school, and the income differences between individuals who do not graduate and individuals who do graduate from high school. I will also provide information about WIOA and the relationship between the WIOA counselor and the participant. Chapter 2 also includes more information on the study's theoretical foundation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to understand the experiences of WIOA participants who earned their GED and worked with their career counselor to set employment goals. These participants worked towards gaining employment within a year of exiting the program while developing problem-solving skills. I asked them to share how they benefited, if at all, from the career readiness training. Having been enacted in 2014, WIOA is a recently developed program, and there has been little research, I have found, on the experiences of participants who earned their GED and gained employment from being in the program. In this chapter, I report on the research that has been conducted on the purpose of WIOA, requirements of being a participant, employment rates for those who do not have a high school diploma, what WIOA offers, career counselor and participant relationship, and adult education. I expanded this research by conducting interviews with previous WIOA participants and recorded their experiences in my findings.

WIOA prepares youth for employment through training opportunities, counseling, and assistance with postsecondary opportunities (Smith et al., 2017). There are performance measures associated with the WIOA program. These measures include the WIOA participants who gain employment within the first year after they exited the program, participants' median earnings, participants' earning of a GED, and the effectiveness WIOA had on serving employers in the community (Davidson, 2017). WIOA is also designed to be focused on career pathways, in that the participants are educated to be prepared for the workforce to fill the needs of the local job market

(Davidson, 2017). Career pathways are clear paths that lead to an occupation that the student is interested in by connecting them with the education and training that will lead to the career choice over time (Hossain, 2015).

WIOA involves working with local employers while they collaborate with other employers to provide training for incoming employees, so they will be prepared for a specific type of job (LaRose, 2015). A goal is that not only will the students be prepared, but they will also be self-sufficient in that they will be able to provide for themselves (Edelstein & Lowenstein, 2014). Employers from the same industry come together to talk with potential employees while giving the applicant an option as to which employer they will match up with the best (LaRose, 2015). The WIOA professionals must be willing to work with employers in order to align their services with the employer's needs and better prepare the participants (Hossain, 2015).

Strategies such as focusing on occupations that are high in demand, wages, and advancement; engaging employers in the development of education for skill building; and intertwining reading, math, and writing to a career path are all focused on what the employer needs (Liebowitz & Taylor, 2004). One part of the WIOA program is that it involves paying the employers a portion of the WIOA participant's salary for a specified period of time (LaRose, 2015). This is a good incentive, but it does not always work due to liability issues, so employers want to receive some recognition for giving the participating out-of-school youth participants the opportunity to work with them and they need to be reassured that it would be good for their business to work with these youth (Hossain, 2015). Employers who agree to work with this population often do not have the

training or experience of working with out of school youth and the supportive services provided (Hossain, 2015). WIOA personnel should develop plans to train employers on how to help out of school youth work on their strengths instead of putting an emphasis on their weaknesses (Hossain, 2015). I further discuss the issues with the program, as it currently operates, in the literature review. Before reviewing the literature, I discuss the literature search strategy and theoretical foundation for the study.

Literature Search Strategy

I used Walden University Library resources, including ProQuest databases, and the search engine Google Scholar to find literature. I found literature that provided background information on WIOA, adult education, and the theory related to my research. These terms were used to find literature on WIOA, individuals who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent, and the theory related to my research: *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, high school dropouts, employment and high school dropouts, high school dropout prevention, high school dropout causes, problem solving strategies, origination of GED program, adult education, GED attainment, benefits of GED, counselor and participant relationship, professional development of WIOA professionals, and social cognitive theory.*

Theoretical Foundation

From the lens of social cognitive theory, WIOA gives individuals who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent the tools to create a better environment for themselves as they learn skills to help them be successful (see Dooley & Schreckhise, 2016). A premise of social cognitive theory is that people have beliefs on what they can

do based on their actions and that their actions are based on the environment (Ng & Lucianetti, 2015). Social cognitive theory involves people using self-reflection, self-regulation, and self-organization when making decisions about life (Martin et al., 2014).

Self-efficacy is a key focal point of social cognitive theory. This is relevant because WIOA counselors work with participants to set goals to increase their self-efficacy so that they will be motivated to complete the requirements to earn their GED, which should lead to employment (Dooley & Schreckhise, 2016). According to the social cognitive theory, when a person is anxious and has negative feelings, their self-efficacy declines (Ng & Lucianetti, 2015). Social cognitive theory identifies how one regulates their actions with self-efficacy (Smith et al., 2017). Individuals engage in certain behaviors based on factors associated with their characteristics as well as outside factors such as the environment and the people around them (Martin et al., 2014). Social cognitive theory relies on the behavior of the individual, how the person thinks, and the environment working together to help individuals make decisions that will impact their outcome (Carillo, 2010). Environmental factors are external factors that provide an individual with opportunities and social pressures; an individual shapes their environment by personal factors that are cognitive, personality-related, and demographic in nature (Carillo, 2010).

A participant's self-efficacy and what they expect for the future will reinforce the career goals that they set with help from a WIOA counselor (Sung & Connor, 2017). An individual's career and academic choice is dependent on their self-efficacy (Byars-Winston et al., 2010). When their self-efficacy is high, they are less threatened by stress

and their coping skills are enhanced (Smith et al., 2017). By gaining knowledge and learning skills, the participants will be less likely to drop out of the adult basic education course and will be more likely to earn their GED (Dooley & Schreckhise, 2016). With a high self-efficacy, an individual will set goals and work towards achieving them because they are more confident that they can achieve their goals (Byars-Winston et al., 2010). Tutoring and study skills training provided by WIOA services will increase the participant's knowledge and skills so that they can be independent and less likely to drop out of the GED program (Dooley & Schreckhise, 2016).

Training, academic, and career support helps a participant make decisions for the future, due to the environment being a more positive one for them (Sung & Connor, 2017). A positive social environment can impact a person just like a negative social environment, in that it encourages positive behaviors and coping skills (Smith et al., 2017). A positive training experience will lead to a participant having a positive outlook on their goals, because they will feel like they have the support to be successful as an adult basic education student (Sung & Connor, 2017). Occupational skill training also offered by WIOA leads to a certificate or credential to prepare a participant for employment, which is also an example of social cognitive theory being implemented within the program (Dooley & Schreckhise, 2016). Leadership development, one of the key elements of WIOA, introduces out-of-school youth to community service opportunities and life skills such as parenting, work behavior, budgeting, and mentoring; another example of social cognitive theory (Dooley & Schreckhise, 2016). Having life skills, such as interpersonal skills, conflict resolution, self-advocacy, and emotional

regulation, can also help school youth prepare for employment through WIOA (Edelstein & Lowenstein, 2014).

Internal and external motivations such as self-efficacy, outcome expectations, behavioral outcomes, self-management skills, and behavior are also components of social cognitive theory (Martin et al., 2014). According to this theory, goals strengthen motivational outcomes (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). WIOA out-of-school youth participants want to ultimately obtain their GED so that they can gain successful employment. Outcome expectancies for these participants come from them going to class and working towards earning their GED as well as gaining work experiences while working on their GED (Martin et al., 2014). Students with a higher self-efficacy are more committed to their goals and develop skills that will enable them to reach their goals (Dishman et al., 2019). Setting goals with their WIOA career counselor produces self-management skills through setting goals, monitoring progress, and reinforcing learned behaviors that will benefit participant (Martin et al., 2014). Overcoming difficulties to achieve these goals will be easier for someone with a higher self-efficacy (Chan, 2020).

There are also variables that influence behaviors according to social cognitive theory, such as skills training, observed behavior, perceived social support, perceived barriers and obstacles, intrapersonal states, environmental context, and internal and external cues to action (Martin et al., 2014). Observational learning is someone's ability to observe a behavior and the motivation to learn the behavior that will lead them to be successful (Sell et al., 2016). Social support from those with like experiences can increase positive outcomes and behaviors (Smith et al., 2017). An example of skills training could

be work experience and attending GED classes, in that it helps increase self-management with the help of perceived social support such as career counselors that encourage the participants to reach their goals and gain employment (Martin et al., 2014). The career counselor motivates the participant and the participant set their expectations to complete the goal (Carter et al., 2016).

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts

History of Education in Colonial America and the United States

Many English colonies in America developed their own school laws by 1647, which mandated that at least 50 families support a school locally (Warren, 2018). For most of the 19th century, the state control of the school was weak in most communities, with higher enrollment rates in rural areas (Meyer et al., 1979). The initial form of education was established during the 1600s in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire but was solely based on religion, which caused it to fail due to different religious beliefs (Thattai, 2001). The Puritans put an emphasis on reading so that children could learn to read the Bible (Jeynes, 2007).

From the early 1600s until the middle of the 19th century, grammar schools for boys were the public education option (Carnevale et al., 2018). The first public secondary school in the United States was the Boston Latin School, which was established in 1635; it is the oldest educational institution in the country (Jenks, 1881). Reverend John Cotton, who wanted to establish a free grammar school, influenced the opening of this school (Rexine, 1977). The Massachusetts School Law of 1647 mandated that communities of at least 50 households collect taxes and hire a teacher for reading and writing (Pell, 2004).

The teacher at the grammar school was paid by local funds of that town (Hiatt, 1994). Although this law was established, only one third of the communities with at least 50 households had a teacher established; therefore, this law was not enforced as it should have been (Katz, 1976).

American high school attendance increased after Benjamin Franklin started the American Academy in 1751 to meet the demands for skilled workers (Thattai, 2001). Although the American Academy was not successful, there were others such as Phillips Andover Academy in 1778 that did survive (Webb, 2006). Up until the 1840s, education was only available to those who were considered wealthy. Horace Mann created the *Common School Journal*, which gave the public information on the availability of public education issues and was developed to improve the common school (Hinsdale, 1898). According to Mann, schools run by the government were necessary to bring children together, no matter what background they came from, so they could learn to interact with each other (DeAngelis, 2018). In the 1850s there were other groups and classes that joined this movement to promote free public schools (Katz, 1976). Those who opposed education for the disadvantaged felt that education for them would cause them to have unrealistic career goals and lead them to be dissatisfied with common labor (Vinovskis, 1992).

Mann believed that the government owed it to every child to provide education, and in turn, every citizen would grow up fit enough to vote (Chicosky, 2015). Because of Mann's efforts, elementary education was available to all American children by the end of the 19th century, and by 1852 the first compulsory school attendance laws were passed

in Massachusetts (Rauscher, 2014). Mann wanted to increase the support of public education by showing the economic value to the state and the individual people, which he argued will earn 50 percent more than those who are not educated (Vinovskis, 1992).

From 1890 up until the early 1900s, states and territories had compulsory attendance laws, which were reported to be well enforced to the United States Bureau of Education (Deffenbaugh & Keesecker, 1935). Compulsory attendance laws and child labor regulations caused school attendance to increase (Doepke & Zilibotti, 2005). In the south, 46% of children between the age of 5 and 20 attended school for an average of 89 days (Margo, 1987). During the high school movement of 1910, less than 10% of students in the United States graduated high school, but between 1930 and 1960 high school graduation rates were at about 45% (Goldin, 1999).

By 1920, legislation established longer hours at school, required a census, and mandated that attendance officers at schools be hired (Katz, 1976). From 1900 to 1996, high school graduation rates increased from 6% to almost 85% (Thattai, 2001). An increase in the number of students attending high school was also due to the increased need for white- and blue-collar jobs that required training and preparation for higher education (Goldin, 1999). Lawmakers also introduced compulsory education laws in the second half of the nineteenth century into the 20th century (Cabus & De Witte, 2011). The presumption was that students with more required years in school would do better in their lifetime, and over time that this would outweigh the costs of enforcing these laws (Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013).

Because students were required to go to school, activists in the Civil Rights Movement pushed for equal education regardless of race in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case (Bell, 1980). Although this case ended the segregation of U.S. public schools, the African American students did not always feel welcomed, and some teachers did not provide them with the same opportunities, which caused some of them to drop out of school (Zirkel & Cantor, 2004). Equal education was also provided to children in the All-Handicapped Children Act of 1975, which required all children, regardless of disability status, to be educated and for these children to also abide by compulsory education laws (Chicosky, 2015). *Mills v. the Board of Education* involved a lawsuit against the District of Columbia public schools for refusing to enroll and expelling students who had disabilities; in their decision, the court ruled that children had protections and that the burden of lack of funding for the school could not fall on the child (Martin et al., 1996).

As a result of the All-Handicapped Children Act of 1975, educators developed individual educational plans to ensure students had the accommodations they needed to be successful in school and graduate (Keogh, 2007). As a result of this act, there was a major peak in enrollment for these students, which led to the passage of National Defense of Education Act in 1958 for educational program improvement, providing a billion dollars in federal aid (Flemming, 1960). Before laws were put into place for those with disabilities, these students were placed in regular classrooms with no accommodations, therefore causing them to be unsuccessful in school (Martin et al., 1996). In 1963, the Vocational Education Act was passed by Congress, which encouraged job training to take

place in schools (Hyslop-Margison, 1999). With the new laws, court rulings, and changes made over the course of the years for educational reform, by 1975 there were still 3.5 million children with disabilities who were not being admitted to school or not receiving adequate education they deserved (Martin et al., 1996). The No Child Left Behind Act specifies that the purpose of education is to ensure people have mastered skills and concepts to be successful in the workforce (Chicosky, 2015).

Before compulsory laws were put in place, the parents made the decision to send their children to school or keep them home (Wilkins, 2005). Amish children were considered prepared for life as long as they stayed within their own community without former secondary education (Bybee, 1996). *Wisconsin versus Yoder* addressed compulsory education and allowed Amish parents to decide if their children were going to go to school past the eighth grade (Fischel, 2012). The court ruled that what the parents taught their children at home satisfied the education requirements (McVicker, 1985). Only 32 states require students stay in school for more than 10 years, but they all put the responsibility on the parent to make sure their child attends school (Diffey & Steffes, 2017).

An Overview of High School Dropout in the United States

Completing the requirements for a high school diploma can lead to a better likelihood of going to college and have a better employment opportunity (Gottfried & Plasman, 2018). In 1970, the United States had the highest rate of high school graduates in the world, but as of 2012, the United States was number 21 in high school graduation rates (Levin & Rouse, 2012). Dropping out is not just one single event, but it is

considered a series of events leading to leaving high school before graduation (McIntosh et al., 2008). Students who decided to drop out of high school made the difficult decision due to being overwhelmed and thought it was too late to get help (Grossnickle, 1986). About 1.2 million students drop out of school every year, which leads to a difficult time finding a good stable job (Kim, 2013). In 2018, dropout rate for those who were age 16 to 24 was 2.1 million (National Center for Education Statistics). These high school dropouts sometimes read below the basic literacy level and have a disadvantage in the workforce along with low wages (Tighe et al., 2013).

High school dropouts are 63 times more likely to be incarcerated than those who graduated college (Morgan et al., 2017). Due to their criminal record, these youth are not able to enroll in community colleges or universities and are not able to enlist in the military, which makes their options limited for their success (Fernandes-Alcantara, 2015). Although, dropping out leads to difficulties finding a job, there are opportunities available for high school dropouts. Of the high school dropouts, 31% gain work experience, which helps them advance on their job, and 8% of the dropouts begin their mid-level career as their first job and move up from there (Kim, 2013). Moving up in a career is not always due to educational attainment. Although education is not always the sole cause of career satisfaction, obtaining one's GED can benefit a student by allowing them to continue their education in college due to certain GED scores being the equivalent to college credit hours (Davidson, 2017).

Factors Contributing to High School Dropout From a Human Ecology Perspective

A high school dropout is one who leaves school before completing the requirements for graduation (Rumberger, 1987). Studies show that students who drop out of high school lose opportunities to further their education, reach their full capability, more likely to be unemployed, and more likely to engage in criminal activity (Youngsik et al., 2018). Student attrition is defined as students who have multiple stressors or problems, which lead up to them dropping out of high school (Cabus et al., 2016). High school dropout rates are 2 times higher than those of elementary and middle school students, with those who are a part of the minority, low-achieving, and low-socioeconomic status being the main dropouts (Youngsik et al., 2018). Male students are also more likely to drop out of high school than female students, but this difference between male and female is not significant once you factor in parental involvement, socioeconomic status, and learning disabilities (Campbell, 2015). High school dropouts consider school as only one essential part of their life and the chances of gaining employment is high and the cost to stay in school is high because they are missing out on job opportunities by staying in school (Stearns & Glennie, 2006).

The parents' socioeconomic status is one factor that influences high schoolers dropping out, as well as the amount of education the parents obtained (Parr & Bonitz, 2015). In 2013, students who were between the ages of 16 and 24 from low family income households had higher dropout rates, compared to students not in low-income households (McFarland et al., 2016). When there is a financial need in the home, some students started working. In North Carolina, youth at the age of 14 can start working

nonhazardous jobs during certain hours, and at age 16 they can work at any time for multiple hours while obtaining a driver's license (Stearns & Glennie, 2006). When they start working more hours and helping financially, schoolwork can get neglected and the students will drop out of high school (Meeker et al., 2008). About 30 percent of the high school dropouts are employed youth, with a larger family of adults who are also not educated, and they contribute 20 percent of the household annual income (Scott et al., 2015).

Another factor directly related to the child's parents is the parents' involvement in the child's life and their education (Parr & Bonitz, 2015). Parents who have previously dropped out and think the school system failed them, are likely not to put in the effort for their child to complete school; leading to the child not being able to adjust from home life to life at school (Grossnickle, 1986). Moving from home to home, is not always in the plan, but they move to another district and do not feel like they belong and are often bullied (Ottosen et al., 2019). Those students who were in grade eight to ten and moved to a new school, were more likely to not graduate from high school (Kennelly & Monrad, 2007).

Another factor that led to dropping out was students not attending school when they did not feel like going, and their parents did not make them go (Meeker et al., 2008). This behavior also applied to academically gifted students, in that they did not feel challenged enough at school, so they stopped going; although they were able to do the work (Ritchotte & Graefe, 2017). If the parent did not set high educational expectations for the child, the child was not motivated to attend school, and the teacher did not have a

relationship with the parent, due to the low expectations and lack of involvement (Ross, 2016). The parents' involvement and their education can also influence how the child views their education and how important they consider their education to be. When these social risk factors are identified, strategies should be put in place to prevent the student from dropping out of school (Todd & Caldarella, 2016).

Parents who do not communicate with school personnel, or their children, have children with a higher risk of dropping out of high school (Sahin et al., 2016). Federal policy makers think that a good way to reduce the high school dropout rate is for school personnel to strengthen the parent and school relationship and increase the involvement of the parents for their children's education (Ross, 2016). Students who did not want to wake up for school, skipped class, and taking extended time outside of the classroom were more likely to drop out due to the parent not making them go to school and the lack of communication between the parent and school personnel (Bridgeland et al., 2006). Not only do involved parents reduce the decision to drop out, but household with two parents also reduce the dropout rate (Campbell, 2015). About 40 percent of high school dropouts come from single parent households (Scott et al., 2015). Dropouts have been more likely to live with their moms, who have low incomes (Markey, 1988).

Teachers can recognize when a student is failing because the student does not understand the material and when the student is failing from lack of effort; therefore, teachers are more inclined to give the student a failing grade without intervening when they know the student is not trying to do the work (Mac Iver & Mac Iver, 2009). A student's learning disability is also a factor related to dropping out of high school. A

study was conducted and found that among the students who identified as having a learning disability, 80% of them felt that school was not helpful for them (Parr & Bonitz, 2015). Students with low grades and who are failing classes have the most accurate predictor of dropping out of high school (Freeman & Simonsen, 2015).

A school that has a policy that encourages grade retention for these students who are considered not ready to move on, will have more students dropping out (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004). When students do not see a significant improvement in their grades over time, they are more likely to drop out of high school (Ritchotte & Graefe, 2017). A student can get overwhelmed and become exhausted emotionally, which leads to him or her dropping out of high school (Walburg, 2014). Previous test scores can also be an indicator of high school dropouts. When a student is not interested and does not find school helpful, they have attendance and coursework completion issues, which are considered academic risks (Todd & Caldarella, 2016). Some high school dropouts felt that their learning disability or inability to focus in class was overlooked or not addressed as it should have been by school personnel (Ottosen et al., 2019).

