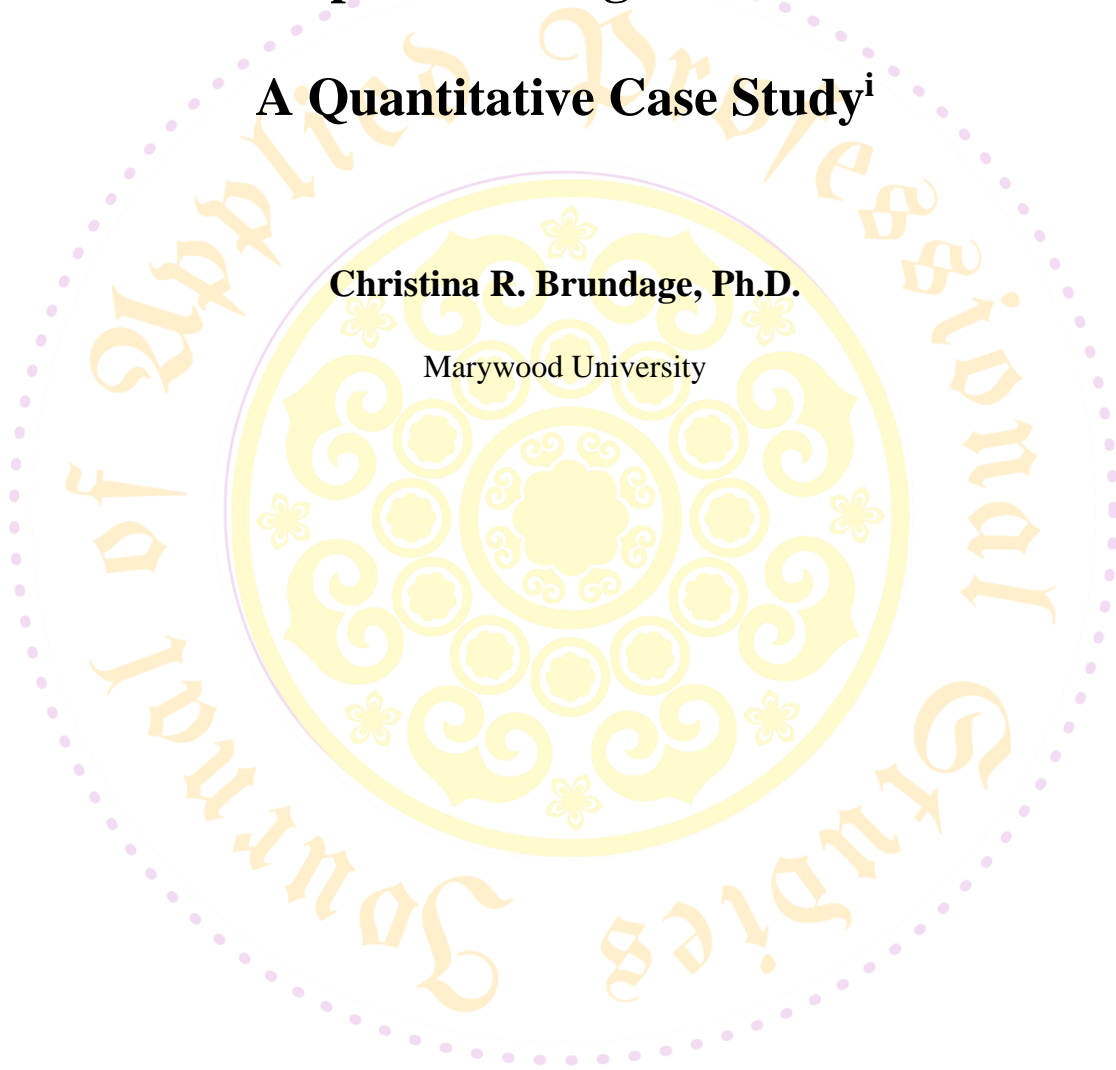# An Examination of Minority Students' Career Development in Higher Education

A Quantitative Case Study[i]

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Abstract

Engagement in career development activities and barriers to the career development process were examined in racial/ethnic minority (R/EM) undergraduate students who attended a Mid-Atlantic, faith based, primarily White institution of higher education (PWI). A secondary analysis was conducted using the Higher Education Research Institute's (HERI) College Senior Survey (CSS) for years 2012 through 2016 for the identified PWI. Constructs were created from the CSS variables to form an engagement score and a barriers score in order to determine differences in R/EM career development experiences. Independent-sample t tests, a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), and descriptive statistics were completed to answer the research question and subproblems. Additional supplemental analyses were conducted through independent-sample t tests and a two-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). A significant difference was found when comparing White/Caucasian students and R/EM students. R/EM students had lower engagement scores when faced with higher levels of barriers. Additional supplemental analysis showed that although weak, there is a significant relationship to race and the engagement and barriers scores of students and when students experience more barriers the amount of engagement decreases. The results of this study may offer insight into the experiences and barriers that this population faces so that institutions such as PWIs can provide improved programming and services that meet their individual cultural needs.

Keywords: career development; racial/ethnic minorities; barriers; primarily white institutions of higher education; self-efficacy.

Introduction

There are many factors that college students face in the career development process but racial/ethnic minority (R/EM) students tend to encounter issues or barriers that often intervene in the development process and hinder their willingness or interest in engaging in activities that promote their career development. These issues, which are often influenced by the social, economic, and political climates, are aspects of the R/EM student career development experience which can be very different from what their majority, White, peers encounter at primarily White institutions (PWIs) of higher education (Nelson Laird, Bridges, Morelon-Quainoo, Williams, & Salinas Holmes, 2007; Durodoye & Bodley, 1997). PWIs have generally lacked the resources needed to support R/EM students because of a deficiency in knowledge and understanding of the obstacles and barriers that this population faces during their lifetime. These institutions typically develop their services, programming, and resources around the majority population and fail to consider the needs of the minority students which lends to reduced acclimation to the campus, lower R/EM retention rates, and disengagement with various activities that support the career development process. Studies have found that minority students, such as African Americans, tend to be more engaged and willing to participate in their collegiate experience when attending schools serving primarily minority student populations such as historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) (Nelson Laird et al., 2007). This factor alone would suggest that PWIs, who seek diverse student enrollment, need to address the deficiency in organizational practices in supporting this population by increasing their understanding regarding the R/EM student experience and what the organization can do to help improve R/EM engagement in activities that aid in achievement of key skills and competencies in relation to student career development.

Understanding the experiences and obstacles that undergraduate minorities' go through while attending PWIs of higher education is vital to ensuring students develop skillsets and career competencies that promote career readiness, self-efficacy and attainment of career goals (Dickinson, Abrams, & Tokar, 2017). R/EM student needs have often been overlooked during the design, implementation, and use of college level supportive services and programming which was based on the needs for assisting the majority population at PWIs. It is also important to have a greater understanding of the obstacles and barriers that inhibit students from engaging in beneficial career activities and how these barriers shape the career decisions and goal attainment. These barriers can have a negative effect that impedes students' willingness to engage in vital career development activities and reduces self-efficacy levels that help them believe they have the abilities to attain their own career goals (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000).

With a greater knowledge of student engagement in career development activities and understanding for the barriers they face during the career development process, PWI colleges and universities can provide improved programming and increase support of undergraduate, racial/ethnic minority (R/EM) students which will help improve outcomes and further encourage this population of students to engage in activities as often as their White peers. PWIs can create and modify their programming, supportive practices, and develop additional resources that encourage R/EMs to participate in experiences that shepherd their career development process and build upon career skills that promote career readiness, self-efficacy and the attainment of career goals (Dickinson, Abrams, & Tokar, 2017).

There is also a deficiency of research in the area of racial differences in R/EM student career development versus their majority peers, including perceptions of career readiness, self-efficacy, and attainment of career goals. Studies that have been conducted focusing on the aspect of race in career development have found a direct correlation that supports the relation of self-efficacy and outcome expectations (Scheuermann, Tokar, & Hall, 2014; Dickinson, Abrams, & Tokar, 2017). With limited information on R/EM student engagement in activities promoting career development and the overall effect on outcomes of student career programming for the minority populations at PWI colleges and universities, it is imperative to explore what R/EM students are participating in with regard to activities that lend to the improvement and the attainment of important competencies that prepare them for the transition into life after college.

Foundational theorist for career development focused on the majority, Caucasian population for their studies resulting in a lack of research in the area of racial differences in student career readiness, self-efficacy, and attainment of career goals. With little information on the overall outcomes of racial/ethnic minority (R/EM) student career programming and participation in career focused professional, it is important to understand how R/EM students engage in career related activities through which they garner professional development skills, improve their self-efficacy, and feel more inclined to set higher career goals. Because these facets of career development lend to the successful achievement of transition into the professional phase of their lives, it is necessary to have a better grasp on what R/EM students are currently participating in to better understand what we can do as supportive higher education professionals in order to help them become more engaged in this vital activities and have a more positive experience where they can achieve successful career development.

Theoretical Framework

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) has been utilized in the investigation of career development for decades. In order to critically evaluate the research conducted in this study, it is imperative that the supporting research include utilization of SCCT, provide additional value to the understanding of minority career development, and enhance the understanding of supporting services for undergraduate minority students that contribute to their college to career transition (Mejia-Smith & Gushue, 2017).

A review of recent literature the use of SCCT to understand the student perception of career development, self-efficacy, and career goals. The social cognitive aspect of SCCT incorporates an individual's self-efficacy, career outcomes and goals (Tatum, 2018). While fewer studies focused on the minority students in PWIs, key studies focused on the aspect of race and gender in relation to achieving career objectives. With higher educational organizations becoming increasingly diverse and student outcomes becoming a major incentive for student enrollment, it is imperative to evaluate the career development of not only minority students on campus but to also compare the reported student perceptions of their majority peers in order to address the holistic and developmental needs for equally supporting both the minority and majority career potential.

Examining social cognitive variables of career development with minority undergraduate students can help solidify career interests and improve career decision making skills (Hui & Lent, 2017). SCCT can be utilized as a guided pathway for the understanding the career development of

students based on their racial background, gender, socioeconomic status (SES), societal influences on self-efficacy, and overall career goals or outcomes which aid in shaping the behavior of the individual (Hui, Lent, 2017; Mejia-Smith & Gushue, 2017). By understanding the cultural differences and utilizing SCCT to evaluate students career development, perceived career readiness, self-efficacy, and determination to achieve career goals, PWIs can make appropriate modification of programming to address the different needs that minority students have in order to achieve a successful college to career transition.

**Figure 1**
Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)
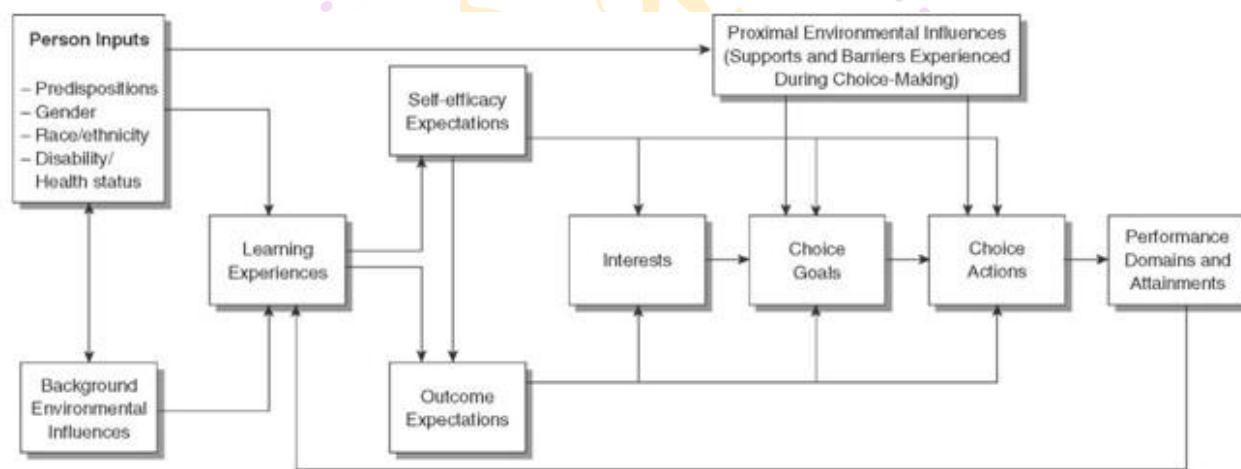
Note. Simplified diagram of Lent, Brown, and Hackett's (2000) career development model derived from a modified version of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory.