Some student's academic performance was related to their relationship with their teachers, how relevant the teaching was, and how well the teachers work together with other teachers (Mac Iver & Mac Iver, 2009). When students do not feel that their teacher is supportive, and the school policies are not there to help them, students drop out of high school (Meeker et al., 2008). A supportive teacher who understands how each student learns and develops effective teaching strategies reduce the high school dropout rate (Kennelly & Monrad, 2007). There are also some gifted students who drop out of high

school, making up to five percent of the nation's high school dropout rate (Ritchotte & Graefe, 2017).

Guidance counselors are at schools to work with instructors to help them succeed, but some students do not feel that they were knowledgeable about vocational topics, which became a factor for dropping out of high school (Ottosen et al., 2019). Students who are taken out of a regular classroom and put on a vocational or occupational course of study are often not taught at the same academic standards, which causes them to drop out of high school (Plank et al., 2008). Teachers may have negative attitudes towards these students, and the students prefer not to go to school so they will not have to deal with the behaviors (Sahin et al., 2016). Some students think the teacher is less interested in having a relationship with them and only want to do their day-to-day activities at school (Burrus & Roberts, 2012). Some teachers provide instruction without providing real world problems that will help them apply what they learn after graduation, but for the teacher to teach effectively they must understand the students they teach (Hampton & Edelman, 2019).

The lack of connection between a student and a teacher can lead to the student dropping out of high school due to the student not feeling comfortable in the school's environment (Stearns & Glennie, 2006). There are students who are also bullied or harassed at school, but without positive teacher and school personnel relationships, there is no one to report the bullying to which leads to them dropping out (Cornell et al., 2013). When a student is not engaged in school, there is no relationship with the teachers or other school personnel (Archambault et al., 2009). Students who are not interested in

school or motivated to do their homework are likely to drop out of school even if they think they are capable of graduating high school (Bridgeland et al., 2006). Students may have some homework due they do not understand, so they will not attend school on the day it is due so they will not have to deal with the teacher's reactions to them not doing their homework (Sahin et al., 2016).

Participation has four components which are how students respond to requirements, their initiatives in class, extracurricular activities, and the decisions they make (Archambault et al., 2009). How much or little a student engages in school is based on the student's characteristics and the school's environment and how they handle the academic and behavioral pressures of school (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004). Disengaging in school normally begins with multiple days absent, behavior issues, and failing assignments and courses (Mac Iver & Mac Iver, 2009).

Pregnancy and teen parenting are also factors that affect dropping out of high school, but it affects teen mothers more than teen fathers (Meeker et al., 2008). Single parents are considered youth who have a barrier to employment, due to them needing childcare for their children while they work or go to school (Spaulding, 2015). The Life Events and Difficulty Schedule (LEDS) is used to assess experiences with psychosocial stressors and can be used to address the issue of students at high risk for dropping out of high school (Dupere et al., 2017). In a previous study, LEDS was used for the researcher to determine the stressors of the participants during interviews; with the researching determining if the situation or stressor was severe (Brown et al., 1987).

Dropout risks can be identified in students in the sixth grade, so identifying students as high risk once they get in high school may be too late to determine strategies to help them stay in school (Todd & Caldarella, 2016). Middle school students who fall behind and need tutoring when they reach high school, and it is not available are more likely to drop out of high school (Bridgeland et al., 2006). The transition from middle school to high school can be the beginning of the dropping out process for some students (Cornell et al., 2013).

Research has shown that students fail out of 9th grade more than any other grade in high school (Heppen & Therriault, 2008). Statistically, only 7 out of 10 ninth graders will graduate from high school (Levin & Rouse, 2012). Ninth graders are considered at risk if they are in school less than 70% of the school year, earn less than two credits, and did not pass the 9th grade when they were on track to pass (Burrus & Roberts, 2012). Once a child reaches high school, they must adapt to a new environment that allows them to be more independent, encounter new class organization, and have a less personal experience with the teacher (McIntosh et al., 2008). Research has shown a decline in parent involvement with the school system once the child reaches middle school (Ross, 2016).

Early warning systems that are put in place to let parents know immediately of the student's absenteeism could help students stay in school (Bridgeland et al., 2006). In order to help reduce the probability of high school dropouts while the students are still in middle school, school personnel should recognize good attendance with rewards, have teachers monitor attendance, and arrange meetings with the teachers, parents, student,

and counselors (Todd & Caldarella, 2016). Although there are many risk factors and indicators of a student dropping out, the most useful signs are having access to attendance and academic performance, which will help school personnel target interventions to encourage students to stay in school (Heppen & Therriault, 2008).

Prevention of High School Dropout

Due to frustration from educational demands at school and home environmental factors, students drop out, which costs the United States billions of dollars (Somers et al., 2009). Over the years policy makers, educators, parents, students, and community leaders have worked together to ensure there are dropout prevention strategies put in place as well as an improvement to education, such as Common Core State Standards in English, language, and math (Balfanz et al., 2010). Successful interventions keep students in school by reconnecting them and their families to school (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004). Psychologists have also been included in the high school dropout prevention, due to their background knowledge of research related to developmental growth and pathways taken towards completing school (Doll & Hess, 2001). Researchers show that when teachers work together and take on the joint responsibility of the students' success, the students' attendance and their educational performance is impacted (Mac Iver & Mac Iver, 2009).

The most successful dropout prevention programs have involved an adult working with a small group of students; also, those that have a more intense tutoring program with counseling features (Kennelly & Monrad, 2007). Most intervention programs are focused on changing the student by first providing counseling on a personal issue then focusing on academics, such as tutoring (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004). Achievement for Latinos

through Academic Success provides support for students and develops relationships between school and home by having counselors give support to students and inform parents on the student's attendance (Kennelly & Monrad, 2007). The counselors serve as a liaison between the teachers and the students by providing modeling to the parent and information to the teachers about how the students and parents addressed any problems (Kennelly & Monrad, 2007).

Principals in Oakland County, Michigan reached out for assistance with decreasing the dropout rate of 24%; therefore, the Oakland County Attendance and Dropout Task Force was developed in 1982 to ensure each student who was at risk for dropping out was provided resources to help them be successful (Grossnickle, 1986). This taskforce met to exchange views about issues of student dropouts (Thomas, 1986). Through crisis interventions for the students and the families of students, absenteeism should be reduced with this model (Thomas & Sykes, 1986). Check & Connect is a research-based student engagement intervention that has trained monitors for students that keep up with tardiness, absents, behaviors, and academics; and meet with students and parents about their progress (Kennelly & Monrad, 2007). The point of this program is to show student involvement and shows that those students are more involved and show up to school are less likely to drop out (Sinclair et al., 2003). The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program provides intense tutoring for students struggling in school (Kennelly & Monrad, 2007). This program was developed to prevent Hispanic middle school students from dropping out by providing them with tutoring (Gaustad, 1993).

Recognizing students at risk for dropping out of high school in the early stages of school is the first step in addressing dropout prevention (Heppen & Therriault, 2008). Some states have laws put in place that it is mandatory for parents to be involved and they are given actual data on how well their children are doing in school; included are other strategies such as text messaging parents, developing parent centers, and television stations to keep the parent up to date on what is going in with their child's school (Balfanz et al., 2010). Students who read at low levels are provided with vocational classes that help them prepare for a job after graduation and it increases their confidence at school; therefore, they stay in school until they graduate, because they understand their course of study (Gottfried & Plasman, 2018).

When a teacher and parent set high expectations for the student and the coursework is challenging, the student is more likely to be successful; with the expectation that they are expected to graduate high school and attend college (Balfanz et al., 2010). Although good grades and high GPAs are indicators of the student capable of graduating, these factors do not prevent dropping out of high school (Somers et al., 2009). Even with good grades, if the student is not motivated, does not complete their homework, or lacks a relationship with their teacher, the student is still at jeopardy of dropping out (Somers et al., 2009). There are high achieving students who get bullied but remain quiet about it, therefore dropping out seems like the best option (Cornell et al., 2013). Teachers and principals also need to be trained on the dropout crisis and how to take the necessary steps to combat it over time (Balfanz et al., 2010).

Schools that are in areas with increased crime rates are at jeopardy for having high dropout rates due to the circumstances, low expectations, and what students are exposed to (Cornell et al., 2013). Public schools that are large and located in urban areas have a high chance of increased high school dropouts, but smaller schools with more personal teacher and student relationships have a lower risk of high school dropouts (Mac Iver & Mac Iver, 2009). If the percentage of students living in poverty is high, dropout rates will be high at that school (Burrus & Roberts, 2012). Policy makers and educational personnel have been working together to combat the issue of high school dropout rate in urban areas to address the structure of the community, gang related violence, poor housing, and poverty-stricken areas (Somers et al., 2009). Certain steps need to be taken such as developing a data system that tracks attendance, grades, and behavior; determining who is not on track for graduating and develop interventions; tracking 9th grade students who missed at least 10 days of school, and tracking students who failed multiple core classes that will prevent them from moving to the 10th grade (Kennelly & Monrad, 2007). Also, regular meetings with the school staff is necessary to plan interventions (Mac Iver & Mac Iver, 2009).

The primary stage of prevention begins on the district level developing good quality instruction and promoting students to be engaged in the learning process (Mac Iver & Mac Iver, 2009). When students are having a difficult time at school academically, vocational education is designed to help students learn skills that will help them with a career after high school, instead of focusing on preparing them for college (Gottfried & Plasman, 2018). There are only a few programs that have been shown

effective in high school dropout prevention programs, and these programs address staying, progressing, and completing school (Mac Iver & Mac Iver, 2009).

Job and Careers Opportunities for Individuals Who Drop Out of High School

As of 2015, one half of dropouts were employed by “dead-end” jobs with no advancement in their career, leading to them becoming welfare recipients (Kim, 2015). As a student moves up from grade to grade, their education becomes more valuable; therefore, each year of secondary education decreases the probability of being dependent of welfare as adults by 35% (McIntosh et al., 2008). Between 1973 and 2006, young adult males who dropped out of school had a 23 percent decrease in earnings (Bloom, 2010). It has been estimated that by year 2020, 55 million jobs will be available for future job seekers, but 65% of them will require education or training after high school (Steinberg & Almeida, 2015). Programs such as WIOA, encourage dropouts to gain work experience through their program and earn their GED, since they are helping with both (Kim, 2015).

Rate of pay and career development are not always correlated, in that dropouts are paid more based of their strength and ability to a certain job, not on their actual skill and education (Kim, 2015). These youth earn a mean of less than ten thousand dollars a year, as of 2015 (Scott et al., 2015). From 200 to 2011, youth ages 20 to 24 who had at least part time job fell from 72 percent to 60 percent, and 16-to-19-year old’s’ employment rates fell from 45 percent to 26 percent; with high school dropouts employment rate going from 51 percent to 28 percent (Steinberg & Almeida, 2015). Young workers, who are still trying to figure out what they want to do with their life, are often leaving jobs

before the employer can determine if they will be an asset to the company, so their real value to the company does not have a chance to be assessed (Kim, 2015).

Over 50 percent of working high school dropouts work more than 40 weeks out of the year, working over 30 hours a week (Scott et al., 2015). High school dropouts can have unrealistic career goals set for themselves, such as careers in the entertainment and music industry as soon as they drop out of high school; therefore, having teachers or educational personnel to help them set more realistic goals and define objectives to reach these goals would be beneficial (Somers et al., 2009). They are also twice as likely as high school graduates to be in poverty over the years, and less likely to be healthy as someone with more education (Bridgeland et al., 2006). Adults who were at least 25 years old, reported that they were in worse health than those who earned their high school diploma (Stark et al., 2015).

Students complete school to show they are smart and further their education, while employers use a potential employee's education to determine if they are the best fit for the job, due to the employers not knowing the applicant's work skills (Brekke, 2014). Employers also see those who complete school as more productive workers because they follow through with things such as completing the requirements to earn their high school diploma (Brekke, 2014). Students with only a high school diploma have a difficult time finding a career they enjoy, and those who have a GED the chances of them having a career they enjoy are even worse (Martin & Broadus, 2013). Since 2013, the federal government and some national foundations have called for an increase in prospective employees with a college degree (Rutschow & Crary-Ross, 2014).

Problem-Solving Strategies to Address Job Barriers

Problem solving involves the participant identifying a gap between their current state and their goal and will make the necessary steps to achieve the goals (Hesse et al., 2015). Academic buoyancy is the high school student overcoming barriers such as bad grades, anxiety, and learning disabilities with a positive attitude that leads to success in school (Bakhshae et al., 2017). Students have control on how their life goes to some degree by interacting with their environment for a better outcome (Zambianchi, 2017). Having a positive attitude and continuing with one's education shows that the student has great perseverance, that can be developed with the help of WIOA counselors, which leads to good academic performance (Bakhshae et al., 2017). Collaborative problem solving consists of the WIOA professional and participant working together and effectively communicating (Hesse et al., 2015).

Problem solving, critical thinking, and creative thinking can help adolescents create a better future with proactively being involved in their job search (Zambianchi, 2017). WIOA professionals help participants identify problems, share their insight on how they interpret the problem, and work with the participants to find the best solution to the problem (Hesse et al., 2015). There are two types of problem orientations; one being positive, which means a person will accept a problem as a challenge and push through adversity, and the other being negative which means they see a problem as a threat and becoming frustrated (Koruklu, 2015). There are six steps to effective problem solving which involves the problem solver or student and the peer coach which is the WIOA professional (Snyder & Snyder, 2008).

Although participants need critical thinking and problem-solving skills to be successful, they rarely use critical thinking to solve real life problems (Snyder & Snyder, 2008). Thus, they will benefit from learning these skills while a WIOA out of school youth participant. Collaborative problem solving involves the WIOA professional and the participant to share a plan that they will work together to execute the plan (Hesse et al., 2015). When these participants are able to use the newly learned problem-solving skills, they are able to learn strategies for solving problems in the future (Karatas & Baki, 2017). The progress of the participant needs to be evaluated to determine if more actions need to be taken to ensure the participant is on track with reaching the solution to their problem (Hesse et al., 2015).

The GED Program

The General Education Development (GED) program was developed to help World War II veterans get placed at a job (Brinkley-Etzkorn & Ishitani, 2016). The GED is an exam that requires no classroom time with the purpose being to certify a person has a level of knowledge in mathematics, writing, reading, social studies, and science (Tyler, 2005). If the veterans came back with no education, they were not able to get a good job; therefore, the GED program was developed to prevent an economic depression (Cohen, 2018). Only veterans were allowed to take the GED in the early years of its development, but in 1958, there were more civilians taking the GED than veterans (Cardoza, 2015).

By 1974 every state allowed civilians to earn their GED, with most test-takers being recent high school dropouts (Cohen, 2018). Now, the GED is the most accepted alternative high school credential in the United States (Rutschow & Crary-Ross, 2014).

Between 1980 and 2009 the GED was given to 23.4 million test takers, and led to one-sixth of high school dropouts earning their GED in the United States (Halpern-Manners et al., 2015) The increase of use of the GED testing program has been linked to the school system's failure to meet the needs of the students who felt that school was not important for their future (Ritchotte & Graefe, 2017).

Emphasis on Adult Education

In 1964, as part of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, the Adult Basic Education Program was developed, with the purpose to help those who could not read and retain employment due to the inability to read (Tyler, 2005). Adult basic education programs are designed to provide courses for those who are at least 16 years or older to earn a General Education Development certificate (GED), serving over 2 million students a year (Tighe et al., 2013). By 1966 every state had adult education programs with federal and state funds contributing to the success of the program (Tyler, 2005). North Carolina community colleges put a focus on the state's economic and workforce development by providing incentives to community colleges for expanding services to adults with low reading levels (Liebowitz & Taylor, 2004). Adult basic education programs are more likely to serve students who have the most socioeconomic and educational challenges, thus making it a longer process for the students to be successful, compared to those who already have their high school diploma (Prins & Clymer, 2018).

About 80 percent of students in the Adult Basic Education program are reading and have math skills that are below the 9th grade level and 40 percent under the 6th grade level (Rutschow & Crary-Ross, 2014). Some students with literacy and math skills are

discouraged to work for their GED, due to the time and effort it will take to pass the GED exam, so they do not try and do not earn a high school equivalency credential (Halpern-Manners et al., 2015). Educational, family, and barriers related to employment cause a decrease in how persistent a student is to continue their education (Liebowitz & Taylor, 2004). There is no standardized way to teach GED classes, a lack of funding for professional development, and the instructors all have different expertise and education making it difficult to measure success for an adult learner (Tighe et al., 2013). A study in 2004 showed that of the 90,000 people who took the GED exam, about half of them attended a program to prepare them for the GED exam (Martin & Broadus, 2013). The median length of time for the average student to prepare for the GED is 30 hours, but some students study for hundreds of hours to prepare, which ultimately increases their skill level over time (Murnane et al., 1995).

With the help of better standards for Adult Basic Education, there have been enrollment periods set up for first time GED students, so the lesson plans and instruction are more organized (Rutschow & Crary-Ross, 2014). With the use of enrollment periods, relationships can be developed among the adult learners, which gives them some type of accountability for staying in the program (Hossain, 2015). Since the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the adult basic skills programs have helped adults improve basic skills and prepare for earning a GED certificate; teaching adults who are on a second-grade level up to adults who are on an eleventh and twelfth grade level (Rutschow & Crary-Ross, 2014). Those who were enrolled in the adult basic education program for 100 hours or more were twice as likely to earn their GED (Morgan et al., 2017).

Students who are enrolled in adult basic education programs are likely poverty stricken, single parents, or have a work schedule that is full of low wages (Rutschow & Crary-Ross, 2014). Due to the busy schedules and other personal and family related commitments, some adult learners have a difficult time staying focused and completing courses. Adult basic education programs offer courses that are accelerated, short-term, and have an occupational focus to help a student complete coursework faster (Liebowitz & Taylor, 2004). The characteristics associated with the adult learner can also be barriers, such as lack of childcare and support, overwhelming family life and responsibilities, and health and learning disabilities (Patterson & Paulson, 2016). These barriers may lead to the student dropping out of the adult basic education program because they do not have the support to help them complete the requirements to earn their GED (McDonnell & Soricone, 2014).

There are not many students who stay in the program for a long time without dropping out or leaving and coming back months to years later to complete the requirements to earn their GED (Rutschow & Crary-Ross, 2014). Adult learners are not motivated to stay in school unless the education is relevant to their life, such as education that will result in a better or higher paying job (Patterson & Paulson, 2016). If there is a strong connection to a better career, then the adult learner will be more persistent in earning their GED (Liebowitz & Taylor, 2004). Efforts have been made to keep students in the program long enough to be successful. These efforts include associating adult education with the Common Core State Standards to develop college and career readiness standards (Rutschow & Crary-Ross, 2014). Community colleges now connect adult basic

education to workforce programming that led to credentials for employment (Liebowitz & Taylor, 2004). Some instructors worry that adding these standards to GED testing, will require students to be in classes longer and may cause them to give up and not earn their GED (Cardoza, 2015).

The most noticeable reform was the newly developed GED exam that measures knowledge and skills for college and career with addressing critical thinking skills, the analyzing of information, the evaluation of texts, and the ability to demonstrate real life mathematical skills (Rutschow & Crary-Ross, 2014). Community colleges need to make career attainment a priority, flexible learning environment, and the education needs to be directly related to career advancement (Park et al., 2007). These reforms help prepare students for college and career after earning their GED by also providing case management and advising to students on the next steps after earning a GED such as college courses to take or career fields the student will be interested in (Rutschow & Crary-Ross, 2014). With reform comes costs; therefore in North Carolina the price of the GED test went from \$35 to \$135, but scheduling, proctoring, and scoring is all included in the updated price and states can subsidize the test (Cardoza, 2015).