Donald Super's career development theory focuses on the way an individual constructs and negotiates their career as they encounter different experiences and learn how to deal with various situations, learn from their experiences, and develop coping skills in order to successfully attain their careers (Savickas, 1997). His Self-Concept Theory of Career Development recognizes the transitions and changes that individuals go through as they mature and it encompasses a life-span approach on how occupational decisions are made along with how a person adapts to certain experiences. Super's theoretical framework, although primarily based on Westernized American, White (Caucasian) populations, focused of self-concept and has been found relevant to Black, South Africans due to the theories abilities to emphasize interrelationships within ones various life-roles (Stead & Watson, 1998).

In addition to the theoretical connection to race, within Super's life-span development is a critical stage for college age students. The stage of exploration, during years fifteen through twenty-four, are important for student vocational development where they need to successfully manage key tasks that help them understand their interests, skills, values, and career goals (Super, 1990). The Life-Rainbow, or archway of career development, shows how complex experiences, intrapersonal, and environmental influences act as determinants when forming ones career (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996). This also involves physical, mental, and environmental factors, during the exploration years of development which help shape and implement student self-concept.

Super's life-space segment of the Life-Career Rainbow has also been utilized as a valuable tool in the career counseling process to help students identify their current and ideal roles and then identify barriers or challenges that they would have reaching their career goals (Okocha, 2001). Although the primary focus for undergraduate students would be within the exploratory phase, not everyone progresses through the various stages at the same time or at specific fixed ages but instead, Super focused on readiness to make career decisions, by completing stage-appropriate career tasks (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996).

Figure 2
Super's Theory of Career Development
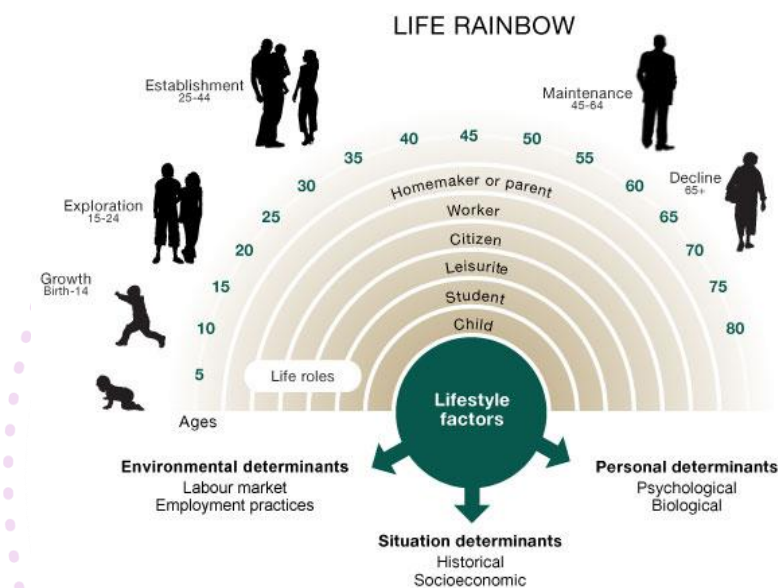
Note. Donald Super's Life-Career Rainbow diagram showing various age related milestones in the career development process (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996).
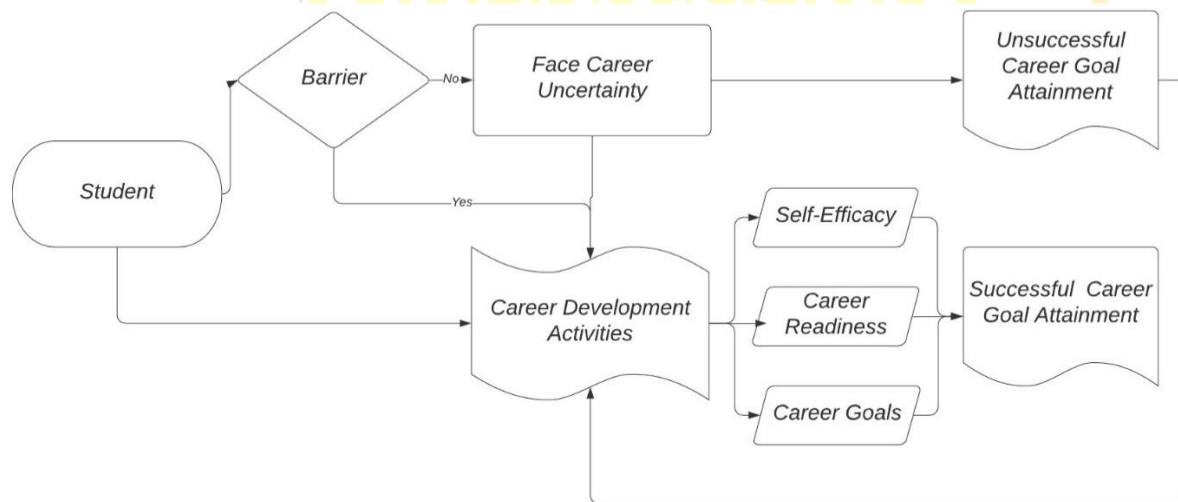
Conceptual Framework

Super's Theory of Career Development along with Social Cognitive Career Theory can be utilized as a guiding path for conceptualizing the career development process of R/EM undergraduate students based on their engagement in activities that provide them with valuable experiences along with outlining the effects of carrier barriers that can often prolong the developmental process. By understanding the cultural differences and barriers that R/EM undergraduate students face, Super's career theory and SCCT can be utilized to evaluate the students' career development journey which encourages or impedes the students' achievement of   career readiness, self-efficacy, and determination to achieve career goals. Evaluating the engagement of student participation in career development activities can help recognize whether or not there is a need for modification of programming to address the obstacles that minority students face in their willingness or ability to participate in activities that can enhance their potential to achieve a successful college to career transition.