Adult basic education programs also offer programs that will help students prepare for furthering their education, after obtaining their GED (Karmelita, 2020). Second chance programs that initially had a main goal of GED attainment, are now focusing on postsecondary education, in hopes of the education leading to a good job (Bloom, 2010). Career pathway programs have become popular in helping reform adult education providing workforce training programs to disadvantaged individuals in the

community (Jolley & Khalaf, 2020). An educational certificate is a nondegree certificate designed to prepare a student for a specific occupation while gaining a certification, licensure, or other career related qualification (Torpey, 2013). The most common career fields for these students are health care, manufacturing, and child development, with career advising, transportation assistance, housing assistance, crisis intervention, and child career assistance provided to help students reach goals in these career fields (Rutschow & Crary-Ross, 2014). Those who earned a certificate in a certain career field have shown to earn higher wages than those who only had a high school diploma or GED (Torpey, 2013).

GED Attainment

Some high school administrators consider earning a GED as an alternative for students who disrupt other students, have problems in traditional high school, and are considering dropping out of high school (Cohen, 2018). Those who disrupt the classroom environment with problematic behaviors and are diagnosed with emotional or behavioral disorders are at a higher risk for dropping out of school (McIntosh et al., 2008). Their view is if you take out the disruptive students and they earn their GED, the other traditional high school students can complete the requirements to earn their high school diploma, thus leading to a decrease in the high school dropout rate (Cohen, 2018). After a study was conducted in 2003, it was found that of the 412,000 people who passed the exam, almost 200,000 of them were under the age of 20, with 50,000 being between 16 and 17 years old (Park et al., 2007). The GED is recognized by most employers who require their employees to have a high school diploma for certain job positions (Stark et

al., 2015). A potential employer may recognize that someone who has earned their GED has characteristics such as determination to complete tasks and the necessary cognitive ability to do a job (Murnane et al., 1995).

When a person has a difficult time finding employment, they will go to a community college and enroll in the Adult Education program to earn their GED. Earning a GED could help a high school dropout with employment or furthering their education (Jeounghee & Myungkook, 2013). Community colleges are considered the entryway to postsecondary education for adults who have low math and reading skills to prepare them for education and job training (Park et al., 2007). Adult basic education programs in community colleges are designed to help adult learners earn their adult high school credentials in a smaller classroom setting (Millet et al., 2016). Basic Adult Education instructors have stated that since the economy is not doing well, high school dropouts come to community colleges to earn their GED, since they have free time being unemployed (Herring, 2013).

Those who have access to a computer at home may need more support from their instructors (Brinkley-Etzkorn & Ishitani, 2016). The instructors are normally part time and have little experience teaching adult learners, with lessons that are normally not organized (Martin & Broadus, 2013). These Adult Basic Education programs typically offer new students to begin classes weekly, which hinders instructors to develop more coherent lesson plans (Rutschow & Crary-Ross, 2014). The GED is administered at the community college for those who are at least 16 years old, and once they pass the students earn an equivalency certificate (Cohen, 2018). The latest version of the GED test

was developed in 2014 to increase the difficulty level of the test, which coincided with the increased high school graduation standards by different states (Treskon et al., 2020).

Earning a GED is not based on classroom attendance and schoolwork, but instead based on an online test administered by Pearson, a GED testing company (Cohen, 2018). The online test has been difficult for the older adults who do not have a lot of computer experience, but practice test is provided to help students get comfortable with the GED online test (Brinkley-Etz Korn & Ishitani, 2016). This exam is divided into four separate parts, that test one's ability to know factual information and critical thinking in Reasoning Through Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, and Mathematics (Zinth, 2015). The GED takes 7 hours to complete, and there is not one way to prepare for this exam (Martin & Broadus, 2013).

Benefits of Earning a GED Certificate

Students who decide to take the GED exam increase how productive they are in the workforce after earning the certificate; therefore, a GED certificate should help increase the wages for potential employees because having a GED gives potential for furthering one's education (Cohen, 2018). The GED is considered an alternative to a high school diploma that will give high school dropouts employment opportunities and access to postsecondary education (Park et al., 2007). A GED recipient's hourly wage is expected to increase by two percent every year for the expected wage increase based on the person's experience (Song & American Council on Education, 2011).

One must be self-determined and have a certain amount of motivation to complete the requirements to earn a GED (Herring, 2013). A student who drops out of

traditional high school shows they are motivated to further their education by studying for and earning their GED, and employers consider these prospects as determined and committed individuals (Cohen, 2018). Those who drop out of high school, can develop a low self-esteem, which can lead to poor work performance once they do obtain employment (Cohen, 2018). The primary benefit of obtaining a GED is increased self-esteem (Park et al., 2007). Earning a GED can boost the self-esteem of an individual because having that certificate can lead more education opportunities (Messerschmidt, 2014).

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Over 4 and a half million adolescents between the ages of 16 and 24 did not have a job, neither were they in school in 2016 (Gurkin, 2018). According to data by the Department of Education, the Census Bureau, and the National Center for Education Statistics, there is a need for stronger dropout prevention programs (Herring, 2013). Through the federal government, adult education was redefined as a service approach to prepare students for the workforce (Durdin, 2018). WIOA is the first significant update in almost 15 years that guides how the workforce system assist the unemployed or underemployed access to education, training, and employment (Hossain, 2015). This act is designed to provide access to education, employment, training, and support services that will help participants join and remain part of the labor market who have barriers to employment (Marrone, 2016). WIOA requires participants be provided with career assessments and an assessment of supportive services needs along with a plan for employment (Spaulding, 2015).

WIOA for Out of School Youth is designed to serve participants between the ages of 16 and 24 to prepare them for a job and education after earning their GED (Bransberger, 2015). This act puts an emphasis on working with youth long-term and provide academic and employment support along helping with life skills that can be transferred on the job or at school (Edelstein & Lowenstein, 2014). Priority of service is given to those who have barriers to employment such as those who receive public assistance, low income, aged out of foster care, single parents, long term unemployed, and basic skills deficient (Policy, 2014). Low-income individuals, under WIOA, are individuals who receive cash from public assistance, income in the past 6 months below the poverty line, receives food stamps within the household, homeless, foster child, or a person who has a disability with their own income that is also below the poverty line (Eyster & Nightingale, 2017).

Programs like WIOA, are at times the only support and sense of safety these participants have that encourage them to finish school and gain employment (Steinberg & Almeida, 2015). With this act there is more of an emphasis on out of school youth for training that leads to jobs that are in demand in the labor market (Hossain, 2015). Out of school youth who are between the ages of 16 and 24 must not be a current student, must be a high school dropout, subject to the justice system for adults or juveniles, or a youth with a disability (Lockwood & Nally, 2017). These youth are also deemed low income, which means the youth receives public assistance, 70% of lower living standard income level, homeless, foster child, or a person with a disability (Eyster & Nightingale, 2017). According to WIOA, out of school youth are those who are homeless, parenting, have

disabilities, or criminal record (Hossain, 2015). Over two thirds of inmates do not have a high school diploma, although plenty have earned their GED while incarcerated (Bloom, 2010).

There are grants provided for WIOA that require at least 20 percent of the funds spent on work experiences for the youth participants (Career, 2006). Registered apprenticeships are partnerships between the government and organizations that provide training which leads to a license or certification, with the apprenticeship registered with the Department of Labor to ensure the trainings meet specific requirements (Eyster & Nightingale, 2017). Apprenticeships are used to help reduce unemployment among youth and help participants transition to the workforce with experience and a possible credential (Rice et al., 2016). Under the apprenticeships, the participants are paid and once the apprenticeship is over, they are considered a regular employee and are paid as such (Eyster & Nightingale, 2017). The funds under WIOA are allocated every program year, with the year beginning on July 1 and ending on June 30 of the following year (Fernandes-Alcantara, 2015). The funds must be used on summer and year-round employment, pre-apprenticeship, on the job training, internships, and job shadowing as well, with vocational rehabilitation allocating 15 percent of funds to provide services to help participants transition to competitive employment that is in an integrated setting (Lockwood & Nally, 2017).

The majority of out of school youth are not working and are considered disconnected or opportunity youth who are involved or have been involved with welfare services, foster care, or justice involved youth (Hossain, 2015). Foster care youth are

considered to be at a higher risk for dropping out and are more likely receiving health and human services; therefore, providing social services to these youth can encourage them to earn their GED, if they have already dropped out of school (Kennelly & Monrad, 2007). With this act state and local agencies are required to form education, training, and employment services to help enhance youth's ability to become employed (Lockwood & Nally, 2017). The performance of WIOA is measured on employment rates, earnings, and participant credentials (Gurkin, 2018). With so much emphasis being put on employment, those who have low reading skills may find it difficult to be successful and some WIOA professionals will not enroll the potential participant, if it does not seem like they will be successful (Pickard, 2016).

WIOA offers multiple services to ensure the participants are successful by earning their GED and gaining employment. The main elements of programs under WIOA are financial literacy, entrepreneurial skills training, employment services, transition to postsecondary education, and continuity of education and job training in the community (Lockwood & Nally, 2017). There are six core performance measures used to determine program's progress; with four being related to employment, one related to postsecondary education, and one related to measurable skills gains (Pickard, 2016). The program is designed to provide access to vocational services, education, and training, that will help increase the chance of gaining employment in the community (Honeycutt & Wittenburg, 2017). Career coaching and counseling are designed to help participants make better decisions and be prepared for the workforce by providing assessments, teaching job search skills, and job readiness workshops (Eyster & Nightingale, 2017).

The activities provided by WIOA are focused on opportunities for training for occupations that are in-demand (Lockwood & Nally, 2017). Providing tutoring and strategies that help the participant graduate with their GED, paid and unpaid work experiences, trainings that help the participants develop occupational skills, assistance with transportation, childcare, and housing will help the participants gain confidence in themselves and become successful (Gurkin, 2018). Transportation has been the most common issue for youth when they are trying to earn their GED, so having a program that is accessible and available to public transportation, such as the city bus would be helpful (Hossain, 2015). The participants are required to come to the WIOA professional to get screened for services and this can happen on multiple occasions, but if there is no transportation, the youth will be looked at to be not interested and unmotivated to be involved in the program (Hossain, 2015).

The occupational skills trainings are focused on credentials that will lead to a job that is in demand in today's workforce. WIOA also offers career exploration services that provides the participants with information about jobs that are in demand in the area (Cushing et al., 2019). Once a participant gets a job, they need to be prepared to save their earnings and learn how to live off the money they make and take care of himself or herself. WIOA provides financial literacy classes for the participants that teach them about saving and opening a bank account along with the importance of credit, so the participants will be ready to make financial decisions (Walton, 2018). These services are considered program elements which WIOA counselors decide on which of the services

will be the best fit for the participant and how the services provided will help them gain employment and retain employment in the community (Logan & Golden, 2018).

Under WIOA, state Workforce Development Boards are designed to help implement the act by managing the core workforce programs with the state workforce agencies providing supervision (Eyster, 2016). The state workforce board provides the funds to the local workforce boards while giving them the responsibility to carry out the WIOA program (Fernandes-Alcantara, 2015). There are Workforce Development Boards that provide direct services for WIOA, and there are others that have contracts with organizations that provide WIOA youth program services that develop strategies for each participants' success (Gurkin, 2018).

States are required to provide information on how well the providers will teach the participants before they are awarded grants (Pickard, 2016). The local workforce development board provides funds for training programs based on the demands of the labor market (Anderson & Kelly, 2018). There are six indicators of performance are the percentage of participants in education or training activities or unsubsidized employment during the second/fourth quarter after exiting the program, their median earnings during the second quarter, percentage of participants who earned a postsecondary credential or GED during or one year after exiting, percentage of participants in an education or training program during the program year that leads to a credential, and indicators of effectively serving employers (Fernandes-Alcantara, 2015).

There are also youth programs that fall under WIOA such as pre-employment transition services (Taylor et al., 2019). Under Job Corps, WIOA puts emphasis on

assisting eligible youth with social, academic, and vocational education for job placement (Stapleton, 2017). Reintegration of Ex-Offenders under WIOA, is designed to help youth who were justice involved with supportive services (Fernandes-Alcantara, 2015). WIOA is a broad program that works with and influences multiple organizations and other programs to help participants gain and keep jobs in the community that will pay them minimum wage or higher (Logan & Golden, 2018).

Counselor and Participant Relationship

Those who are responsible for serving the out of school youth of WIOA should provide services that increase the likelihood of employment and have educational outcomes (Larson, 2018). Over time the WIOA counselor and participant relationship goes from advising to mentoring, which depends on how the relationship develops (Fullick et al., 2013). With the presence of emotional and moral support, a family atmosphere is created, and the participants feel as if they belong to something meaningful (Hossain, 2015). When a participant has that psychosocial support, they feel accepted by their counselor and friendship is developed (Fullick et al., 2013). Some of these WIOA youth participants do not have a good relationship with an adult, so the relationship with their counselor is essential for their success and sharing their personal information, so the counselor can work with them to help them be successful.

Having the career support and input of the counselor such as being involved in the participants' career goals can help the participant with career development (Blustein et al., 2017). The counselor is there to improve the confidence of the participants by encouraging participants, providing experience opportunities, and reducing avoidance

anxiety (Erlich & Russ-Eft, 2011). Career counselors are there to assist those with the greatest need by supporting them to be included in the workplace (Chan et al., 2017). When the participant knows their counselor cares about them and their future, it can be much easier to share their life experiences. The counselors put an emphasis on shared experiences, so they can reach the youth and develop a connection that will be lasting (Hossain, 2015). These professionals have to show a shared responsibility for the student to be successful in the program, which means they should be in constant contact with the participant, effectively communicating with the participants as well as employers, and community college staff (McDonnell & Soricone, 2014).

Increasing Professional Development of WIOA Professionals

WIOA professionals serve the most disadvantaged out of school youth in the United States and there has been a positive relationship between development of professionalism and competencies that are self-reported by professionals (Larson, 2018). Training, funded by grants, is provided to increase the effectiveness of services to participants that is delivered by the community colleges, state and local workforce agencies, and community-based organizations (Barnow & Smith, 2016). It has been reported that youth professionals have a difficult time keeping participants in the program after the initial contact has been made; therefore, strategies should be put in place for retention purposes (Hossain, 2015). There is also limited information provided to the WIOA professionals during the initial participant assessment due to the participant not feeling comfortable to share their experiences so far that have prevented them from earning their high school diploma (Brown et al., 2019). There should be multiple

communication methods to reach these participants such as orientations, group advising, electronic mail, and presentations that will help the student be successful and aware of the services offered (McDonnell & Soricone, 2014).

There are two main challenges these professionals face; which are knowing how to connect the youth to the career training opportunities and how to provide the support these youth need in order to be successful (Steinberg & Almeida, 2015). When the WIOA professional provides services that are both academic and supportive, retention can be improved, and the adult learner's persistence will get better (Liebowitz & Taylor, 2004). Professional development is needed for professionals who want to know more about recruiting and retaining youth and how to develop, place and help youth in work experiences (Larson, 2018). Some out of school youth are TANF recipients, and TANF works with WIOA to send referrals for WIOA services, which will benefit WIOA and the out of school youth simultaneously (Joyce et al., 2015). Introducing youth early on to paid work site experience opportunities increases the youth's engagement and interest (Showalter & Spiker, 2016).

Over the years there has been an increase in mental health needs for these youth, so the professionals are trained to help with therapy, or they work with mental health agencies, so the participants will have access to treatment (Hossain, 2015). When a mental health need is identified in a participant, WIOA professional should work with Vocational Rehabilitation to help them get the psychiatric needs to prepare them for a career (Logan & Golden, 2018). Professionals face many challenges with working with youth such as keeping them engaged, instable housing, and mental health issues that

youth deal with while trying to earn their GED (Larson, 2018). Due to these challenges, some professionals do not stay in their position long because of too many students on the caseload, lack of pay, and lack of communication, which causes a negative impact on the youth after a relationship has been develop between the youth and the counselor (Hossain, 2015).

Financial incentives, such as a paid work experience that is connected to their career goals can help assess the participant's ability to be successful on the job (Showalter & Spiker, 2016). Other benefits of work experience for youth are exposure to possible careers, help with transitioning to more education, work history, and providing mentors when the youth develop relationships with their work experience supervisor (Showalter & Spiker, 2016). There are two main goals to worksite experience, which are providing participants immediate access to earning money and increase work experience, skills, and connections to employers (Hall, 2015). Finding a work experience that is related to a participant's career goal can also be difficult due to the professionals having to build trusting and lasting relationships with potential employers by convincing them that giving the participants a chance is a good investment (Larson, 2018).

Employers benefit from participants being work experience participants when the business's productivity is increased along with participant engagement (Showalter & Spiker, 2016). Serving youth with disabilities is also a challenge for professionals because it can be hard to find employers who are willing to hire the participants, and the employers may not know how to train and accommodate the participants (Larson, 2018). When employability of the participant is the goal, policy makers should identify

participants who are not likely to find a job without being a participant of WIOA for out of school youth, along with ensuring the job will make a positive difference in their lives (Hall, 2015). This is why it can be beneficial to the employer and participant to have a job developer on site, which is one who helps the participant learn the job tasks while training the employer on how to work with the participant (Edelstein & Lowenstein, 2014).

Professional development for these WIOA counselors should address the needs and long-term goals of participants by helping them understand the workforce development system (Larson, 2018). Some of these youths are not realistic when it comes to their skills and abilities and can become frustrated when they do not see progress; therefore, short-term goals should be written down so they participants can see their progress (Hossain, 2015). Encouraging the counselors to work with agencies such as Vocational Rehabilitation and NC Works Centers will help their participants be connected to these agencies, community programs, and potentially help them with employment connections (Larson, 2018).

Summary and Conclusions

The issue of high school dropouts not being employed is mainly due to the lack of education. Unemployment and underemployment have been linked to the lack of education a high school dropout has; therefore, a workforce program is beneficial in providing education opportunities while assisting participants in finding a career with wages that will help the participant be self-sufficient. After conducting this literature review, I found that WIOA is designed to help participants shape their environment to

increase the likelihood of them earning their GED and reaching their goal of employment. Although there are high school dropout prevention programs and strategies that have been put into place, there is still a major issue with dropping out of school.

I have found that there are many factors associated with dropping out of high school, but adult basic education is designed to allow the high school dropout another chance at an education that will lead to employment. Factors such as family related issues and poverty should be addressed by the WIOA counselor to help the participants set and reach their academic and career related goals. Other factors such as learning disabilities decrease the participants self-efficacy, but WIOA has been put into place to help these participants gain the confidence necessary to be successful in the community.

Adult basic education programs have become more career focused and student focused over the years, in that the program is providing advising to help the students be successful in their education as well as their career. Adult basic education instructors work with the WIOA counselors to recruit and retain participants for the program. Although the adult basic education instructors work with the WIOA counselors, there should be professional development opportunities provided for the WIOA staff to help the participants reach their educational and career related goals. The main objective for high school dropouts is to gain employment that will allow them to take care of themselves after earning their GED. WIOA also works with employers to meet their job vacancy needs by providing training for potential employees while simultaneously improving the likelihood of increased wages. Once the life and occupational skills are

developed by the WIOA professional, the participants are likely to be successful on a job, and the employer will be able to fill the job vacancy permanently.

Although much research on the topic of high school dropouts, employment, dropout prevention, and WIOA, there is more that researchers need to understand about the participants experiences. Understanding the participants' experience while in high school will help with developing a plan for providing WIOA services in the future. In Chapter 3, I will discuss the research design, my role as the researcher, and research methods. Ethical considerations and concerns will also be addressed.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to understand the experiences of the WIOA participants, who earned their GED and gained employment after going through the program. As stated in Chapter 1, President Barak Obama signed the WIOA on July 22, 2014, which has helped changed education in community colleges across the United States (Davidson, 2017). One of the main indicators of the program's performance is the number of participants who gain employment, due to WIOA focusing on career pathways (Davidson, 2017). Participants of WIOA gain job training and education, which allows them to meet the needs of the job market once they earn their GED and any credentials (Davidson, 2017). In this chapter, I describe the methodology I used to examine the experiences of the participants while they were a part of the WIOA program for out-of-school-youth. I also share the recruitment and selection process for the interview participants as well as other aspects of the methodology.