In Figure 3, the combination of Super's career theory along with SCCT shows a potential journey in the career development process through which R/EM students may travel along. Many R/EM

students face obstacles or barriers in the career development process and when this occurs, some may be prevented from or make the decision not to participate in career development activities that promote self-efficacy, career readiness, and the attainment of career goals. Those that engage in career development activities even after facing barriers are able to attain these key areas that support their growth and help the students reach their career goals often before those that avoided or were prevented from participating in these activities. This is not saying that students that do not participate in activities that support their career development will never reach the same level of attainment that those who did participate, it merely suggests that it may take them longer and still require some level of engagement in activities to reach those milestones that support their attainment of goals.

When students face career uncertainty after facing a barrier and choose to avoid career development activities they will find difficulty successfully attaining their career goals. This does not mean it is the end of the road for that individual. While this may result in taking a part-time job that is not related to their professional education, for example, it allows the individual to participate in an experience that provides skill building, exposure to other occupations, has the potential to build self-efficacy, and can lead to setting of career goals. For those students, it is a cyclical process.

Figure 3
Researcher's Integrated Conceptual Framework Model

Note. The researcher's conceptual framework model for student career development when faced with barriers. An integration of SCCT and Super's Theory of Career Development.

Research Question

What are the differences between racial/ethnic minority (R/EM) undergraduate students and their White, majority peers' engagement in career development activities and barriers experienced in the career development process while attending a primarily White institution of higher education?

Subproblems

1. What is the engagement score in career development activities for R/EM undergraduate students attending a primarily White institution of higher education?
2. What is the engagement score in career development activities for White, majority undergraduate students attending a primarily White institution of higher education?
3. What is the barriers score for R/EM undergraduate students attending a primarily White institution of higher education?
4. What is the barriers score for White, majority undergraduate students attending a primarily White institution of higher education?
5. What is the difference in engagement scores in career development activities between R/EM undergraduate students and their White, majority peers?
6. What is the difference in the barriers scores of R/EM undergraduate students and their White, majority peers?

Hypothesis

H_o. There are no differences in engagement scores or barriers scores between R/EM undergraduate students and their White, majority peers while attending a primarily White institution of higher education.

H_a. There are differences in engagement scores or barriers scores between R/EM undergraduate students and their White, majority peers while attending a primarily White institution of higher.

Delimitations

Although this is a national survey, the researcher will only be using the data from students attending one Mid-Atlantic region, primarily White institutions of higher education which does not reflect the entire undergraduate student population. The PWI was identified through HERI's public database of schools participating in the survey. Based on the PWI's consistent yearly participation in the College Senior Survey (CSS), the available data from 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016 will be requested for a secondary analysis case study. The researcher will only utilize the data from these years due to the Higher Education Research Institute's (HERI) regulation for embargoing data within the past three years.

Additionally, the researcher will limit the population size of the CSS by using only the data from students who have attended the reporting PWI college or university for a term of three or more years and are within the defined exploratory age of fifteen through twenty-four. Of the selected population, the researcher will specifically request and utilize variable information that lends to the evidence of engagement in career development activities. The small sampling of variables taken from the entirety of the survey will be used as representation of the type of activity that lends towards career development along with selected variables that represent barriers that the students my encounter due to their race.

Finally, while the IPEDS's data indicated that the population for the 2018 year represented a 73% White/Caucasian population and 27% R/EM population, this study had an overwhelming response

from White/Caucasian participants at 93.1% and only 6.9% of the participants identifying as R/EM students. Because this study was conducted over a five year period, the ratios may have slightly changed, but with a lack of responses from the minority population that had the opportunity to participate, the scores are not reflective of the experiences that those students had.

Assumptions

The assumptions for this study include: the students that responded to the study answered honestly; the data that was received from the Mid-Atlantic PWI of higher education was accurate and as requested by the researcher; the sample of data is representative of the racial/ethnic minority population of undergraduate students at the primarily White institutions of higher education; and although the purpose of the College Senior Survey was not to examine the differences in racial/ethnic minority undergraduate student and White undergraduate student engagement in activities that support their career development and the racial barriers, there is sufficient variables that serve as examples of activities that reflect student participation and barriers to determine if there is such a difference.

Significance

Undergraduate minority students attending primarily White institutions (PWI) of higher education have often experienced social inequity in the career development process that is a vital to a successful college to career transition (Mejia-Smith & Gushue, 2017). This population of students can greatly benefit from a more supportive educational climate where they are encouraged to reach their career goals and participate in programming which includes activities such as workshops, in class projects and assignments, internships, and a culminating capstone experience that focuses on showing the students' development of communication, leadership, teamwork, problem solving and critical thinking, and professionalism and work ethic competencies ("Are College Graduates Career Ready?", 2018). Understanding the differences in students' cultural background in order to develop effective programming and strategies to improve student career development is imperative when analyzing and interpreting the data from this type of research (Byars-Winston & Rogers, 2018).

Student participation in activities that support their career development at PWI of higher education will allow R/EMs exposure to various social situations and allow students to learn how to critically analyze specific social conditions that oppress their advancement towards their career goals (Cadenas, Bernstein, & Tracey, 2018). Improving minority students' outlook of expectations focused on career outcomes will help them achieve their career aspirations by building self-confidence and allowing them to set higher standards of goals for themselves (Raque-Bogdan & Lucas, 2016). Because of these complexities involving the demographics by labeling these students within the category of racial/ethnic minorities, it is imperative to understand this population in order to prepare higher level programming and create a supportive campus climate that will encourage them to achieve these career aspirations.

This study can provide significant findings within career focused research that helps PWIs understand racial/ethnic minority engagement in career development activities within higher education and can lend to the building of better relationships and an environment that meets the

academic, social, and occupational needs this population of students has for transitioning from college to career. With a lack of career theory that can serve as a foundation for the necessary programming for racial/ethnic minority students, further research is needed to understand the level of student engagement in activities that support career development of R/EMs. Recent research on undergraduate racial/ethnic minorities has clearly suggested that there is a distinction in R/EM student and White student perceptions of career readiness, self-efficacy, and career goals, which influence student success in occupation achievement upon graduation.

A study conducted by Bounds (2017) supported the notion that the career decision process of ethnic minorities is significantly affected by student ethnic identity, self-concept, and self-efficacy. This is a clear indication that this population of students have different needs compared to their White, majority peers. Additional or improved programming that is designed to fulfill these needs will lend to greater levels of self-efficacy and confidence in attaining their career goals. Utilizing the data collected from this study can assist PWIs with recognizing whether or not there is a need for change at PWIs of higher education in order to meet the racial/ethnic minority student's career needs and whether or not there is discourse in the engagement levels which can lead to better practices and services that further enhance programming offered to this population of students.

Review of Literature

1954 became a pivotal moment for not only K-12 educational organizations but also for higher education when the Supreme Court ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education* shattered racial barriers by desegregating the American public education system (Strayhorn & Johnson, 2014). With this major milestone in racial equality, K-12 organizations began making the transition to integrating their schools while higher education organizations took a much longer approach to adapting to the concept of a new, non-segregated educational system. Although racial/ethnic minority (R/EM) students were no longer mandated to attend separate post-secondary colleges and universities, they still continued to find themselves facing inequalities in receiving supportive services, experiencing racial disparities and discrimination, and lacking the same achievement levels as their majority peers within the higher education organizations, especially organizations classified as primarily White institutions (PWIs) of higher education (Roksa et al., 2017).

One such area where studies have shown evidence of such inequalities is in the career development of R/EM college students. In general, there are many factors that college students face in the career development process but R/EMs tend to encounter additional issues or barriers that can intervene in the process. These issues or barriers, which are frequently influenced by societal, financial, cultural, environmental, and organizational factors, are aspects of the R/EM students' career development experience which often times is very different from what their White, majority peers' experience (Durodoye & Bodley, 1997; Luke, Diambra, & Gibbons, 2014; Nelson Laird, Bridges, Morelon-Quainoo, Williams, & Salinas Holmes, 2007; Storlie, Mostade, & Duenyas, 2016).

Today, as postsecondary schools seek to further diversify their campuses, colleges and universities are looking for ways to support the needs of their minority population of students with services and provide an inclusive environment where they can achieve their educational dreams and successfully transition into the workforce. Unfortunately, many higher education institutions lack

the resources and appropriate support for racial/ethnic minority student career development. Such is the case for many colleges and universities classified as primarily White institutions of higher education which makes it important to study the career development experience of not only R/EM students but to also evaluate the barriers or issues that may prevent R/EMs from engaging in career development activities which support their overall development and attainment of career goals.

While a major goal of postsecondary schools is to prepare their students for a successful college to career transition and life after graduation, it is student outcomes that remain a major factor in making sure that their students are achieving their own professional goals and finding employment (Ritzer & Sleigh, 2019). A college's student outcomes are often a top priority in the selection process and in order to ensure attractive success rates, it is imperative that all students achieve the development of key career competencies which promote career development and readiness, support the increase in self-efficacy levels, and enable students to achieve their career goals (Dickinson, Abrams, & Tokar, 2017). Competencies such as effective communication, strong leadership traits, the ability to work in a team environment, problem-solving skills, and a great work ethic, for example, are attributes that employers seek in job candidates and by engaging in relevant career development activities, students will gain confidence in their career readiness, have higher self-efficacy levels, and set and attain their professional goals ("Key Attributes", n.d.; Dickinson, Abrams, & Tokar, 2017).

R/EM students are more susceptible to experiencing issues or barriers because of their race and can be discouraged from participating or engaging in valuable experiential learning opportunities such as activities that foster the development of these key competencies. This also can hinder the development of higher levels of self-efficacy. An important aspect in the career development process, certainty of initial career choice, was also found to be significantly predicted by career decision self-efficacy (Pulliam, Ieva, & Burlew, 2017).

Research on undergraduate minorities has clearly suggested that there is a distinction in student perceptions of career readiness, self-efficacy, and career goals, which influence student success in occupation achievement upon graduation. Therefore, it is an aspect of the career development process that needs further support when working with R/EM students. Self-efficacy is often influenced through experiences in both accomplishments and failures, watching or modeling others, encouragement or discouragement, and how the individuals reacts to stress (Bandura, 1997). Students often arrive on campus with little experience in the decision making process which is often seen when there are lower levels of self-efficacy (Luke, Diambra, & Gibbons, 2014). In a study conducted by Lent, Morris, Penn, and Ireland (2018), self-efficacy was found to be a reliable predictor of decisional outcomes. Other research, conducted by Pulliam, Ieva, and Burlew (2017), found that career decision self-efficacy significantly predicted initial career choice which reaffirmed previous research studies.