Research Design and Rationale

As stated in Chapter 1, there was one research question for this qualitative study. The question was, What are the experiences of the WIOA participants who graduated from a community college with a GED and gained employment? I focused on the employment-related experiences of program participants. As stated in Chapter 2, people who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent may earn less money on their job than a high school and college graduate (Kim, 2015). WIOA is designed to help youth earn their GED and gain employment. I also address causes of high school dropout, their background, and circumstances surrounding their current situation. I also discuss

prevention programs before discussing WIOA. Understanding the experiences of people who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent involves understanding their experiences while they were still enrolled in traditional school. Thus, I concluded that knowing their background and life before WIOA was essential to answering the research question.

During the Traditionalist era of qualitative research, researchers analyzed cave painting and oral tradition such as storytelling (Krefting, 1991). During the Reconceptualist era, researchers used audio, video, pictures, and interactive interviews. In the Postmodernism era, researchers used the same techniques as reconceptualist with the addition to research interpreted within a social and cultural framework (Krefting, 1991). A qualitative perspective is developed based on what happens in one's life (Brinkmann et al., 2014). Around 1900, Edmund Husserl founded phenomenology, which included describing how people experience things from the perspective of the first person (Brinkmann et al., 2014).

Qualitative research includes the researcher and the participant working together as coresearchers who create a story that they develop from analysis of lived experiences (Krefting, 1991). A researcher can interview a participant without agreeing or disagreeing on the experience of the participant, because the experience is the participant's reality (Brinkmann et al., 2014). Qualitative researchers have also drawn from pragmatism, involving outcomes that are practical from the actions of others (Brinkmann et al., 2014). Pragmatic philosophers assert that individuals are affixed on being practical and problem-solving their lives (Brinkmann et al., 2014).

In 1991, qualitative methods were new and considered radical for researchers (Pierre, 2014). Although this type of research was considered radical in the early 1900s, a Thomas and Znaniecki (1927, as cited in Jovanovic, 2011) included case studies, biographical research, personal documents, and migrants who were informants for the research. Qualitative research is considered an alternative method of scientific research in which the researcher seeks a different understanding of the people being study (Jovanovic, 2011).

Qualitative research is considered an action type of research and is focused on participants who are predetermined for specific research (Al-Busaidi, 2008). Quantitative research considered to be clearer in its guidelines and more controlled (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Qualitative researchers study the world from the participant's viewpoint (Krefting, 1991). Qualitative research can further understanding people's experiences of interventions and simultaneously provide insight on what factors prevent the implementation to be successful (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

I chose a generic qualitative study for this research because I wanted to know about the experiences of the WIOA participants. In order to know their experiences, I conducted in-depth interviews. Based on my research question, I chose to do this type of study in order to help me gain a better understanding of how WIOA participants worked with their counselors to achieve their goals. For this study, qualitative research will be more fulfilling to the audience who will read and examine the research, based on the purpose of the research (Liu, 2016). During the interview, I acted as a guest in the participants' personal space to help them be more comfortable when talking with me (see

Wa-Mbaleka, 2019). Participants also used their judgment when deciding to participate in the interviews while considering their relationship with me as the researcher (see Reid et al., 2018). By interviewing in a natural setting and discussing with participants their experience with WIOA, I sought to help participants become more comfortable with me and provide enough information that the interview questions would be answered (see Liu, 2016).

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher of this qualitative study, I interviewed past WIOA Out of School Youth participants to gain a better understanding of their experiences. In conducting the study, I strove to respect each participant as a unique individual and not place my own biases on them. I wanted to know how to collect the data, so I used interviews, which is a common way to communicate information (Fink, 2000). When there are too many participants, it can be a challenge to get in-depth interviews completed within a specified time frame, so a limited number of participants was best for this study (Fink, 2000). For the interviews, I developed an interview guide to ensure that all questions were answered (see Fink, 2000). Transcribing after the interview is essential in the interview process, due to certain transcript comments being an aid for the researcher to remember important aspects of the interview (Fink, 2000). I coded the interview responses to analyze the data.

I chose participants for the interviews based on the research criteria for this study (see Fink, 2000). I ensured that my relationship with the participants did not go further than interviewing them for this research study. My only communication with participants

was to contact them about this research study. Professional judgment can be compromised when the researcher has a relationship with participants outside of the research, such as business, financial, or family (Karagiozis, 2018). Researchers should use empathy when conducting interviews to ensure that the participant is comfortable and willing to discuss their experiences (Fink, 2000). The quality of the data gathered from interviewing participants is determined based on the respect between the researcher and the participant (Karagiozis, 2018). Researchers should also be aware of their own biases and perspectives to know how to interact with the participants for the study (Karagiozis, 2018).

I took measures to address ethical issues in this generic qualitative research study. Qualitative research bias was one area that I addressed (see Bell, 2014). I have experience with WIOA due to being a vocational rehabilitation counselor. I believe that my experience adds credibility to my interpretation of study findings. As a researcher, I did not interview anyone whom I work with. All participants were made aware of their right to leave the interview. If there was a conflict of interest and the participants did not feel comfortable continuing with the interview process, they were not obligated to do so. There was no reported conflict of interest, and all of the participants indicated that they felt comfortable completing the interviews. As the researcher, it was my responsibility to respect the participant's privacy by changing their name in the capstone document (see Fink, 2000). In this study, I refer to participants with a label (e.g., P1 for the first participant).

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The target population of this study were adults, 18 or older, who were once WIOA participants who earned their GED and gained employment. These participants were out of the WIOA program for at least a year and no more than 2 years. These individuals were not vulnerable individuals as they were adults who decided for themselves if they wanted to participate in my study. From July 2017 to June 2018, 5,403 participants were served under WIOA in the state of North Carolina (United States Department of Labor, n.d.). The purpose of this qualitative research design was to understand human behaviors and the choices that participants made based on their experiences of the WIOA.

I used purposeful sampling to identify the right participants for this study. This type of sampling was used to identify and select those who knew about the phenomenon of interest or had experienced it firsthand (see Palinkas et al., 2015). When exploring a specific topic, researchers can use purposeful sampling to generate relevant and thorough findings (Anney, 2014). An appropriate sample size is one that has enough participants to answer the research question, so it may vary (Gentles et al., 2015). Purposeful sampling was the most appropriate technique for this study because the research was based on experiences of past participants who were WIOA participants. When using this type of sampling, the researcher chooses the most appropriate participants (Gentles et al., 2015).

As stated in Chapter 1, I aimed for 10 previous WIOA participants to be involved in the interview process from beginning to end. Sampling stopped when I concluded that

no new information was not being brought up by additional participants (see Kuper et al., 2008). The participants for this study were successful in WIOA as they graduated from high school or earned their GED and gained successful employment. The best way to contact potential participants was by reaching out to WIOA youth coordinators in the area. I also reached out by way of Facebook once I created a Facebook page. Once informed about my research study, youth coordinators had the option of letting their participants know about the study. The participants who reached out to me and were willing to complete the interviews were able to complete the interview virtually through Zoom or over the phone due to the current pandemic of COVID-19. The Workforce Development boards have a list online of which counties and locations have the WIOA for Out of School Youth program.

Instrumentation

I drew from other research in formulating the study instrument and focusing on participants' recall of past events. In a study on memory for young adults and older adults, researchers found that those who were age 18 to 26 years old had the same memory accuracy and their age had no impact on their memory (Rich & Goodfriend, 2016). Another study was performed that tested how well adults can recall three events over a 3year period. After the first year, adults could remember over 90% of the events, but after 2 years that percentage dropped to 70% (Bauer & Larkina, 2016). This study was focused on previous WIOA out-of-school youth participants who were at least 18 years old and were out of the program for no more than 2 years. These participants were

also employed after exiting the program, at least 18 years old, and worked full time or part time.

I asked participants seven questions to allow them to provide in-depth response about their experience. The interviews began with me asking the participants about where they were from, what high school they attended, and whether their teachers were supportive of them and their educational goals. I followed up with what compelled participants to enter the WIOA program for out-of-school youth. This led to me asking the participants about barriers they faced and how they overcame the barriers. The interview questions were as follows:

1. Tell me about where you're from and the high school you attended. I want to know about your environment not chosen. How were your teachers supportive of you and your educational goals?
2. Tell me about a life-changing experience that influenced you to choose your environment and become a WIOA Out of School participant and how were you able to go through the program? How did this life event push you to start working on your goals as a participant?
3. Could you name some barriers, such as influences from others, that you think could have stopped you from completing the program? How did they prevent you from going the traditional high school completion route? What steps did you take to overcome these barriers and become in control of your life and actions?

4. How did the career readiness portion of the program prepare you for working with others on your job after earning your GED? How did it prepare you to save your money that you earned?
5. What values and character traits do you possess that helped you overcome your barriers, graduate, and gain employment, and how did you create your new environment? How did your belief in yourself influence your career goal?
6. What was your motivation for completing the requirements as a WIOA Out of School Youth participant, and how did your motivation develop based on your environment? Why did you consider that your motivation?
7. Is there anything else the program could do to improve its career readiness portion of the WIOA Youth program?

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Recruitment

I reached out to the East Carolina Workforce Development Board as well as other counselors in surrounding areas and asked them about any previous WIOA participants who may be interested in my study. For participating in the study, I provided the participants with \$10 Walmart gift cards. Participants received the gift cards prior to completing the interviews, whether they completed the interview or not. Email, Facebook, and telephone were the best methods to use to reach out to potential participants for this study and secure them for this study. This method of contact was the best way for me to gather enough participants efficiently in the set amount of time. After informing them of my study, I invited them to participate in my interview.

I asked them to complete a data questionnaire to show the participants met the criteria for being in the study. I used the answers obtained from the questionnaire in Chapter 4. This information included age range, gender, race, employment status, highest level of education, the year they completed the WIOA program, and income information. Once they agreed to participate, I gave them a date, time, and place for the interview to take place. Those who were interested in the research, were accepted due to me only reaching out to previous successful WIOA participants who earned their GED and gained employment. I only asked previous WIOA Out of School Youth participants, who gained part time or full-time employment after earning their GED. Recruitment was non-coercive, with individual recruiting and no large compensation.

Information about the agreed upon interview, was sent by way of email or over the phone. Each participant needed to sign the consent form agreeing to participate in the study. Information on the nature of the study was provided in the consent form and was emailed to each participant, but if they preferred a hard copy, one was mailed to them. I emailed the participants to request a date and time that works best for them for the interviews. Once, the participant responded to my invitation, I confirmed the date and time for the interview. If the participant did not respond within 7 days, I contacted the participant to answer any questions and respond to any concerns they had.

Participation and Data Collection

Due to the impact of COVID-19, interviews were held via Zoom and over the phone. These recorded interviews were transcribed by hand. Since the interview was virtual, I mailed, emailed, or shared my screen during the interview with the information

on the study. A consent form was signed before the scheduled interview. The interview session did not take longer than 90 minutes.

Before starting the interview process, the participants were reminded of the purpose of the study, procedures, benefits of the study, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time. The participants were given the interview protocol, before being interviewed, so they had time to prepare. All research participants were informed that being a part of the research study is voluntary. They were also informed that their responses were confidential. They were informed that they can refuse or stop at any time during the completion of the interview. The interviews were video recorded, and the participants were aware that the interview questions and responses were audio recorded. The participants were interviewed by me and asked to give some insight on their experiences. I asked about their family background and their motivation for completing WIOA for Out of School Youth program, as well as the reasoning behind the decisions they made.

The participants were also asked about how they evolved with their decision making and problem-solving skills over time from their first day of enrolling to exiting the program successfully. I asked questions that required an in-depth response. The benefit of this research was to help current and future youth participants to develop problem solving skills to help them reach goals with the assistance of WIOA counselors. All recordings from the interview were recorded and collected by me. If there needed to be some clarification on a question or response after the interviews were over, I reached out to the participants and ask them to come back for a second interview, if needed. Once

the interview process was over, I informed them that if any further information was needed, I would contact them. I thanked them for their time, and gave them my contact information, if they had any questions or concerns. I also informed participants that they were welcome to receive a copy of the recorded interview if desired. Regarding their gift card, I asked all of the participants if they wanted me to email them or mail them, and they all requested them to be emailed. I added a thank you note to the electronic gift cards.

Data Analysis Plan

There was a qualitative analysis of the information gathered from interviews. Once the recorded interviews were complete, I transcribed the interviews by hand, which was mentioned in Chapter 4. They gave me the best responses since they are the ones who gained the experiences from WIOA. I was able to learn about the youth's life experiences by interviewing them about their experiences while a participant of WIOA. I wanted to interview participants from different parts of North Carolina to ensure I am getting different experiences from different populations with different backgrounds and poverty areas. For instance, a youth participant in a rural area will not have the same job opportunities as a youth who lives in a larger city, although both have just earned their GED.

I used Dedoose to code the interviews of the research participants once I obtained the recordings from Zoom and transcribed them. Coding used for this research started with participants who had certain barriers as opposed to those who had support. Looking for themes and emotions allowed the researcher to find key words and develop labels and

a coding sheet (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Key words for coding were used such as education, family, career, support, and other coding words related to WIOA and the experiences of the participants. Coding and recoding were completed within two weeks provided results that showed if the results are the same, and if both are the same it enhances how dependable the qualitative research study is (Anney, 2014). Coding was used to analyze the responses from the interview questions with the use of narrative analysis.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Qualitative research is credible when the findings description of the human experience is so relatable to someone else who also shared the same experiences that they will recognize the lived experiences reported in the interviews (Krefting, 1991). Credibility is how confident the researcher is in the truth of the research findings (Anney, 2014). Credibility was reached by conducting interviews with previous WIOA participants. After transcribing the results from the interviews every participant was offered a copy of their responses, to ensure accuracy of each interview recorded and transcribed (Bell, 2014).

Transferability

Transferability is facilitated when participants are selected purposefully (Anney, 2014). The data collected reached saturation when more data collected produced information that is repetitive (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). After conducting this research, the findings were able to transfer to other studies for future research on WIOA for Out of

School Youth. Confirmability happens when the research results can also be confirmed by other researchers (Anney, 2014). Establishing research confirmability involved the researcher accounting for all decisions in research development and throughout the study (Carcary, 2009). External validity will be reached from the conclusion of this study to be transferred to a new research study (Fusch et al., 2018). After conducting this research, the findings were able to transfer to other studies for future research on WIOA for Out of School Youth.

Dependability

Validity is determined when the researcher measures the information that was originally intended to measure and when it is found to be true (Golafshani, 2003). I gathered data from those who were able to give me a firsthand account of their experience while a WIOA participant. A participant's reality is developed socially and is based off the participant's perception, so as a researcher it is important to determine if the interpretations from the interviews represent the participant (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The interviews of qualitative research describe meanings of lived experiences by what participants say (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Truth value is how confident the researcher is about the findings in the research design (Krefting, 1991).

I kept in constant contact with each participant to ensure questions, if any, were answered after the initial interviews. Prolonged contact with the participants decreases the distance between the researcher and the participants (Krefting, 1991). The key to qualitative research is to provide understanding and knowledge on a particular subject (Kuper, 2008). Patterns and values of the qualitative research are developed when

sufficient time is spent with the participants (Krefting, 1991). Reliability is considered when the study can be repeated, but it is unlikely that participants will provide the exact same answers in a later study; therefore, the main goal of reliability is to ensure the researcher has not misrepresented data or was careless in recording data (Carcary, 2009).

Confirmability

Qualitative research needs the researcher to immerse himself or herself in the research to help the researcher understand any issues that will prevent the quality of the research while developing trust with the participants (Anney, 2014). Reflexivity is when a researcher recognizes their influence on the participants, and the researcher is responsible to ensure there is no power issue in the researcher and participant relationship (Kuper et al., 2008). Reflexivity enhances the quality of the research by allowing the researcher to think about how they can prevent or assist in the research process when presenting data and their understanding of the data collected (Berger, 2015). The main objective of reflexivity in qualitative research is to critically examine the role of the researcher (Hsiung, 2008).

Ethical Procedures

Primary access is achieved when the researcher identifies the participants needed and asks for permission to meet with participants for a research study (Maramwidze-Merrison, 2016). The participants need to feel like they are important to the research, and it should be acknowledged by the researcher, which will make the potential participants less defensive when working with you (Maramwidze-Merrison, 2016). The second stage

in gaining access to participants is to inform them of the research process (Maramwidze-Merrison, 2016).

Examining preconceived perceptions, a researcher has during the qualitative study and the knowledgeable findings after the study is complete is another objective (Hsiung, 2008). All ethical research procedures abided by Walden's Institutional Review Board (IRB) standards. Privacy was ensured during this process and participants' names were not disclosed; therefore, pseudonyms were used. The research procedures ensured that all confidential information be protected. Participants shared their experiences willingly, and the researcher's responsibility was to ensure they are trustworthy, and their intentions are clear before the interviews are conducted (Orb et al., 2001). There was no one in the room with me and the participant during the interview, so no one was able to hear us during the interview. All data stored electronically is protected by use of a password protected flash drive. Any paper forms of data were securely locked in a file cabinet at my home office and will be stored for at least 5 years, to protect the participants.

The first and last names and contact information are not necessary for research records. All last names were redacted if it was necessary to include in research records. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant in order to protect their identities. If demographic information was provided in the records, I ensured that only a particular demographic descriptor is provided in the records if at least three participants share a combination of demographic descriptors. No one in this research study will be identifiable by anyone. There were no partner organizations named for this study that assisted me with data collection.

All research results shared with the participants did not give away any identifiable information for the participants involved. The participants were made aware that they can view the results at the end of this research. I kept their contact information and they have mine. They were informed when the research was complete, and if they wanted to view the results, they were able to meet me at an agreed upon location. Sharing results with the participants and community stakeholders involved a verbal presentation.

There were no psychological risks during the interview process, because the participants did not endure any stress that was greater than day to day activities during the data collection and research results. The burden of using their time for the interviews was acknowledged and the participants were asked if they accept that burden. If there were any psychological issues from this study, the participants were offered resources that will help them overcome any psychological issues related to the study. If a participant becomes distressed during the interview, it is the researcher's obligation to stop the interview, because the participant is more important than the information being collected (Orb et al., 2001). Stopping the interview to help the participant find a solution to their distress or helping them with resources such as therapy, indicates that the researcher understands that participants can be vulnerable (Orb et al., 2001). The participants were interviewed separately, so they did not run the risk of seeing each other during the interviews. There was at least a two-hour gap between interviews for each participant to ensure the participants did not see each other coming in for an interview or leaving an interview. I had only one role during this research study, and that is the role of the researcher. This ensured that there were no conflicts of interest. The risks associated

with the research were reasonable. Sharing of personal information, did not cause a burden that negatively impacted the participants' lives.

Summary

This chapter identified the research design and rationale and put emphasis on the research tradition. The research tradition section of this chapter identified the history of qualitative research and how qualitative research was developed over many different eras. Qualitative research has also gained its respect by researchers over the years. The role of the researcher was addressed in the chapter as well. Professional relationships with participants were addressed and any ethical issues that may arise during my role as a researcher. Methodology for this qualitative study identified how the participants were selected and the procedures used to identify the participants. Interviewing participants was how I collected research data for this study. Procedures for participant entering the study and after the study as well as the data analysis plan were also addressed in this chapter. Credibility in this chapter is addressed by identifying strategies of the researcher. The researcher is responsible for transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This chapter addressed ethical issues that may arise and how they will be addressed. The next chapter will address the actual research process including the setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness and the results of the research. In the next chapter, I will discuss the participants' demographic information, data collection, and the results of the data collected for this study

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The objective of this generic qualitative study was to understand the experiences of WIOA participants who earned their GED and worked with their career counselor to achieve their goals and gain employment. I sought to understand the decision-making and problem-solving process of the individuals interviewed. In this chapter, I will address the setting and participant demographics and characteristics related to the study. Data collection methods will be described in depth as well as coding of data analysis. I will also present evidence of trustworthiness followed by the results of the study. The results of the study will address the research question and provide data to support the findings. This chapter will close with a summary of the findings regarding the research question.