Research conducted on undergraduate minorities has clearly suggested that there is a disparity in the student perception of career readiness, self-efficacy, and career goals which can negatively influence student success in occupational achievement upon graduation. R/EM undergraduate students attending PWIs have often experienced social inequality in the career development process which is a vital contributor to a successful college to career transition (Mejia-Smith & Gushue, 2017). In addition, other recent literature has examined the use of Social Cognitive Career

Theory (SCCT) in order to better understand student perceptions of the career development process, self-efficacy building, and ability to set and attain career goals through the social cognitive aspect of SCCT which focuses on those key areas of student development (Tatum, 2018). While fewer studies have been directed towards R/EM undergraduate students at PWIs, key studies have honed in on race and gender in relation to achieving career objectives. There are significant implications within research that support the need for studies focusing on gaining a better understanding of the minority students career development process but with a lack of career theory that is based on R/EMs, foundational theory such as SCCT can support studies and provide a better understanding of the cognitive aspects of career development, improved self-efficacy levels, and overall career outcome expectations and attainment (Raque-Bogdan & Lucas, 2016).

Barriers

Counseling and vocational psychologists have continually sought to increase their knowledge for understanding how barriers shape the career decisions and career paths of R/EM students (Mejia-Smith & Gushue, 2017). Career barriers were defined earlier as events or conditions that can be found within the individual or in the individual's environment that have the potential to make the career development process difficult (Swanson & Woitke, 1997). Student perceptions of barriers have a direct and indirect effect on their occupational aspirations and outcomes (Kim & O'Brien, 2018). R/EM students, in particular, face several potential cultural barriers to their career development and can have a major impact on their ability to attain their career goals (Constantine, Erickson, Banks, & Timberlake, 1998).

Barriers often cause a negative effect that impede a student's ability or willingness to engage in career development activities, set career goals, or work towards achieving their goals (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000). Barriers that an R/EM undergraduate students encounter may be mitigated by social, financial, cultural, and systemic obstacles that influence students' self-efficacy levels and overall career development (Durodoye & Bodley, 1997).

R/EM students attending PWIs have often experienced social inequity in the career development process which supports the students' college to career transition (Mejia-Smith & Gushue, 2017). Social injustices that inhibit the career development process stem from the greater social system, the family, the community, and society, but not from the students themselves (Crucil & Amundson, 2017). Social oppression and social isolation can be found within the campus environment when minority students, such as undocumented immigrants and those that are transitioning from racially segregated communities, attend PWIs of higher education (Cadenas, Bernstein, & Tracey, 2018; Keels, 2013). For students facing these challenges, it is imperative for colleges and universities to have a professional support system that is not only sympathetic to the needs of this population and is also willing to provide additional resources and programming to combat social barriers.

Social privilege, as a social injustice, promotes disparities between the Caucasian and minority populations on college and university campuses and often creates barriers in the career development of R/EM students. (Crucil & Amundson, 2017).

Minority students, while attending college, are also frequently faced with challenges of racial disparities, racism, and discrimination which are external challenges that differ from those of the

majority student population (Fouad & Byars-Winston, 2005). Nationally, nearly 90% of African-Americans and 77% of other minority populations have experienced racially motivated discrimination compared to a much smaller 21% of Whites (Ogunyemi et al., 2019).

R/EM students can also experience racism and discrimination through microaggressions. Sue et al. (2007) defined microaggressions as intentional or unintentional, verbal or nonverbal, insults, invalidations, and indignities that are directed towards an individual or group who is a member of a minority population. They are categorized as microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations. While microassaults are usually conscious and deliberate acts of derogation towards a minority, microinsults and microinvalidations are subtle snubs that entail hidden messages within the insult that demeans the individual's heritage or identity and an invalidation which excludes or nullifies an individual's thoughts or feeling pertaining to their culture (Ogunyemi et al., 2019).

Financial barriers, such as merit-based acceptance criteria into colleges and universities, hinder the educational training of low socioeconomic R/EMs and therefore has a major impact on their employment and income based outcomes (Müller, 2014). With financial aid still an insufficient means for minority students to attend college, fewer R/EMs are able to take advantage of educational opportunities that majority or White students are often privileged with.

DACA students, for example, face additional challenges that include ineligibility of the same rights that U.S. citizens have, such as voting and federal aid, uncertainty in prospective careers, financial and familial pressures, and higher levels of psychological distress due to their immigration status (Cadenas, Bernstein, & Tracey, 2018).

The exploration of ethnic identity is a critical implication within the career development process and is a major life experience for minorities where they can build confidence in performing career-related tasks by achieving a better understanding and connection with their cultural group's beliefs and attitudes (Kim & Choi, 2018). R/EM students with a strong sense of ethnic identity are found to seek out occupational information including information on cultural issues within specific work areas as compared to student with conflicting views on their ethnic identity (Kim & Choi, 2018).

To be effective, career counseling must incorporate different variables and processes from different cultural contexts (Fouad & Byars-Winston, 2005). Understanding the differences in students' cultural background in order to develop effective programming and strategies to improve student career development is imperative in supporting this population of students (Byars-Winston & Rogers, 2018). R/EM students often struggle with finding how they fit in relation to their family lives and as college students in regards to their culture, values, and life roles, which all affect their career development (Storlie, Mostade, & Duenyas, 2016). This population of students face obstacles to their development process that majority, Caucasian students, often do not experience because of their cultural identity or lack thereof.

It is important for individuals working with R/EM students on their career development to consider the role that the student's family plays in the student's life and consider conducting inclusive counseling sessions where the family also plays an integral part in helping the student in their career path (Crucil & Amundson, 2017). Parks-Yancy (2012) found that on occasion, this

population of students felt overwhelmed with the aspect of juggling family and school obligations due in part to the lack of understanding of the demands that college places on the student's time. Hui and Lent (2018) suggest that support from families of some R/EM students may help in an increased level of self-efficacy and outcome expectations.

In a study conducted by Storlie, Mostade, and Duenyas (2016), Latina college students attending a PWI of higher education reported a conflict of their collegiate life and their cultural values and life roles which led to a feeling of isolation and loneliness, all which greatly impact their attainment of academic and career goals.

Unfortunately, many R/EM students do not have the support system available to them or may even be the first in their family to attend a university or college. The familial support may also be hampered by lack of knowledge regarding career opportunities and the process of career development provided through their collegiate experience (Parks-Yancy, 2012). This can result in a severe lack of support where there isn't career advice or encouragement in the pursuit of their career aspirations.