Setting

For this generic qualitative study, I conducted audio-recorded Zoom and telephone interviews to collect participant data. Initial approval to conduct this research study was obtained from Walden University IRB on June 10, 2021 (approval no. 06-10-21-0541844). I located participants by reaching out to WIOA counselors and asking them to share a recruitment flyer that I created (see Appendix) with previous WIOA participants. That method of locating participants was discouraging due to the lack of potential interested participants who contacted me to express interest in being part of the study. One counselor told me that since the outbreak of COVID-19, it has been difficult to get in touch with previous and current WIOA participants. Due to the lack of participants, I went back to IRB to request permission to recruit participants by creating a

Facebook page that could be shared on the local community college pages. Doing so generated more interest from potential participants.

Demographics

The demographic profiles of the participants are shown in Table 1. These profiles substantiate that the participants met the selection criteria. All the participants dropped out of high school, were over the age of 18, had participated in WIOA, and had obtained employment as a result of WIOA. They also all earned their GED or Adult High School diploma while being a participant of WIOA.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant	Age	Gender	Employed	High school dropout	GED	Exit (< 2 yrs)
P1	21	F	Y	Y	Y	Y
P2	25	M	Y	Y	Y	Y
P3	21	F	Y	Y	Y	Y
P4	23	F	Y	Y	Y	Y
P5	25	M	Y	Y	Y	Y
P6	20	F	Y	Y	Y	Y
P7	22	F	Y	Y	Y	Y
P8	20	F	Y	Y	Y	Y
P9	22	F	Y	Y	Y	Y
P10	22	F	Y	Y	Y	Y

Note. GED = general equivalency diploma; F = female; M = male; Y = yes.

Data Collection

I recruited 10 participants to interview for this generic qualitative study. Seven were recruited via social media, and three were obtained from WIOA counselors sharing my flyer. I sent an email to the workforce development board the day after I received IRB approval. I stated my role as a doctoral student and sent multiple emails with my flyer attached, but received few responses. On July 15th, I was approved by IRB to recruit participants via social media. I created a Facebook page and asked local community colleges and the workforce development board to share my recruitment flyer on multiple Facebook pages. Interested participants called and messaged me on Facebook expressing a desire to engage in the study.

All the prospective participants who reached out qualified for this study. I emailed these individuals consent forms and had them complete a demographic questionnaire. They responded to the email by emailing me back the words “I consent” after reading the consent form. Once the consent email was received, they were scheduled for an interview with me. For the Zoom interviews, I sent a link to their email address with their invitation. I also scheduled the telephone interviews. Each interview was recorded and password protected. The data collection process discussed in Chapter 3 was aligned with the actual data collection. The only difference was that the coding software that was mentioned in Chapter 3 was not compatible with my laptop. I used Dedoose to analyze the data.

To prepare for the interviews, I practiced with family and friends. I sent them Zoom links to ensure that my sound and video was working and to ensure that they were able to access the Zoom link. I worked on my facial expressions and tone of voice so that I would not influence participants. The interview questions were aligned with the theory and the research question for this study. All the interview questions were open-ended. For this study, data saturation was reached with seven participants. I continued with the last three to get more in-depth responses.

Data Analysis

After the interviews were completed, I manually transcribed the responses from the Zoom and telephone recordings. I listened to the recording multiple times for any errors in the transcription. I then created summaries in a Word document. I used the summaries to find themes that were identified multiple times. Initially, I sought to use MaxQDA, but that software was not compatible with my computer. I used Dedoose to analyze the data. Codes were color-coded and highlighted. The summaries were copied and pasted in Dedoose. For coding, I used words that I repeatedly heard and subthemes related to the main coding word. For example, family was mentioned in everyone's interview; some participants mentioned no support from family while others felt supported. Figure 1 shows a Dedoose word cloud of the key codes.

Figure 1*Dedoose Word Cloud*

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

I documented my interactions with each participant and reviewed the transcriptions multiple times. The interviews and the interview process were made transparent with the participants. Due to my experience with WIOA, I was able to ask

informed questions about the WIOA program that helped answer the research question. All documents were saved on my password-protected laptop in a separate folder. I am the only one who knows the password to the laptop used for interviewing and transcribing and coding data. I remained honest with participants and transparent about the purpose of the research and what was going to be done after data collection. Credibility is also based on the way participants interpret the questions being asked (Abdalla et al., 2018). I encountered no issues with the participants being able to understand the questions being asked.

Transferability

There was no change from the transferability information presented in Chapter 3. I purposefully sought all of the participants. The purpose of asking these specific participants to interview was to gain the experience of WIOA from their point of view. The information gained from this study may be used in a similar study to provide information about WIOA from a different perspective, in line with Daniel's (2019) understanding of transferability.

Dependability

To ensure dependability, the research method should be detailed, and it should be clear enough that another researcher can repeat the study (Johnson et al., 2020). I made sure that I clearly explained every detail of this study. For instance, I have reported details on every software program used in the study as well as the step-by-step processes I followed in conducting the study. Any bias was minimized by reviewing the transcripts

for accuracy, and coding was performed by using information received from the interview responses.

Confirmability

Confirmability is reached when there is evidence showing that the findings come from study data, and not from the researcher's point of view (Kalu & Bwalya, 2017). Due to my being able to account for my decisions, other researchers can validate this study and possibly build their study from this one. The detailed description of this study explained in Chapter 3 does not differ from the explanation in this chapter. I also took notes during the interviews to address potential researcher bias.

Results

The research question for this study was, What are the experiences of WIOA participants who earned their GED and worked with their career counselor to set employment goals and objectives? Each participant answered all seven interview questions. The participants answered the questions based on their experiences. When I completed data analysis, I had identified key themes, all of which related to family, career, values, and criminal history.

Theme 1: Barriers and Decisions Related to Environment

When asked about their environment not chosen, the participants told me about where they were from, what high school they attended, and what their living situations were. P1, P3, and P6 were all originally from a different state. Two participants attended multiple high schools. P2 stated, "I think I attended every high school while I was living in Fayetteville." P3 stated, "I went to three different high schools, and I was bullied at all

of them.” P1 and P2 both lived with their grandmother. P1 dropped out of high school because she was working to help her grandmother. She stated, “I was in high school and working trying to help with bills.” P2 mentioned that his grandmother is the one who pushed him to go to the local community college to earn his adult high school diploma. P6 and P7 lived in a single-family home, and P8 lived in multiple foster homes. P9 became pregnant while in high school but was married when she became a WIOA participant. P8 told me about running away from one of her foster homes and prostituting to get money for food, stating “I ran away a lot and got on drugs.... then I started prostituting.” She was eventually placed in a new home with a foster parent who wanted her to finish school. P6 mentioned that seeing her friends around her be successful pushed her to become a WIOA participant. She stated, “I saw people I grew up with graduate and get good jobs, and that made me want to change.” She got involved with the wrong crowd, made bad decisions, and eventually dropped out of high school. Their environment, along with the lack of support, caused most participants to make the decision to drop out. Only one participant reported having a great family environment, supportive teachers, and no children or family members to take care when she decided to drop out of high school. P4 lived in a two-parent supportive home environment. She stated, “I wanted to be grown and didn’t feel like going to school. I was my own barrier.”

Environment Chosen

All the participants interviewed became a WIOA participant willingly. They all wanted a better life and knew they had to start with earning their GED. When asked, what made them choose WIOA, they reflected on their environment not chosen and mentioned

that they wanted a better future. P7 stated, “I knew I did not want to work in fast food forever, so I signed up for WIOA and got my GED. P1 knew that she had goals she wanted to achieve and earning her GED seemed like the first step. She stated, “I had to start somewhere so I went to sign up for my GED”. P2 decided to enroll on his own, but his grandmother was his main motivation. His grandmother pushed him to finish and gave him the ultimatum if he was going to live with her he had to finish high school. P2 stated, “She [grandmother] made the statement, if you going to live with me, you’re going to have to go back to school. So that was pretty much the bottom line.” P10 stated, “I never worked before and all I used to get was a little work first check.” She had no work experience and depended on public assistance to help provide for her children. She decided to be a WIOA participant, so she could “provide a better life” for her children. P6 started to realize that she was not making decisions that will help her be successful, so she changed who she spent her time with and got involved with church. She stated, “I didn’t want to keep doing the same thing, so I stopped hanging around the wrong crowd and started going to church.” Once P8 was placed in a new environment with a different foster parent, she created a new environment that helped her be successful. Her foster parent took her to the local community college to help her enroll in the WIOA program.

Theme 2: Family as a Barrier and Support

All the participants mentioned family as a barrier or a support system during the interviews. Family that was mentioned was the participants’ children, grandparents, parents, and foster parent. P5 had supportive family members, but that did not stop him from finishing traditional high school. He stated, “They [his family] were supportive and

wanting me to finish, but they didn't push the issue, so I dropped out." P7 grew up in a single-family home with her mother. She stated, "My mom dropped out when she got pregnant with me, but she wanted me to finish high school. She still didn't push me like I needed to be pushed. I got a job to help her with bills and I ended up dropping out too."

Some participants dropped out due to family issues, taking care of family and lack of support from family. While P1 was in high school she was working part-time to help with family needs. "It was just too much going on.", P1 stated. While she was working and in school her grandmother became ill, and she ultimately dropped out. P1 considered her grandmother to be her motivation for completing the requirements for her GED. She attributed family to the barriers that could have prevented her from completing the requirements for WIOA. They were not supportive of her and that caused her to be depressed at times. P1 made the following the statement about family: "Not getting along with my family caused me to be depressed." "I don't really have a lot of support from my family, and I be having family issues".

All the participants except one who had children were single parents, so providing for their children was important to them. The one participant who was a foster child, considered family as a barrier and her motivation. One foster family was a barrier, while the other foster family motivated her to earn her GED. P8 stated, "My last foster mom made sure I went to class every day." Although, she was not able to live with her biological grandmother, she was a constant motivating factor in her life. P2 mentioned his "church family" as being a motivator for him to finish the WIOA program. He stated, "My grandmother, other family and friends.....and my church family helped me to stay

motivated about my diploma. My grandmother actually went to the school to see what was taking me so long to finish.” P6 mentioned her dad as her main support system. She stated, “My dad pushed me to keep going to get my GED, and seeing my brother graduate from high school made me want it more.”

Being moved from one foster home to the next was a barrier for one participant, because there was little stability and some of the families did not care if she succeeded or not. When P8 was asked about barriers she said:

“Ms. Jones, they [foster family] didn’t care about me, and I didn’t care either. That’s why I started prostituting to make my own money. My (biological) mom already told me I was only good for laying on my back. It was hard for me to care about school when I had all that going on.”

Children, who fell under the family theme, were also considered a barrier in one way and motivation in another. Some of the participants had no help with childcare, so they could not finish traditional high school, and it took them longer to finish the WIOA program and earn their GED. P10, a single parent with three children, had no support from family and had her first child while she was in high school. It took her longer than others to earn her GED, due to her children’s childcare schedule. She had to be home by a certain time to meet the daycare van and get her children. There were some days she could not come to class because of her children’s needs, but she kept going until she was finished with the GED program. P9 also could not make it to class some days due to lack of childcare. She stated, “There were some days I couldn’t find a babysitter for my daughter, and my husband worked all day.”

Family Support and Motivation

All 10 mentioned family as motivating them to finish the WIOA program. Family included children, grandparents, parents, foster parents, and siblings. For the participants with children as their motivation were grateful for their jobs but wanted more for their children. P5 works full time at one of the local plants but does not think he is doing enough. He felt that he is providing for his children, but he stated, "I've been doing okay, but I'm still getting everything in order for my kids on my end." P8, who was in and out of foster homes, was grateful that her last foster mom motivated her to go to school, even though she had to adjust to being more dependent on her foster mom. She stated "I'm glad she did stay on me about going to school. I don't know where I would be right now if she didn't." P8 also mentioned her motivation was her biological grandmother who she kept in contact with while she moved to different foster homes. P7 stated, "I saw my mom struggle and I did not want to go through what she went through, so I got in the WIOA program." P9 is married with one child. Her husband took care of the bills, but she wanted her own money wanted to be more independent. She was determined to finish, and her child motivated her to be successful in the program. P9 stated, "I just want me daughter to be proud of her mommy."

Theme 3: Career Attainment and Satisfaction

All the participants gained employment from the help of the WIOA career counselor. Some of them were satisfied with their job, and some were currently looking for better employment opportunities. P2 is in school now to earn his associate degree in Business Administration and hopes to obtain employment in that field after graduation.

He also plans to go back to school, so he can obtain a higher paying job. The career readiness portion of the program helped him figure out what type of career he was interested in. P2 stated, "I've had a few jobs, but the worksite experience with the city made me want an office job." Most of the participants have factory jobs. Although they all admitted that it was hard work, they were grateful to be able to have a job. P4 stated, "It's hard work, but it's a job". Some of them also wanted something better and mentioned wanting to go to college, so they could get a higher paying job without the physical work. P7 has a job, but after the interview was complete, she reached out to me again and asked me if I knew anyone hiring in her area.

Career Readiness and Workforce Preparation

P9 stated, "The worksite experience helped me feel more comfortable working with other people since I had never worked before." When asked about the career readiness portion of WIOA, the biggest takeaway they got from WIOA was financial literacy. Financial literacy classes and the paid worksite experiences helped the participants learn how to budget and save their money. It also helped them differentiate between needs and wants. P4 stated, "WIOA helped me learn how to save my money, but I'm not gonna lie, I still struggle sometimes with buying things I know I don't need." P1, stated, "The financial literacy class helped me only buy things that I need, not what I want. Needs are more important than wants" She felt that she felt prepared for the workforce after being a participant of WIOA. Gaining work experience also helped her learn appropriate interactions and appropriate work attire. P3, like other participants, also claimed that the career readiness portion helped her budget her money. She stated, "It

helped me learn to save my money and helped me learn how to budget my money to take care of my kids.” It was P10 first time working when she participated in the onsite work experience. P10 stated, “That was my first time making my own money, so I made sure I used that money to take care of my kids and made it last for the month.” P6 stated, “Getting paid only once a month with WIOA worksite experience helped me learn how to stretch my money.” P8 stated, “The worksite experience made me feel more independent. I didn’t have to prostitute for the money or do anything crazy. I wanted to keep feeling independent, so I learned how to make it last for the whole month.”

Theme 4: School-Related Barriers

Six of the participants thought they had supportive teachers while attending traditional high school. P1 told me that some of her teachers were supportive of her and some she did not feel were supportive of her, but she did think that everyone had the opportunity to be successful. She stated, “Yeah, I think they were supportive, but I had a lot going on. I had the opportunity to be successful, but with my family issues and grandma getting sick, I just couldn’t focus on school.” P3 stated, “My teachers were supportive, but that didn’t stop me from dropping out. I couldn’t deal with the bullying.” Being bullied and pregnant in high school was just too much for me.”

P10 did not have supportive teachers or supportive family. She stated, “I wasn’t getting any support at home and then when I went to school, I had no support there either.” Another participant, P6, said, “They were only supportive when I did my work.” P7 teachers were supportive, but she said, “If they checked on me more, I probably would not have dropped out.” P9 had supportive teachers in high school, but ultimately dropped

out. She stated, “My teachers were supportive, but I just didn’t feel comfortable being in high school and pregnant.” The one participant who attended more than three high schools, said teachers were not supportive and gang violence was an issue at all the schools. P2 stated, “They were not supportive at all and the gangs was bad there.” P5 stated, No, my teachers were not supportive. Then I got locked up when I was in high school, and that just made things worse with the teachers there.” There was one participant who had supportive teachers and a supportive family, but she made the choice that high school was not something she wanted to finish.

Theme 5: Goal Setting and Values

When I asked about their values that helped them complete the requirements for WIOA, most participants mentioned being determined, persistent, and persevering. P8 talked about being persistent stating, “I got my GED because I was persistent, and I finally felt like somebody cared about me.” P1 gives credit to her ambition for her success in the program as well as believing in herself and working hard. When asked about her values that helped her achieve her goals, she stated, “My ambition. Having that ambition and showing that I’m a hard worker.... I have a lot of opportunities waiting for me.” Perseverance and patience were attributes that helped P2 overcome his barriers and complete the requirements for his diploma. He stated, “I have a problem with procrastinating, but I think my values that helped me finish was perseverance and patience.” P3 gave credit to her determination and stated, “I was determined to have a better life.” P5 also mentioned determination as a value that helped him earn his GED. He stated, “I was determined to finally finish what I started, and my kids made me want

to keep going.” P10 was another participant who named determination as a value that helped her keep going. She stated, “My determination to make a better life for my kids made me earn my GED.”

There were some who only mentioned other people when asked about values they possess. P9 stated, “I can’t think of any values right now, but I just know my daughter is what pushed me to finish”. Along with her grandmother, her WIOA career counselor motivated her to complete the program. Some of the participants were more focused on their motivation, not their values when asked that question. P4 mentioned her daughter as motivation for going back to school and completing the requirements for WIOA. “I didn’t want to go to school until I had my daughter. I knew I needed to make a better life for her.” The following quote is from P10, about her children and them motivating her: “I don’t have a choice, but to take care of them. Nobody else gonna do it. I’m all they got”.

Theme 6: Barriers Related to Criminal Activity

Three of the participants reported being incarcerated previously. P5 had court dates throughout his time as a WIOA participant from criminal activity before WIOA. While he was a participant of WIOA, he had some court dates from previous criminal charges. He considered this a barrier because of the stress from going to court. He stated, “I had court dates the whole time I was in WIOA and that stressed me out man, but I kept going and I finally got my GED.” He was on probation while participating in WIOA, so he had to get a job within a specified timeframe. Another participant who has a criminal record, got arrested a few months after her GED graduation ceremony. She is doing better now, but she is also on probation. At a young age, P1 was incarcerated, but she did not

share why she was incarcerated. After getting out of jail, she expressed that she left with a different mindset and wanted to earn her GED. “I dropped out, made some bad decisions, but when I got out, I had a different mindset. I did not want to go back to jail.”

Theme 7: WIOA Benefits and Recommendations for Improvement

P2 stated, “He [AHS teacher] called me to his office one day and asked me about going through the Adult High School program instead of getting my GED. He told me it would take longer, but my scores were high enough. I decided to do it. That could be another reason why it took me so long. That’s when I started getting support from teachers.....when I was at Wayne.”

P9 mentioned her career counselor being supportive of her and always checked on her when she did not show up for class. She stated, “When I couldn’t make it to class, she [career counselor] would call me to see if I was okay. She even gave me some study guides so I wouldn’t fall behind in class.” P10 also mentioned her career counselor being helpful. She stated, “When I didn’t have a ride she [career counselor] gave me bus tickets to make it to class and my worksite.” P4 contributed her ability to save money to the career readiness portion of WIOA but suggested that the program teaches more about finances. She mentioned understanding her credit score and credit report and wanting to buy a house eventually. She stated, “I wish I learned about credit when I was with WIOA because I want to buy a house for me and my daughters by the time I’m 30.” That was her only recommendation.

P8 reached out to her previous WIOA counselor about housing resources after she graduated, but she did not get much help. She suggested that WIOA provide

resources for housing in that area or teach future participants the process of living on their own. She stated, “I called the career center after I graduated and I tried to get some help for housing, but my career advisor didn’t really tell me much about where I could go for housing.” The career readiness portion helped P7 stretch her money, but she wanted to learn more about finances to help her prepare for her future. She stated, “I learned how to stretch my money, but I wanted to know more about how to save my money.” This is the only improvement she recommended for the WIOA program.

Summary

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to answer the research question: What are the experiences of WIOA participants who earned their GED and worked with their career counselor to set employment goals and objectives? In this chapter, I provided details on the interview setting, data collection process, analysis of data, evidence of trustworthiness, and results of the data collection. The data were collected by interviewing previous WIOA participants over the phone and via Zoom. These interviews helped me understand their barriers to employment and earning their GED and the motivating factors that helped them overcome the barriers and ultimately gain employment.

There were seven themes identified from the results of the interviews with the participants. These themes were related to the participants’ environment, family, career, school, values, criminal activity, and improvement of career readiness portion. These themes were addressed in the interview summaries and were outlined later in the chapter. These themes emerged from the coding results and the interview responses. The research

question was answered by the participants during the interview. They each shared their lived experiences by answering the interview questions.

In Chapter 5, I will interpret the findings and address the limitations of this study. Recommendations for further research will be addressed, such as the types of jobs participants obtain based on their interest and ability. There are implications for social change, such as maintaining employment to decrease the unemployment rate and it will be discussed in the next chapter. Interpretation of findings that extend current knowledge of WIOA participants' experiences will also be included in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to understand the experiences of WIOA participants who earned their GED and worked with their career counselor to set employment goals. I conducted interviews to ask participants about their experiences as WIOA participants. There were seven themes revealed, which were family, environment, career, values, criminal activity, school, and improvement of career readiness.

Interpretation of the Findings

The results of this study confirmed previous research about barriers related to completing high school as well as previous research on WIOA and how the career counselors prepare the participants. WIOA is a newer program, but the interview results were consistent with previous research. For this study, I used social cognitive theory as the theoretical framework. According to the theory, individuals change their actions based on their environment. The participants interviewed indicated that they made better decisions and changed their actions for a better outcome because of their WIOA participation. Once they decided to be a WIOA participant, they did not continue previous behaviors that would have hindered them from earning their GED.

After completing their worksite experience for WIOA, participants became employed and could provide for themselves and their children. Previous research also indicates that people who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent are likely to be involved in criminal activity, and 3 out of 10 participants reported going to jail after dropping out and before becoming a WIOA participant. The likelihood of committing crime is higher for an individual who does not have a high school diploma or equivalent

than someone who does have this credential (Dragone et al., 2021). Some of the participants mentioned that their family endured financial hardship, which led to them obtaining employment. This became another factor that led to them dropping out of high school. The lack of support from teachers was also mentioned by participants for this study. Teacher and family support is directly related to how adolescents adjust in school (Fernandez et al., 2020).

Teen pregnancy and being a single parent affected some of the participants in this study as well. Only about 50% of teen moms earn their high school diploma as opposed to the 90% who do not get pregnant while in high school (Williams-Breault, 2020). For some participants, their children contributed to them dropping out of school and were their motivation for GED attainment. As mentioned in Chapter 2, previous researchers have found that individuals who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent often have dead end jobs and are not satisfied with their employment. They have limited employment opportunities compared to those who did graduate (Patzina & Wydra-Somaggio, 2020).

In their research on individuals who were pursuing a GED, Murnane et al. (1995) suggested that these individuals possessed a determination that helped them complete the GED requirements. Participants in this study also noted that they were determined to earn their GED and take care of their families. As mentioned in the literature review, WIOA and its career counselors are the participants' support system and push them to keep going until they have earned their GED. They also provide resources to ensure that they are successful. Some of the interview participants mentioned their career counselors as

part of their support system. WIOA provides academic and employment support for the participants so they will be prepared for their future. The participants were ready for employment and gained employment after completing the requirements for WIOA. These participants were also provided the tools and support to earn their GED. WIOA is the primary federal workforce program that prepares participants for employment after obtaining their GED (Sattar, 2020).

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

One limitation was the small number of individuals used for the study in that I only asked previous WIOA participants to be in the study. The participants whom I interviewed were previous WIOA participants from one part of North Carolina. That was considered a delimitation. It was difficult recruiting participants because WIOA is a newer program, so it took a while to recruit enough participants for the study. Once I did get the participants to commit, some of them had to constantly reschedule interview appointments. Most of them had conflicting work schedules, so I scheduled appointments based on what worked best for them.

One participant agreed and consented to participate in the study; then she informed me that her grandmother became ill, and I did not hear from her again. As stated in Chapter 1, participants are not obligated to participate in the study. There were also some issues with using Zoom for the interviews. Most of the participants asked if we could conduct the interviews over the phone. One participant was able to get into the Zoom meeting room, but there was no sound on her end. I had to record our phone conversations with an iPad.

Recommendations

I conducted this study from the perspective of previous WIOA participants. Further research is recommended from the WIOA career counselor's point of view. This perspective could add some insight on improvements to the WIOA program that would be effective. This would provide experience and insight from both the participants and the career counselors. Obtaining information about the experiences of the participants and the counselors could help in terms of identifying a broader range of recommended improvements for WIOA. A study encompasses the whole state of North Carolina would also provide more information on the program and may yield more recommendations from the participants for improvement. Although saturation was achieved, the participants did not represent the entire state of North Carolina.

Although the participants were grateful to be employed as a result of WIOA, they wanted more for themselves. I recommend further research on the types of employment that participants obtain. Education can be a barrier for some participants who want a different career. Further research should be conducted to explore how WIOA provides post-secondary educational support to its participants. In-depth research on the effects of family on individuals who do have a high school diploma or equivalent could be helpful in identifying how to prevent high school dropout and how to aid WIOA participants in their success.

This generic qualitative study only addressed the experiences of the participants. A quantitative study could be useful in showing statistical data on participants who

participated in the worksite experience and were employed as a result of WIOA. It could also yield data on GED attainment.

Implications

The results of this study may provide a better understanding of WIOA for people wanting to go back to school to earn their GED. Because WIOA is less than 10 years old, there are people in the community who do not know about the program and who do not know about the resources it provides. This study may inform potential participants about the different resources that WIOA provides participants such as transportation, job experience, assistance with furthering one's education, and financial literacy to prepare participants for employment. If transportation is something holding someone back from becoming a WIOA participant, they will now know that WIOA aids in getting them to and from the community college and the worksite.

The study findings may also inform potential participants whose family is a barrier that WIOA career counselors are there to support them reach their goals. Having that support may ignite determination and perseverance because of a change in environment, which supports the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989). With the support from the WIOA career counselor, the participant may be better prepared for employment and able to obtain employment. After this study was complete, I learned that each participant obtained employment as a result of WIOA. With further research, researchers may be able to make other determinations about the impact of WIOA program participation on the employment rate. Findings from this study also showed that the financial literacy resources provided by WIOA helped participants learn how to save

their money, which can help potential participants take care of their families and budget for bills.

Conclusion

The results of this study support previous research on WIOA and how it has impacted WIOA participants in the past. Participants have benefited from WIOA and have learned characteristics about themselves in the process of bettering themselves. The findings indicate that WIOA continues to have a positive impact on participants. All the participants expressed their gratitude for WIOA and their career counselor as well. They were all able to overcome their barriers once they chose their new environment, which was WIOA.

The participants all chose to become WIOA participants through the local community college. Once they chose their environment, their self-efficacy improved, and they were able to achieve their goals, so they could obtain employment. Although all the participants in this study dropped out of traditional high school, they all worked hard to overcome barriers and earn their GED, which led to obtaining employment. The participants in this study were determined to have a better outcome for their lives. Those participants who considered family a barrier, found comfort in knowing the WIOA career counselors were there to push them to achieve their goals, although their family was not there for that support. Those who considered family as supportive had the extra support of WIOA.

The participants who suggested improving the career readiness portion of the WIOA program still benefited from the program, obtained their GED, and gained

employment. Their suggestions included WIOA providing resources for housing and more financial literacy classes. The participants interviewed were more focused on how they benefited from WIOA and how their career counselors helped them achieve their goals. When some were asked about any suggestions for improving the career readiness portion of WIOA, they took that opportunity to praise the program instead of offer suggestions. The results from this study along with further research can help WIOA make improvements where necessary as well as continue to work hard to ensure their participants' success. From participants' feedback during the interviews, WIOA has the potential to continue to grow and help more participants once they become aware that the program is available to them. This research along with previous and further research studies can bring awareness to high school dropouts, unemployment, and resources provided by the WIOA.

References

- Abdalla, M. M., Oliveira, L. G. L., Azevedo, C. E. F., & Gonzalez, R. K. (2018). Quality in qualitative organizational research: Types of triangulation as a methodological alternative. *Administração: Ensino e Pesquisa*, 19(1), 66-98.
<https://doi.org/10.13058/raep.2018.v19n1.578>
- Al-Busaidi, Z. Q. (2008). Qualitative research and its uses in health care. *Sultan Qaboos University Medical Journal*, 8(1), 11-9.
<https://journals.squ.edu.om/index.php/squmj/article/view/1317/1271>
- Amsden, L. B., Davidson, P. T., Fevrier, H. B., Goldfien, R., & Herrinton, L. J. (2018). Improving the quality of care and patient experience of care during the diagnosis of lupus: A qualitative study of primary care. *Lupus*, 27(7), 1088-1099.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0961203318763082>
- Anderson, L., & Keily, T. (2018). *Approaches to state workforce development systems*. Education Commission of the States. <https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Approaches-to-State-Workforce-Development-Systems.pdf>
- Anney, V. N. (2014). Ensuring the quality of the findings of qualitative research: Looking at trustworthiness criteria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 5(2), 272-281.
<http://196.44.162.10:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/256/Ensuring%20the%20Quality%20of%20the%20Findings%20of%20Qualitative%20Research%20NEW.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Archambault, I., Janosz, M., Fallu, J.-S., & Pagani, L. S. (2009). Student engagement and

its relationship with early high school dropout. *Journal of Adolescence*, 32(3), 651-670. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2008.06.007>

Bakhshae, F., Hejazi, E., Dortaj, F., & Farzad, V. (2017). Self-management strategies of life, positive youth development and academic buoyancy: A causal model. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 15, 339–349. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-016-9707-x>

Balfanz, R., Bridgeland, J. M., Moore, L. A., & Fox, J. H. (2010). *Building a graduation: Progress and challenge in ending the high school dropout epidemic*. Civic Enterprises; Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University; America's Promise Alliance. <https://www.americaspromise.org/resource/building-graduation-progress-challenge-ending-high-school-dropout-epidemic-november-2010>

Bandura, A. (1989). Social cognitive theory. In R. Vasta (Ed.), *Annals of child development* (Vol. 6, pp. 1-60). JAI Press.

Bandura, A. (1999). Social cognitive theory of personality. In L. Pervin & O. P. John (Ed.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (2nd ed., pp. 154-196). Guilford Publications.

Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.1>

Bandura, A. (2002). Social cognitive theory in cultural context. *Applied Psychology*, 51(2), 269-290. <https://doi:10.1111/1464-0597.00092>

Barnow, B. S., & Smith, J. (2016). Employment and training programs. In R. A. Moffitt (Ed.), *Economics of means-tested transfer programs in the United States* (Vol. 2,

pp. 127-234). University of Chicago Press.

<https://www.nber.org/system/files/chapters/c13490/c13490.pdf>

Bauer, P. J., & Larkina, M. (2016). Predicting remembering and forgetting of autobiographical memories in children and adults: A 4-year prospective study. *Memory*, 24(10), 1345-1368.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09658211.2015.1110595>

Bell, D. A., Jr. (1980). *Brown v. Board of Education* and the interest-convergence dilemma. *Harvard Law Review*, 93(3) 518-533. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1340546>

Bell, E. E. (2014). Graduating black males: A generic qualitative study. *Qualitative Report*, 19, 13. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2014.1271>

Berger, R. (2015). Now I see it, now I don't: Researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Qualitative research*, 15(2), 219-234.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794112468475>

Bloom, D. (2010). Programs and policies to assist high school dropouts in the transition to adulthood. *The Future of Children*, 89-108. <https://doi.org/10.1353/foc.0.0039>

Blustein, D. L., Connors-Kellgren, A., Olle, C., & Diamonti, A. J. (2017). Promising career and workforce development programs and services in supporting the needs of unemployed populations. In *The Handbook of Career and Workforce Development* (pp. 105-131). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315714769-6>

Bransberger, P. (2015). Coordinating postsecondary education and the public workforce system in workforce planning. Policy Insights. *Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED573101.pdf>

- Branson, R. A., Marbory, S., Brown, A., Covington, E., McCauley, K., & Nash, A. (2013). A pilot study: An exploration of social, emotional, and academic factors influencing school dropout. *Researcher: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 26(2), 1–17.
- Brekke, I. (2014). Long-term labour market consequences of dropping out of upper secondary school: Minority disadvantages? *Acta Sociologica*, 57(1), 25–39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0001699313495056>
- Bridgeland, J. M., DiIulio Jr, J. J., & Morison, K. B. (2006). The silent epidemic: Perspectives of high school dropouts. *Civic Enterprises*. <https://docs.gatesfoundation.org/documents/thesilentepidemic3-06final.pdf>
- Brinkley-Etz Korn, K. E., & Ishitani, T. T. (2016). Computer-based GED testing: Implications for students, programs, and practitioners. *Journal of Research and Practice for Adult Literacy, Secondary, and Basic Education*, 5(1), 28. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55a158b4e4b0796a90f7c371/t/57995d789f7456dc5697a96a/1469668780681/COABE+Journal+Spring+2016.pdf#page=30>
- Brinkman, S., Jacobsen, M. H., & Kristiansen, S. (2014). Historical overview of qualitative research in the social sciences. *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research*, 17-42. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199811755.013.017>
- Brown, E., Conroy, K., & Kirby, G. G. (2019). Aligning federal performance indicators across programs promoting self-sufficiency: Local perspectives. *Target*, 14, 24. <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/260606/EMPOWEREDPerfMeasuresLocal.pdf>

- Brown, G. W., Bifulco, A., & Harris, T. O. (1987). Life events, vulnerability and onset of depression: some refinements. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, *150*(1), 30-42.
<https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.150.1.30>
- Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *The Economics Daily*, Median weekly earnings \$606 for high school dropouts, \$1,559 for advanced degree holders on the Internet at <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2019/median-weekly-earnings-606-for-high-school-dropouts-1559-for-advanced-degree-holders.htm>.
- Burrus, J., & Roberts, R. D. (2012). Dropping out of high school: Prevalence, risk factors, and remediation strategies. *R & D Connections*, *18*(2), 1-9.
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Richard_Roberts2/publication/233381528_Dropping-out_of_High_School_Prevalence_risk_factors_and_remediation_strategies/links/09e41509e7ca9975a7000000.pdf
- Byars-Winston, A., Estrada, Y., Howard, C., Davis, D., & Zalapa, J. (2010). Influence of social cognitive and ethnic variables on academic goals of underrepresented students in science and engineering: A multiple-groups analysis. *Journal of counseling psychology*, *57*(2), 205. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018608>
- Bybee, J. S. (1996). Substantive due process and free exercise of religion: Meyer, Pierce and the origins of *Wisconsin v. Yoder*. *Cap. UL Rev.*, *25*, 887.
<https://scholars.law.unlv.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1363&context=facpub>
- Cabus, S. J., & De Witte, K. (2011). Does school time matter? On the impact of compulsory education age on school dropout. *Economics of Education*

- Review*, 30(6), 1384-1398. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2011.07.003>
- Cabus, S. J., & De Witte, K. (2016). Why do students leave education early? Theory and evidence on high school dropout rates. *Journal of Forecasting*, 35(8), 690-702. <https://doi.org/10.1002/for.2394>
- Campbell, C. (2015). High school dropouts after they exit school: Challenges and directions for sociological research. *Sociology Compass*, 9(7), 619-629. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12279>
- Campbell, C., Love, I., & Education Commission of the, S. (2016). Leveraging community colleges in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: A blueprint for state policymakers. State-federal partnerships in postsecondary education. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED571781.pdf>
- Campolieti, M., Fang, T., & Gunderson, M. (2010). Labour market outcomes and skill acquisition of high-school dropouts. *Journal of Labor Research*, 31(1), 39-52. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12122-009-9074-5>
- Carcary, M. (2009). The research audit trial--enhancing trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry. *Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, 7(1). <https://eds.p.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=0&sid=b4e197b7-0f65-4155-a5a1-964b97d1abaa%40redis>
- Carillo, K. D. (2010, March). Social cognitive theory in is research--literature review, criticism, and research agenda. In *International Conference on Information Systems, Technology and Management* (pp. 20-31). Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-12035-0_4

- Cardoza, K. (2015). *A More Difficult and Expensive GED Puts a Burden on Test Takers*.
- Career, C. D. P. (2006). Technical education act. *Public Law*, 109-270.
- Carnevale, A. P., Gulish, A., & Strohl, J. (2018). Educational adequacy in the twenty-first century.
<https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/86986/EducationalAdequacy.pdf?sequence=1>
- Carson, D. (2017). The influence of college readiness and institutional intervention upon intention to persist among GED credentialed community college students.
<https://doi.org/10.31274/etd-180810-4902>
- Carter, S. R., Moles, R. J., Krass, I., & Kritikos, V. S. (2016). Using social cognitive theory to explain the intention of final-year pharmacy students to undertake a higher degree in pharmacy practice research. *American Journal of pharmaceutical Education*, 80(6). 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.5688/ajpe80695>
- Chan, C. C. (Accepted/In press). Factors affecting career goals of Taiwanese college athletes from perspective of social cognitive career theory. *Journal of Career Development*, 47(2), 193-206. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845318793234>
- Chan, F., Tansey, T. N., Chronister, J., McMahon, B. T., Iwanaga, K., Wu, J. R., ... & Moser, E. (2017). Rehabilitation counseling practice in state vocational rehabilitation and the effect of the workforce innovation and opportunity act (WIOA). *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, 48(3), 20-28.
<https://doi.org/10.1891/0047-2220.48.3.20>
- Chicosky, C. L. (2015). Restructuring the modern education system in the United States:

A look at the value of compulsory education laws. *BYU Educ. & LJ*, 1.

<https://digitalcommons.law.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1355&context=eli>

Christenson, S. L., & Thurlow, M. L. (2004). School dropouts: Prevention considerations, interventions, and challenges. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 13(1), 36-39.

<https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.474.1870&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

Cohen, A. L. (2018). GED Programs. *GED Programs -- Research Starters Education*, 1.

Conner, M., & Norman, P. (1995). Predicting health behavior: Research and practice with social cognition models. Buckingham: Open University Press.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/08870449308400448>

Cornell, D., Gregory, A., Huang, F., & Fan, X. (2013). Perceived prevalence of teasing and bullying predicts high school dropout rates. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 105(1), 138. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0030416>

Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. - *Theory into Practice*, 39(3), 124-130.

https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip3903_2

Cushing, E., English, D., Therriault, S., & Lavinson, R. (2019). Developing a college-and career-ready workforce: An analysis of ESSA, Perkins V, IDEA, and WIOA. *College and Career Readiness and Success Center*.

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED602409.pdf>

- Daniel, B. K. (2019, June). What constitutes a good qualitative research study? Fundamental dimensions and indicators of rigour in qualitative research: The TACT framework. *Proceedings of the European Conference of Research Methods for Business & Management Studies* (pp. 101-108).
<https://doi.org/10.34190/RM.19.113>
- Davidson, J. C. (2017). National shifts in adult basic education: Workforce innovation and opportunity act, ability to benefit, and high school equivalency tests. *New Directions for Community Colleges, 2017*(180), 27–35.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/cc.20278>
- DeAngelis, C. A. (2018). Is public schooling a public good? An analysis of schooling externalities. *Policy Analysis No. 842. Cato Institute*.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED586209.pdf>
- Deffenbaugh, W. S., & Keesecker, W. W. (1935). *Compulsory school attendance laws and their administration* (No. 4). US Government Printing Office.
- Delman, J., Kovich, L., Burke, S., & Martone, K. (2017). The promise of demand side employer-based strategies to increase employment rates for people living with serious mental illnesses. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal, 40*(2), 179-182.
<https://doi:10.1037/prj0000264>
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2011). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. Sage. doi: 10.1177/1468794108098034
- Diffey, L., & Steffes, S. (2017). Age requirements for free and compulsory education. 50-state review. *Education Commission of the States*.