PWIs have not effectively supported or retained R/EM students compared to those institutions who are primarily serving minority populations. Rodgers and Summers (2008) suggested that colleges and universities serving R/EMs consider developing a better model for supporting this population by considering minority student motivation and self-systems in regards to their racial or ethnic identities. Positive identification within an ethnic group can aid in greater self-efficacy, ability to complete career related tasks, and perceive fewer career barriers (Mejia-Smith & Gushue, 2017).

Students within higher education are coming from increasingly diverse backgrounds and when higher education professionals such as career counselors work with this population it is important to incorporate the students beliefs, values, and worldviews to be effective (Fouad & Byars-Winston, 2005). Because cultural values and life roles are often significant aspects of R/EM students' lives, it is imperative that professionals within student development, retention, and career preparation at higher educational organizations explore the impact that these have on the overall development process (Storlie, Mostade, & Duenyas, 2016).

Summary

While *Brown v. Board of Education* may have set a precedence for the integration of minorities into public education, it did nothing to discourage the social, cultural, financial and systemic barriers that still inflict inequality for racial/ethnic minority education including their career development. Although higher education has strived to produce 21st century learners who are more globally sensitive than previous generations, there is still severe discourse that causes barriers to the career development process which impacts R/EM students' ability to achieve high levels self-efficacy, self-confidence, and attain their professional career goals.

While PWIs often find frequent disengagement with minority populations, studies have found that minority students, such as African Americans, tend to be more engaged and willing to participate in their collegiate experience when attending schools serving primarily minority student populations such as historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) (Nelson Laird et al.,

2007). Recent literature has shown that race can severely impact the career development process and cause adverse psychological consequences. This evidence shows that PWIs, through a holistic organizational approach, need to adopt better resources and acquire further knowledge for providing a more diverse learning environment, quality services designed with minority student programming in mind, and appropriate support to meet the needs of R/EM students. To do so, PWIs must achieve a better understanding about the ethnic minority student experience and how these types of organizations can help improve the development of key skills and competencies in relation to student career development while also supporting this population by providing an educational environment that supports their complex needs. The educational learning environment of higher educational organizations need to combat the negative implications of racial discrimination and disparities and help to eliminate the negative stereotypes and views that create a hostile campus which promotes additional psychological afflictions and derails the learning and career development process (Ogunyemi et al., 2019).

Higher educational organizations must also provide greater cultural outreach efforts across multiple learning contexts where there is a significant need to support diverse student populations, especially within the academic curriculum (Stebleton & Diamond, 2018). Exploring the impact of cultural values on career development will improve R/EMs' sense of belonging and develop a better support system for students attending PWIs of higher education (Storlie, Mostade, & Duenyas, 2016). A study conducted by Kim and Choi (2018) found that students with a strong sense of support from their ethnic groups often participate in social interactions with members of that group where they can build on knowledge and skills needed for successfully performing future career-related tasks.

Methodology

Research Design

A quantitative case study was conducted through secondary analysis of data collected by the Higher Education Research Institute & Cooperative Institutional Research Program (HERI) through the College Senior Survey (CSS) of 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016. While the original intentions of the survey was to measure the overall impact of college and provide further support and insight into student cognitive and affective growth during college, the CSS also served as an exit survey for seniors who transitioned from their undergraduate years of college. The survey included critical aspects of student engagement, interaction, development, aspirations, and future plans (HERI, n.d.) The CSS provided researchers with a better understanding of student learning experiences in and out of the classroom, student confidence in science and research, leadership, and future aspirations and plans (Berdan Lozano & Tilman, 2016). The independent variable that was used for the secondary analysis was RACE and the two dependent variables included ENGAGEMENT SCORE and BARRIERS SCORE.

Participants

Based on the available dataset through HERI's 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016 College Senior Survey (CSS), the population of student participants that was utilized for this study included graduating undergraduate college seniors that are enrolled at a faith-based, primarily White

institution of higher education in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The original cumulative sample size provided to the researcher included 1628 participants that responded to the PWI's HERI's 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016 College Senior Survey (CSS). The population of students was then further reduced when removing students that did not fit the inclusion criteria of the study. The inclusion criteria included:

1. Between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four.
2. Attended the reporting PWI for a minimum of three years.
3. Will be graduating with a minimum of a Bachelor's degree at the time of the survey.

The PWI that had been selected by the researcher was identified through HERI's database of colleges and universities that had participated in the CSS for at least five consecutive years. The college or university, through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System's (IPED's) website, was found to have a racial distribution of White, or Caucasian, students representing 51% or higher which classifies the organization as a PWI. The Mid-Atlantic, faith-based, PWI that was selected for this study reported for 2018 an undergraduate enrollment of 1,934 with 73% of the population classified as White and 87% of the student population being twenty-four years old or younger (College Navigator, 2018).

The identified PWI supplied the survey's electronic SPSS datasets with the requested variables and stripped all identifiable information for the specified five years upon ERC/IRB approval. After attaining the datasets, the data was combined to form one large dataset representing five years' worth of student engagement and potential barriers.

Instrument

The College Senior Survey (CSS) data was provided by the identified PWI. The CSS, was a survey instrument designed by HERI which received University of California Los Angeles IRB approval. The survey provided by HERI was used at colleges and universities who managed their own distribution and had access to HERI forms and documentations that supported the dissemination and collection of the survey data.

The researcher requested the data from HERI's CSS of 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016 from the identified PWI that had participated in the CSS survey for at least five consecutive years. HERI had publicly made a list of institutions that had participated in the past. Based on that list, the researcher identified a school that participated for five consecutive years consisting of 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016 due to HERI's policy of embargoing data from the last three years. The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) was used to verify that the school qualifies as a PWI and had a White to minority ratio of at least 51% White population or higher. The school that was identified for the study had been contacted and provided a permission letter to access the data, pending ERC approval. The data received back from this PWI had no identifiable information on the participating school or the responding individuals.