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED577460.pdf>

- Dishman, R. K., McIver, K. L., Dowda, M., Saunders, R. P., & Pate, R. R. (2019). Self-efficacy, beliefs, and goals: Moderation of declining physical activity during adolescence. *Health Psychology, 38*(6), 483–493. <https://doi.org/10.1037/hea0000734>
- Doepke, M., & Zilibotti, F. (2005). The macroeconomics of child labor regulation. *American Economic Review, 95*(5), 1492-1524. <https://doi.org/10.1257/000282805775014425>
- Doll, B., & Hess, R. S. (2001). Through a new lens: Contemporary psychological perspectives on school completion and dropping out of high school. *School Psychology Quarterly, 16*(4), 351. <https://doi.org/10.1521/scpq.16.4.351.19895>
- Dooley, T. P., & Schreckhise, W. D. (2016). Evaluating social cognitive theory in action: An assessment of the youth development program's impact on secondary student retention in selected Mississippi Delta communities. *Youth & Society, 48*(3), 383–401. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X13493445>
- Dragone, D., Migali, G., & Zucchelli, E. (2021). High school dropout and the intergenerational transmission of crime. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3794075>
- Drewry, J. A., Burge, P. L., & Driscoll, L. G. (2010). A tripartite perspective of social capital and its access by high school dropouts. *Education and Urban Society, 42*(5), 499-521. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124510366799>
- Dupéré, V., Dion, E., Harkness, K., McCabe, J., Thouin, É., & Parent, S. (2017). Adaptation and validation of the life events and difficulties schedule for use with

high school dropouts. *Journal of Research on Adolescence (Wiley-Blackwell)*, 27(3), 683–689. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12296>

Durden, W. S. (2018). Guided pathways, WIOA, and Washington State's I-Best: Blueprints for the future of adult basic education. *Journal of Research & Practice for Adult Literacy, Secondary & Basic Education*, 116–123. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Esther-Prins-2/publication/330397496_CAREER_PATHWAYS_IN_CHICAGO_HOUSTON_AND_MIAMI_KEY_FEATURES_AND_SUPPORT_SERVICES_AMONG_ADULT_EDUCATION_PROVIDERS/links/5c3de7d6a6fdccd6b5aee682/CAREER-PATHWAYS-IN-CHICAGO-HOUSTON-AND-MIAMI-KEY-FEATURES-AND-SUPPORT-SERVICES-AMONG-ADULT-EDUCATION-PROVIDERS.pdf#page=116

Edelstein, S., & Lowenstein, C. (2014). Supporting youth transitioning out of foster care. Issue brief 3: Employment programs. OPRE Report No. 2014-70. *Urban Institute*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED559329.pdf>

Educational attainment and unemployment. (2015, March 23). Retrieved from <https://demography.cpc.unc.edu/2015/03/23/nc-in-focus-unemployment-rate-by-educational-attainment/>

Erlich, R. J., & Russ-Eft, D. (2011). Applying social cognitive theory to academic advising to assess student learning outcomes. *NACADA Journal*, 31(2), 5-15. <https://doi.org/10.12930/0271-9517-31.2.5>

Eyster, L., Durham, C., Van Noy, M., & Damron, N. (2016). Understanding local

workforce systems. *Washington, DC: Urban Institute.*

https://scholarship.libraries.rutgers.edu/discovery/delivery/01RUT_INST:ResearchRepository/12664483470004646?l#13664753350004646

Eyster, L., & Nightingale, D. S. (2017). Workforce development and low-income adults and youth: The future under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. *Washington, DC: Urban Institute.*

https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/93536/workforce-development-and-low-income-adults_and-youth.pdf

Fazli, A., Imani, E., & Abedini, S. (2018). Faculty members' experience of student ethical problems: A qualitative research with a phenomenological approach. *Electronic Journal of General Medicine, 15*(3), 1–9.

<https://doi.org/10.29333/ejgm/84952>

Fernandes-Alcantara, A. L. (2015). Vulnerable youth: Employment and job training programs.

https://ecommons.cornell.edu/bitstream/handle/1813/79282/CRS_Vulnerable_Youth_0915.pdf?sequence=1

Fernández Lasarte, O., Ramos Díaz, E., Goñi Palacios, E., & Rodríguez Fernández, A. (2020). The role of social support in school adjustment during secondary education. *Psicothema.*

<https://redined.educacion.gob.es/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11162/193497/100-107.pdf?sequence=1>

Fink, A. S. (2000, December). The role of the researcher in the qualitative research

process. A potential barrier to archiving qualitative data. In forum qualitative sozialforschung/forum: Qualitative social research (Vol. 1, No. 3).

<https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-1.3.1021>

Fischel, W. A. (2012). Do Amish one-room schools make the grade? The dubious data of "Wisconsin v Yoder". *The University of Chicago Law Review*, 79(1), 107-129.

<https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1800409>

Flemming, A. S. (1960). The philosophy and objectives of the National Defense Education Act. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 327(1), 132-138. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000271626032700116>

Freeman, J., & Simonsen, B. (2015). Examining the impact of policy and practice interventions on high school dropout and school completion rates: A systematic review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 85(2), 205-248.

<https://doi.org/10.3102%2F0034654314554431>

Fullick JM 1. julia. fullick@quinnipiac. ed., Smith-Jentsch KA 2. kimberly. jentsch@ucf. ed., Kendall DL 3. kendalld@spu. ed. Advisees' expectations for support as moderator between advisor behavior and advisee perceptions of advisor behavior. *NACADA Journal*. 2013;33(2):55-64. <https://doi:10.12930/NACADA-11-383>.

Fusch, P., Fusch, G. E., & Ness, L. R. (2018). Denzin's Paradigm Shift: Revisiting Triangulation in Qualitative Research. *Journal of Social Change*, 10(1), 19-32.

<https://doi.org/10.5590/JOSC.2018.10.1.02>

Gaustad, J. (1993). Peer and cross-age tutoring.

<https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/3300/digest079.pdf?sequence>

- Geiger, T. J., & Amrein-Beardsley, A. (2017). (Almost) a slam dunk: Assessing the experiences and opinions of participants in a National Basketball Association (NBA)-funded dropout prevention program. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 647-19. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2017.05.005>
- Gentles, S. J., Charles, C., Ploeg, J., & McKibbin, K. A. (2015). Sampling in qualitative research: Insights from an overview of the methods literature. *The qualitative report*, 20(11), 1772-1789. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2015.2373>
- Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8(4), 597-607. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2003.1870>
- Goldin, C. (1999). A brief history of education in the United States. <https://www.nber.org/papers/h0119.pdf>. <https://doi.org/10.3386/h0119>
- Gottfried, M. A., & Plasman, J. S. (2018). Linking the timing of career and technical education coursetaking with high school dropout and college-going behavior. *American Educational Research Journal*, 55(2), 325-361. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831217734805>
- Grossnickle, D. R. (1986). High School Dropouts: Causes, Consequences, and Cure. Fastback 242. Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, Eighth and Union, Box 789, Bloomington, IN 47402.
- Gurkin, C. (2018). Workforce innovation and opportunity act: States and local areas report progress in meeting youth program requirements. *GAO Reports*, 1-45

Hagger, M. S., Gucciardi, D. F., & Chatzisarantis, N. L. D. (2017). On nomological validity and auxiliary assumptions: The importance of simultaneously testing effects in social cognitive theories applied to health behavior and some guidelines. *Frontiers in Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01933>

Hall, R. (2015). Subsidized employment programs.

<https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/public/resources-and-publications/publication-1/Subsidized-Employment-Programs-1.pdf>

Halpern-Manners, A., Warren, J. R., & Grodsky, E. (2015). High-stakes testing and the rise of the GED. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 663, 292-330. <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226100128.003.0008>

Hampton, C., LI, H. A., & Edelman, P. (2019). The Youth Opportunity Guarantee.

<https://www.georgetownpoverty.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Youth-Opportunity-Guarantee-03282019.pdf>

Heimola, H. (2019). *Building the experience of using appreciative methods from the student-consultants' point of view* (Master's thesis, Itä-Suomen yliopisto).

Herring, A. H. (2013). An examination of motivational factors in high school dropouts participating in general education development degree programs. *E Journal of Organizational Learning & Leadership*, 11(2), 60.

<https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.1071.3577&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

Hesse, F., Care, E., Buder, J., Sassenberg, K., & Griffin, P. (2015). A framework for teachable collaborative problem-solving skills. In *Assessment and teaching of 21st*

century skills (pp. 37-56). Springer, Dordrecht. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9395-7_2

Hiatt, D. B. (1994). Parent involvement in American public schools: An historical perspective 1642-1994. *The School Community Journal*, 4(2), 27-38.

<https://www.adi.org/journal/fw94/HiattFall1994.pdf>

Hinsdale, B. A. (1898). *Horace Mann and the common school revival in the United States* (Vol. 8). C. Scribner's sons.

Hock, H., Luca, D.L., Kautz, T., & Stapleton, D. (2017). Improving the outcomes of youth with medical limitations through comprehensive training and employment services: Evidence from the national job corps study. *Mathematica Policy Research*.

<https://ideas.repec.org/p/mpr/mprres/00b09009914b4c9986a85fe3e00a86cf.html>

Holland, B. (2016). Both sides now: Toward the dual customer approach under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act in the United States. *Local Economy*, 31(3), 424-441. <https://doi:10.1177/0269094216640476>

Honeycutt, T. t., Martin, F., & Wittenburg, D. (2017). Transitions and vocational rehabilitation success: Tracking outcomes for different types of youth. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 46(2), 137-148. <https://doi:10.3233/JVR-160850>

Hossain, F. (2015). Serving out-of-school youth under the workforce innovation and opportunity act (2014). MDRC.

https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/Serving_Out-of-School_Youth_2015%20NEW.pdf

- Hsiung, P. C. (2008). Teaching reflexivity in qualitative interviewing. *Teaching Sociology*, 36(3), 211-226. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0092055x0803600302>.
- Hyslop-Margison, E. J. (1999). An assessment of the historical arguments in vocational education reform. <https://doi.org/10.21061/jcte.v17i1.590>
- Itzhaki, Y. Y., Itzhaky, H., & Yablou, Y. B. (2018). The contribution of parental and societal conditional regard to adjustment of high school dropouts. *Journal of Adolescence*, 62, 151-161. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2017.11.014>
- Jenks, H. F. (1881). *The Boston Public Latin School. 1635-1880*. M. King.
- Jeounghee Kim, & Myungkook Joo. (2013). Trend in U.S.-born dropouts' GED and postsecondary degree acquisition: Differences by gender and race/ethnicity. *Journal of the Society for Social Work & Research*, 4(3), 171-181. <https://doi.org/10.5243/jsswr.2013.12>
- Jeynes, W. H. (2007). *American educational history: School, society, and the common good*. Sage. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15507390903584721>
- Johnson, J. L., Adkins, D., & Chauvin, S. (2020). A review of the quality indicators of rigor in qualitative research. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 84(1). <https://doi.org/10.5688/ajpe7120>
- Jolley, J., & Khalaf, C. (2020). Skillshed analysis as a tool to inform workforce training programs. *Economic Development in Higher Education*, 3, 1-5. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/G-Jason-Jolley/publication/341946588_Skillshed_Analysis_as_a_Tool_to_Inform_Workforce_Training_Programs_The_Case_of_Amazon_HQ2/links/5edad72a299bf1c67d

[46b47f/Skillshed-Analysis-as-a-Tool-to-Inform-Workforce-Training-Programs-The-Case-of-Amazon-HQ2.pdf](#)

Joseph, M. M., Osmanu, K., & Moss, K. (2017). Ethical considerations for working with transition aged youth and students with disabilities given the implications of WIOA. *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, 48(2), 42-47.

<https://doi.org/10.1891/0047-2220.48.2.42>

Joyce, K., Gould-Werth, A., Derr, M., Sanchez-Eppler, E., Clowney, C., & Roberts, L. (2015). *Using data to connect TANF clients to good jobs: An opportunity to foster WIOA partnerships* (No. d2daefb0052946f6ae8f3ef32ee9d856). Mathematica Policy Research.

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/final_using_data_to_connect_tanf_clients_122115_complete.pdf

Kalu, F. A., & Bwalya, J. C. (2017). What makes qualitative research good research? An exploratory analysis of critical elements. *International Journal of Social Science Research*, 5(2), 43-56. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijssr.v5i2.10711>

Karagiozis, N. nkaragiozis@alumni. uottawa. c. (2018). The complexities of the researcher's role in qualitative research: The power of reflexivity. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Educational Studies*, 13(1), 19–31.

<https://doi.org/10.18848/2327-011X/CGP/v13i01/19-31>

Karatas, I., & Baki, A. (2017). The effect of learning environments based on problem solving on students' achievements of problem solving. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 5(3), 249-268.

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1068620.pdf>

- Karmelita, C. (2020). Advising Adult Learners During the Transition to College. *NACADA Journal*, 40(1), 64-79. <https://doi.org/10.12930/NACADA-18-30>
- Katz, M. S. (1976). A History of Compulsory Education Laws. Fastback Series, No. 75. Bicentennial Series. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED119389>
- Kena, G., Aud, S., Johnson, F., Wang, X., Zhang, J., Rathbun, A., ... American Institutes for Research. (2014). The condition of education 2014. NCES 2014-083. National Center for Education Statistics. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED545122.pdf>
- Kennelly, L., & Monrad, M. (2007). Approaches to dropout prevention: Heeding early warning signs with appropriate interventions. *American Institutes for Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/e538292012-001>
- Keogh, B. K. (2007). Celebrating PL 94-142: The education of all handicapped children act of 1975. *Issues in Teacher Education*, 16(2), 65-69. <https://repository.law.umich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2153&context=mjlr>
- Kim, K.-N. (2013). Career trajectory in high school dropouts. *Social Science Journal*, 50(3), 306–312. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.soscij.2013.03.005>
- Kim, K.-N. (2015). Occupational constraints and opportunities faced by school dropouts. *Education and Urban Society*, 47(4), 391–411. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124513497505>
- Koruklu, N. (2015). Personality and social problem-solving: The mediating role of self-esteem. *Kuram ve Uygulamada Eğitim Bilimleri/Educational Sciences: Theory &*

Practice, 15(2), 481–487 <https://doi.org/10.12738/estp.2015.2.2601>

- Krefting, L. (1991). Rigor in qualitative research: The assessment of trustworthiness. *American journal of occupational therapy*, 45(3), 214-222. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.45.3.214>
- Kuper, A., Lingard, L., & Levinson, W. (2008). Critically appraising qualitative research. *Bmj*, 337. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1t895q0.51>
- Lansford, J. E., Dodge, K. A., Pettit, G. S., & Bates, J. E. (2016). A public health perspective on school dropout and adult outcomes: A prospective study of risk and protective factors from age 5 to 27 years. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 58(6), 652-658. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2016.01.014>
- LaRose, C. c. (2015). The north east regional employment and training association takes a look at the new public workforce system under WIOA [The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act]. *Career Planning & Adult Development Journal*, 31(3), 59-64. <https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1P3-3970868691/the-north-east-regional-employment-and-training-association>
- Larson, M., & National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth). (2018). Professional development needs among WIOA youth service professionals. Info Brief. Issue 46 *National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED588759.pdf>
- Levin, H. M., & Rouse, C. E. (2012). The true cost of high school dropouts. *The New York Times*, 25, A31. <https://www.sanjuan.edu/cms/lib/CA01902727/Centricity/Domain/4026/Drop%2>

[0Out%20Articles%20Packet.pdf](#)

Liebowitz, M., & Taylor, J. C. (2004). Breaking through: Helping low-skilled adults enter and succeed in college and careers. *Jobs for the Future*.

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED486157.pdf>

Liu, L. (2016). Using generic inductive approach in qualitative educational research: A case study analysis. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 5(2), 129-135.

<https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v5n2p129>

Lockwood, S. K., & Nally, J. M. (2017). Exploring the importance of the workforce innovation and opportunity act (2014) to correctional education programs for incarcerated young adults. *Justice Policy Journal*, 14(1), 1.

https://www.cjcj.org/uploads/cjcj/documents/workforce_innovation_and_opportunity_act_and_correctional_education.pdf

Logan, D. G., & Golden, L. (2018). New law helps youth & young adults get a job: What WIOA can do for you. *Psychiatry Information in Brief*, 15(7), 1.

<https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1127&context=pi>
[b. https://doi.org/10.7191/pib.1127](https://doi.org/10.7191/pib.1127)

Maramwidze-Merrison, E. (2016). Innovative methodologies in qualitative research: Social media window for accessing organizational elites for interviews. *Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, 14(2).

<https://eds.p.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=0&sid=eedf872e-9991-40a2-8217-a2d9ec0aaa73%40redis>

Margo, R. A. (1987). *Accounting for racial differences in school attendance in the*

American South, 1900: The role of separate-but-equal (No. w2242). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Markey, J. P. (1988). The labor market problems of today's high school dropouts. *Monthly Lab. Rev.*, 111, 36. <https://stats.bls.gov/opub/mlr/1988/06/art4full.pdf>

Marrone, J. (2016). Workforce innovation and opportunity act (WIOA) and its application to youth and young adults with serious mental health conditions (SMHC)[English and Spanish versions]. *Psychiatry Information in Brief*, 13(8), 1. <https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1105&context=pi>
[b](https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1105&context=pi)

Martin, E. W., Martin, R., & Terman, D. L. (1996). The legislative and litigation history of special education. *The future of children*, 25-39. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1602492>

Martin, C. A., Rivera, D. E., Riley, W. T., Hekler, E. B., Buman, M. P., Adams, M. A., & King, A. C. (2014, June). A dynamical systems model of social cognitive theory. In *2014 American Control Conference* (pp. 2407-2412). IEEE. <https://doi.org/10.1109/acc.2014.6859463>

Martin, V., Broadus, J., & MDRC. (2013). Enhancing GED instruction to prepare students for college and careers: Early success in LaGuardia community college's bridge to health and business program. *Policy Brief. MDRC*. MDRC. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2265891>

McDonnell, R. P., & Soricone, L. (2014). Promoting persistence through comprehensive student supports. *Jobs for the Future*.

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED561305.pdf>

McVicker, D. D. (1985). The interest of the child in the home education question:

Wisconsin v. Yoder re-examined. *Ind. L. Rev.*, 18, 711.

[https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/indilr18&div=38
&id=&page=](https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/indilr18&div=38&id=&page=)

Merriam, S. B. (1995). What can you tell from an N of 1?: Issues of validity and

reliability in qualitative research. *Theory to Practice*, 4, 51-60. Retrieved October

24, 2018. [https://www.iup.edu/assets/0/347/349/4951/4977/10245/BA91CF95-
79A7-4972-8C89-73AD68675BD3.pdf](https://www.iup.edu/assets/0/347/349/4951/4977/10245/BA91CF95-79A7-4972-8C89-73AD68675BD3.pdf)

Messacar, D., & Oreopoulos, P. (2013). Staying in school: A proposal for raising high-school graduation rates. *Issues in Science and Technology*, 29(2), 55-61.

https://www.hamiltonproject.org/assets/files/a_proposal_to_raise_high_school_graduation_rates_science_and_tech_issue.pdf

Messerschmidt, J. Y. (2014). The relationship between online and in person GED preparatory courses.

<https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1354&context=sferc>

Meyer, J. W., Tyack, D., Nagel, J., & Gordon, A. (1979). Public education as nation-building in America: Enrollments and bureaucratization in the American states, 1870-1930. *American Journal of Sociology*, 85(3), 591-613.

<https://doi.org/10.1086/227051>

McFarland, J., Stark, P., Cui, J., National Center for Education Statistics, (., & American Institutes for Research, (. (2016). Trends in high school dropout and completion

rates in the United States: 2013. Compendium Report. NCES 2016-117.

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED569943.pdf>

McIntosh, K., Brigid Flannery, K., Sugai, G., Braun, D. H., & Cochrane, K. L. (2008).

Relationships between academics and problem behavior in the transition from middle school to high school. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 10(4),

243-255. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300708318961>

Miller, M. T. ., Grover, K. S., Deggs, D. M. ., D'Amico, M., Katsinas, S. G. ., & Adair,

L. (2016). Adult education in community colleges: New challenges to old problems. *MPAEA Journal of Adult Education*, 45(2), 17–23.

Moore, R., & Friedman, M. (2017). The role of informed choice in advancing

competitive integrated employment. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 46(2),

245-264. <https://doi:10.3233/JVR-160860>

Morgan, K., Waite, P., & Diecuch, M. (2017). The case for investment in adult basic education.

<https://www.charlescountyliteracy.org/documents/supplementalmaterials/The%20Case%20for%20Investment%20in%20Adult%20Basic%20Education.pdf>

Moser, A., & Korstjens, I. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part

3: Sampling, data collection and analysis. *European Journal of General*

Practice, 24(1), 9-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375091>

Murnane, R. J., Willett, J. B., & Boudett, K. P. (1995). Do high school dropouts benefit from obtaining a GED?. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 17(2), 133-

147. <https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737017002133>

- Neely, S. R., & Vaquera, E. (2017). Making it count: Breadth and intensity of extracurricular engagement and high school dropout. *Sociological Perspectives, 60*(6), 1039–1062. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0731121417700114>
- Ng, T. W., & Lucianetti, L. (2016). Within-individual increases in innovative behavior and creative, persuasion, and change self-efficacy over time: A social–cognitive theory perspective *Journal of Applied Psychology, 101*(1), 14. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/apl00000293>
- Novak, J. (2015). Raising expectations for U.S. youth with disabilities: Federal disability policy advances integrated employment. *CEPS Journal Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal, 5*(1), 91-110. <https://doi.org/10.26529/cepsj.156>
- Oertle, K. M., & O'Leary, S. (2017). The importance of career development in constructing vocational rehabilitation transition policies and practices. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 46*(3), 407-423. <https://doi:10.3233/JVR-170877>
- Osanloo, A., & Grant, C. (2016). Understanding, selecting, and integrating a theoretical framework in dissertation research: Creating the blueprint for your “house”. *Administrative issues journal: connecting education, practice, and research, 4*(2), 7. <https://doi.org/10.5929/2014.4.2.9>
- Ottosen, K. O., Goll, C. B., & Sørli, T. (2019). “From a sense of failure to a proactive life orientation”: First year high school dropout experiences and future life expectations in Norwegian youth. *International Social Work, 62*(2), 684–698. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872817746225>
- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K.

- (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and policy in mental health and mental health services research*, 42(5), 533-544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>
- Pappalardo, M., & Schaffer, W. R. (2016). Using research to design integrated education and training programs. *Journal of Research and Practice for Adult Literacy, Secondary, And Basic Education*, 5(3), 38-42. <https://search.proquest.com/openview/627d1d0d6eafcba8be512a6964eb1a67/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=2042767>
- Park, R. J., Ernst, S., & Kim, E. (2007). Moving beyond the GED: "Low-skilled adult transition to occupational pathways at community colleges leading to family-supporting careers". Research Synthesis. *National Research Center for Career and Technical Education*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED508965.pdf>
- Parr, A. K. ., & Bonitz, V. S. I. bonitz@lakeforest. ed. (2015). Role of family background, student behaviors, and school-related beliefs in predicting high school dropout. *Journal of Educational Research*, 108(6), 504–514. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2014.917256>
- Patterson, M. B., & Paulson, U. G. (2016). Adult transitions to learning in the USA: What do PIAAC survey results tell us. *Journal of Research and Practice for Adult Literacy, Secondary, and Basic Education*, 5(1), 5-27 https://static1.squarespace.com/static/51bb74b8e4b0139570ddf020/t/54da7639e4b0990535ec333a/1423603257773/Patterson_Paulson_PIAAC.pdf

- Patzina, A., & Wydra-Somaggio, G. (2020). Early careers of dropouts from vocational training: Signals, human capital formation, and training firms. *European Sociological Review*, 36(5), 741-759. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcaa011>
- Pell, E. (2004). *John Winthrop: Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony*. Capstone.
- Pickard, A. (2016). WIOA: Implications for low-scoring adult learners. *Journal of Research and Practice for Adult Literacy, Secondary, and Basic Education*, 5(2), 50.
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55a158b4e4b0796a90f7c371/t/57bc0532e6f2e1aba1338c51/1471939890881/WIOA+Implications+for+Low+Scoring+Adult+Learners.pdf>
- Pierre, E. S. (2014). A brief and personal history of post qualitative research: Toward “post inquiry”. *Journal of curriculum theorizing*, 30(2).
<https://journal.jctonline.org/index.php/jct/article/view/521/stpierre.pdf>
- Plank, S. B., DeLuca, S., & Estacion, A. (2008). High school dropout and the role of career and technical education: A survival analysis of surviving high school. *Sociology of Education*, 81(4), 345–370.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/003804070808100402>
- POLICY, N. W. (2014). Priority of Service Policy. *Policy*, 15, 10.
- Prins, E., & Clymer, C. (2018). Career pathways in Chicago, Houston, and Miami: Key features and support services among adult education providers. *Journal of Research & Practice for Adult Literacy, Secondary & Basic Education*, 28–51.
<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Esther-Prins->

[2/publication/330397496_CAREER_PATHWAYS_IN_CHICAGO_HOUSTON_AND_MIAMI_KEY_FEATURES_AND_SUPPORT_SERVICES_AMONG_ADULT_EDUCATION_PROVIDERS/links/5c3de7d6a6fdccd6b5aee682/CAREER-PATHWAYS-IN-CHICAGO-HOUSTON-AND-MIAMI-KEY-FEATURES-AND-SUPPORT-SERVICES-AMONG-ADULT-EDUCATION-PROVIDERS.pdf#page=28](https://publication/330397496_CAREER_PATHWAYS_IN_CHICAGO_HOUSTON_AND_MIAMI_KEY_FEATURES_AND_SUPPORT_SERVICES_AMONG_ADULT_EDUCATION_PROVIDERS/links/5c3de7d6a6fdccd6b5aee682/CAREER-PATHWAYS-IN-CHICAGO-HOUSTON-AND-MIAMI-KEY-FEATURES-AND-SUPPORT-SERVICES-AMONG-ADULT-EDUCATION-PROVIDERS.pdf#page=28)

- Rahman, M. S. (2020). The advantages and disadvantages of using qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in language “testing and assessment” research: A literature review. <https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v6n1p102>
- Rauscher, E. (2014). Hidden gains: Effects of early US compulsory schooling laws on attendance and attainment by social background. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 36(4), 501-518. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373714527787>
- Reid, A. M., Brown, J. M., Smith, J. M., Cope, A. C., & Jamieson, S. (2018). Ethical dilemmas and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Perspectives on medical education*, 7(2), 69-75. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-018-0412-2>
- Rexine, J. E. (1977). The Boston Latin school curriculum in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: A bicentennial review. *Classical Journal*, 261-266.
- Rice, O., Hudson, J., Foster, L. R., & Klein, S. (2016). Connecting secondary career and technical education and registered apprenticeship: A profile of six state systems. *Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, US Department of Education*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED571820.pdf>
- Rich, J., & Goodfriend, W. (2016). Can you remember? Factors predicting memory

accuracy in eyewitnesses. *Modern Psychological Studies*, 22(1), 3.

<https://scholar.utc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1259&context=mps>

Ritchotte, J. A., & Graefe, A. K. (2017). An alternate path: The experience of high-potential individuals who left school. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 61(4), 275-289.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0016986217722615>

Ross, T. R. (2016). The differential effects of parental involvement on high school completion and postsecondary attendance. *education policy analysis archives*, 24, 30. <https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.24.2030>

Rubenstein, L. D., Ridgley, L. M., Callan, G. L., Karami, S., & Ehlinger, J. (2018). How teachers perceive factors that influence creativity development: Applying a social cognitive theory perspective. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 70, 100-110.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.11.012>

Rumberger, R. W. (1987). High school dropouts: A review of issues and evidence. *Review of educational research*, 57(2), 101-121.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/1170232>

Rutschow, E. Z., Crary-Ross, S., & MDRC. (2014). Beyond the GED: Promising models for moving high school dropouts to college. *MDRC*.

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED545454.pdf>

Şahin, Ş. seymasahin@gmail. co., Arseven, Z. zeyneparseven@duzce. edu. t., & Kılıç, A. abdurrahmankilic@duzce. edu. t. (2016). Causes of student absenteeism and school dropouts. *International Journal of Instruction*, 9(1), 195–210.

<https://doi.org/10.12973/iji.2016.9115a>

- Sattar, S., Kauff, J., Kuehn, D., Munoz, V. S., Reiter, A., & Wolff, K. (2020). *State Experiences Expanding Registered Apprenticeship: Findings from a Federal Grant Program* (No. 3a81b7aca09f427aafdb83b6bd7e9d7e). Mathematica Policy Research.
- Schoenfeld, J., Segal, G., & Borgia, D. (2017). Social cognitive career theory and the goal of becoming a certified public accountant. *Accounting Education*, 26(2), 109-126. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09639284.2016.1274909>
- Schunk, D. H., & DiBenedetto, M. K. (2020). Motivation and social cognitive theory. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 60, 101832. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2019.101832>
- Scott, M. M., Zhang, S., & Koball, H. (2015). Dropping out and clocking in. *The Urban Institute*. <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/49216/2000189-Dropping-Out-and-Clocking-In.pdf>
- Sell, K. , Amella, E. , Mueller, M. , Andrews, J. and Wachs, J. (2016) Use of social cognitive theory to assess salient clinical research in chronic disease self-management for older adults: An integrative review. *Open Journal of Nursing*, 6, 213-228. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojn.2016.63022>
- Showalter, T., & Spiker, K. (2016). Promising practices in work-based learning for youth. *National Skills Coalition*. <https://nyachnyc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/National-Skills-Coalition-Promising-Practices-in-Work-Based-Learning-for-Youth.pdf>
- Sinclair, M. F., Christenson, S. L., Lehr, C. A., & Anderson, A. R. (2003). Facilitating

student engagement: Lessons learned from check & connect longitudinal studies.

The California School Psychologist, 8(1), 29-41.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/bf03340894>

Smith, A. J., Felix, E. D., Benight, C. C., & Jones, R. T. (2017). Protective factors, coping appraisals, and social barriers predict mental health following community violence: a prospective test of social cognitive theory. *Journal of traumatic stress*, 30(3), 245-253. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.22197>

Smith, T. J., Dillahunt-Aspillaga, C. J., & Kenney, R. M. (2016). Implementation of customized employment provisions of the workforce innovation and opportunity act within vocational rehabilitation systems. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 27(4), 195-202. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1044207316644412>

Smith, T. J., Dillahunt-Aspillaga, C. J., & Kenney, R. M. (2017). Implementation of customized employment provisions of the workforce innovation and opportunity act within vocational rehabilitation systems. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 27(4), 195–202. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1044207316644412>

Smith, A., & Thomson, M. M. (2014). Alternative education programmes: synthesis and psychological perspectives. *Educational Psychology In Practice*, 30(2), 111-119. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2014.891101>

Snyder, L. G., & Snyder, M. J. (2008). Teaching critical thinking and problem solving skills. *The Journal of Research in Business Education*, 50(2), 90. <https://reforma.fen.uchile.cl/Papers/Teaching%20Critical%20Thinking%20Skills%20and%20problem%20solving%20skills%20-%20Gueldenzoph,%20Snyder.pdf>

- Somers, C. L., Owens, D., & Piliawsky, M. (2009). A study of high school dropout prevention and at risk ninth graders' role models and motivations for school completion. *Education, 130*(2), 348-356
<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/f110/1d93c13c8a09073944603cd04566e6837208.pdf>
- Song, W., & American Council on Education, G. T. S. (2011). Labor market impacts of the GED[R] test credential on high school dropouts: Longitudinal evidence from NLSY97. GED testing service[R] research studies, 2011-2. GED testing service. *GED Testing Service*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED541696.pdf>
- Spaulding, S. (2015). The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and child care for low-income parents. *Washington, DC: Urban Institute*.
<https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/64706/2000309-the-workforce-innovation.pdf>
- Stark, P., & Noel, A. M. (2015). Trends in high school dropout and completion rates in the United States: 1972-2012. Compendium Report. NCES 2015-015. *National Center for Education Statistics*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED557576.pdf>
- Stearns, E., & Glennie, E. J. (2006). When and why dropouts leave high school. *Youth & Society, 38*(1), 29-57. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118x05282764>
- Steinberg, A., & Almeida, C. (2015). Opening the door: How community organizations address the youth unemployment crisis. *Jobs For the Future*.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED561287.pdf>
- Sung, C., & Connor, A. (2017). Social-cognitive predictors of vocational outcomes in

transition youth with epilepsy: Application of social cognitive career theory. *Rehabilitation Psychology*, 62(3), 276–289.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/rep0000161>

Tas, A., Selvitopu, A., Bora, V., & Demirkaya, Y. (2013). Reasons for dropout for vocational high school students. *Kuram Ve Uygulamada Egitim Bilimleri*, 13(3), 1561-1565. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1017656.pdf>

Taylor, J. P., Whittenburg, H. N., Thoma, C. A., Gokita, T., & Pickover, G. S. (2019). Collaboration to improve employment outcomes for youth with disabilities: Implications of the pre-ETS components of WIOA on IDEA transition requirements. *DADD Online*, 38. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Juliet-Hart-Barnett/publication/339389996_doj_6_2019_final/links/5e4ee1c2a6fdccd965b439e9/doj-6-2019-final.pdf#page=42

Thattai, D. (2001). A history of public education in the United States. *Journal of Literacy and Education in Developing Societies*, 1(2), 2001-11. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Deeptha_Thattai/publication/321179948_A_History_of_Public_Education_in_the_United_States_Editorial_Summary/links/5a1393820f7e9b1e57309035/A-History-of-Public-Education-in-the-United-States-Editorial-Summary.pdf

Thomas, T. (1986). Student absenteeism--school dropouts: The cause--how to resolve? Interviews with 205 persons representing students, educational and community agencies. *READ: A resource handbook for school administrators*, Volume XIV. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED315859.pdf>

- Thomas, T., & Sykes, R. (1986). 187 Alternative educational programs for reducing absenteeism and the dropout rate. *READ: A resource handbook for school administrators*, Volume XIII. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED315858.pdf>
- Tighe, E. L., Barnes, A. E., Connor, C. M., & Steadman, S. C. (2013). Defining success in adult basic education settings: Multiple stakeholders, multiple perspectives. *Reading research quarterly*, 48(4), 415-435.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.57>
- Todd McKee, M. ., & Caldarella, P. (2016). Middle school predictors of high school performance: A case study of dropout risk indicators. *Education*, 136(4), 515–529. <https://eds.p.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=0&sid=c23d6524-7294-406e-9630-aacca8855aec%40redis>
- Torpey, E. (2013). Certificates: A fast track to careers. *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, 56(4), 2. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ994857.pdf>
- Treskon, L., Kusayeva, Y., & Walter, J. (2020). Building on the GED: Promising Results from a Bridge-to-College Model. *MDRC*.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED605801.pdf>
- Tyler, J. H. (2005). The general educational development (GED) credential: History, current research, and directions for policy and practice. *Review of adult learning and literacy*, 5, 45-84.
https://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/ann_rev/rall_v5_ch3.pdf
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2020). *The Condition of Education 2020* (NCES 2020-144), Status Dropout Rates.

- Vinovskis, M. A. (1992). Schooling and poor children in 19th-century America. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 35(3), 313-331.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764292035003008>
- Walburg, V. (2014). Burnout among high school students: A literature review. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 42, 28-33.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2014.03.020>
- Walton, C. O. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) services for out-of-school youth ages 16 to 24. *policy*, 850, 651-2315.
[https://careersourceokaloosawalton.com/files/public/\(FINAL\)%20-%20Workforce%20Services%20RFP%20for%20Youth%20Services%20PY%202018-2020.pdf](https://careersourceokaloosawalton.com/files/public/(FINAL)%20-%20Workforce%20Services%20RFP%20for%20Youth%20Services%20PY%202018-2020.pdf)
- Wa-Mbaleka, S. (2019, December). Ethics in Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide. In *International Forum Journal* (Vol. 22, No. 2, pp. 116-132).
<https://journals.aiias.edu/info/article/view/51/42>
- Wang, S., Hung, K., & Huang, W. J. (2019). Motivations for entrepreneurship in the tourism and hospitality sector: A social cognitive theory perspective. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 78, 78-88.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2018.11.018>
- Warren, L. L. (2018). The Governance of Public Education in the United States of America. *Journal of Power, Politics & Governance*, 6(1), 1-6.
<https://doi.org/10.15640/jppg.v6n1a1>
- Webb, L. D. (2006). The history of American education. *Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill*

Prentice Hall.

<http://lburlbaw.cehd.tamu.edu/edci658/webb%20hist%20of%20am%20ed.pdf>

What to know about WIOA. (2015). *Community College Journal*, 86(3), 32.

Wilkins, B. (2005). Should public education be a federal fundamental right. *BYU Educ. & LJ*, 261.

<https://digitalcommons.law.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://scholar.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1207&context=elj>

Williams-Breault, B. D. (2020). Teen pregnancy: United States vs. Europe. *Int J Arts Humanit Soc Sci Studies*, 5(6), 46-54.

<https://www.ijahss.com/Paper/05062020/1179451174.pdf>

Wilson, P. G., Killam, S. G., Stazio, L. C., Ellis, R. B., Kiernan, N. M., & Ukachu, A. N. (2017). Post-secondary apprenticeships for youth: Creating opportunities for high demand employment. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 46(3), 305-312.

<https://doi:10.3233/JVR-170866>

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act performance results at-A-glance. United States Department of Labor. (n.d.). Retrieved from

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/performance/wioa-performance>

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Selected States' Planning Approaches for Serving Job Seekers and Employers. (2016). AO Reports, 1-25.

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/46239337-workforce-innovation-and-opportunity-act>

Wilkins, J., & Bost, L. W. (2016). Dropout prevention in middle and high schools: From

research to practice. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 51(5), 267-275

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1053451215606697>.

Youngsik Kim¹, Hyun Jun Joo², & Ssangcheol Lee³, ssclee@kedi. re. k. (2018). School factors related to high school dropout. *KEDI Journal of Educational Policy*, 15(1), 59–79.

Zambianchi, Manuela (2017). Time perspective, coping styles, perceived efficacy in affect regulation, and creative problem solving in adolescence and youth. *Psicología Educativa: Revista de Los Psicólogos de La Educación*, 1.

<https://doi.org/10.5093/psed2018a1>

Zinth, J. (2015). GED, HiSET and TASC: A comparison of high school equivalency assessments. ECS education trends. *Education Commission of the States*.

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED558072.pdf>

Zirkel, S., & Cantor, N. (2004). 50 years after Brown v. Board of Education: The promise and challenge of multicultural education. *Journal of Social Issues*, 60(1), 1-15.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0022-4537.2004.00096.x>

Appendix: Recruitment Posting

Interview study seeks previous WIOA participants who obtained employment through the program

There is a new study called “Career Attainment in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Program” to understand the experience of WIOA participants who earned their GED and worked with their career advisor to gain employment. For this study, you are invited to describe your experience with the WIOA program.

This interview study is part of the doctoral study for Asia Jones, a Ph.D. student at Walden University.

About the study:

- Confidential, audio recorded virtual interview (phone option available) (60 minutes)

Volunteers must meet these requirements:

- Previous WIOA participants who exited the program no more than 2 years
- 18 years old or older
- Gained employment with the help of WIOA

If interested, please email Asia Jones at asia.jones@waldenu.edu