The independent variable that was utilized for the secondary analysis was RACE and the two dependent variables included ENGAGEMENT SCORE and BARRIERS SCORE. The

engagement score will be calculated by whether or not the student has participated in career development activities. These identified activities from the CSS included twenty variables from the survey that supported career development. In order to formulate the appropriate scoring, transformation of the variables took place to create a uniform point system that would reflect in a cumulative engagement score. Each activity was scored with 0 (No Participation) and 1 (Yes, Have Participated). An engagement score ranging from 0 (No Engagement) through 20 (High Level of Engagement) was then calculated by creating a computed variable in SPSS. Although the instrument was used for secondary analysis, a professional review was conducted for both ENGAGEMENT and BARRIERS to verify the validity of the selected questions/variables.

Transformation of the variables also took place to create a uniform point system that would reflect in a cumulative barriers score. Twenty questions/variables were identified as potential barriers from the CSS surveys. Each barrier will be scored with 0 (No, Have not experienced) and 1 (Yes, Have experienced). The barriers score was found by calculating a variable within SPSS based on whether or not the student had identified or experienced barriers that could potential hinder their career development. The barriers score ranged from 0 (No Barriers) through 20 (High Level of Barriers).

Transformation also took place for the students identified RACE. SPSS 26 was used to transform the multiple races into one variable labeled RACE. Seven specific races were identified from all five years of the survey and due to the fact that each year had slightly different responses, each year's survey for RACE was transformed separate and prior to being added into the main dataset in order to have a consistent response rate. The seven races that were identified include:

1. White/Caucasian
2. African American/Black
3. American Indian/Alaskan Native
4. Asian American/Asian
5. Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
6. Latino/a
7. Other race/ethnicity

Following the creation of the new variable RACE, a second variable, RACE_COMP, was created to include just the comparison population of White/Caucasian or Racial/Ethnic Minorities. White/Caucasian students were classified into the first group and all others were included in the second group.

The data was then be used to do a comparison of R/EM and White undergraduate student engagement scores along with their barriers scores to determine if there are difference in the two populations.

Data Analysis

After receiving the 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016 College Senior Survey data set from the selected Mid-Atlantic, faith based PWI of higher education, the data was imported into SPSS Version 26. The appropriate data cleaning was completed, and participants who did not meet the

requirements of three or more years enrolled at their current college or university and at or between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four were removed from the dataset. Finally, a secondary analysis was conducted to determine if there are differences in R/EM undergraduate student and White student engagement in career development activities and difference in the barriers these students face while attending a PWI.

IBM SPSS Version 26 was used to conduct the secondary analysis of the data collected and cleaned by the researcher in order to answer the following questions.

The Research Question

What are the differences between racial/ethnic minority (R/EM) undergraduate students and their White, majority peers' engagement in career development activities and barriers experienced in the career development process while attending a primarily White institution of higher education?

The research question will be analyzed using a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to assess if mean differences exist.

Subproblems

For subproblems one, two, three, and four, descriptive statistics was used to determine the mean engagement score and the mean barriers score for R/EM students and White/Caucasian students.

For subproblems five and six, the differences were evaluated by performing an independent-samples *t* test for each dependent variable to determine if there was a significant difference between the means of the two groups of students for engagement and barriers.

Supplemental Analyses

Supplemental analyses were conducted on the demographic data to examine the various variables for differences in engagement in career development activities and barriers that students faced in the career development process. The following supplemental analyses were considered:

- The difference in gender (male vs. female) for the engagement score was measured using an independent-sample *t* test.
- The difference in gender (male vs. female) for the barriers score was measured using an independent-sample *t* test.
- The relationship between race and the amount of loan debt was measured using the Pearson R correlation.
- The difference in loan debt for White/Caucasian students and R/EM students was measured using and independent *t* test.
- The relationship between race and the engagement and barrier score was measured using the Pearson R correlation.
- The effect of race and gender on the engagement and barrier score was measured using a two-way MANOVA.

Results

In examining the differences in White/Caucasian students in comparison to their Racial/Ethnic minority peers regarding their engagement in career development activities and the barriers they face in the career development process, several analyses were conducted.

Response Rate

Prior to the analysis, data was screened and cleaned, and missing data were addressed. The original number of participant in the dataset included 1628 students. The following factors reduced the number of cases.

- 143 participants were removed because they were not within the age range of eighteen to twenty-four.
- 223 participants were removed because they were not in attendance at the selected PWI for three or more years.
- 33 participants were removed because they did not identify that they were graduating with a bachelor's degree.
- 33 participants did not identify their race and therefore could not be included.
- 296 cases of missing data were found in the responses that calculated towards an engagement or barriers score and therefore were removed.

Following the cleaning of the data, the assumptions of normality were met with skewness and kurtosis indicating a normally distributed sample. The final study sample consisted of 900 participants.

Demographic Information

The study participants included male students (N = 211, 23.4%) and female students (N = 689, 76.6%). The study population consisted primarily of White/Caucasian students (N = 838, 93.1%) with the remaining students classified as Racial/Ethnic minority students (N = 62, 6.9%). Participants ranged in age from eighteen to twenty-four ($M = 22.54$). Additionally, participants reported an average of $44,453 in student debt owed as of June of the year of their graduation, although 23.8% (N = 214) did not respond to the question (Table 1, p. 40).

Table 1
Demographic of Participant Population (N = 900)

Variable		N	%
Race	White/Caucasian	838	93.1%
	African American/Black	6	0.7%
	American Indian/Native Alaskan	2	0.2%
	Asian American/Asian	15	1.7%
	Hispanic/Latino/a	28	3.1%
	Other	11	1.2%
Gender	Female	689	76.6%
	Male	211	23.4%
Age	Twenty-one	14	1.6%
	Twenty-two	484	53.8%
	Twenty-three	305	33.9%
	Twenty-four	97	10.8%

Subproblems

Subproblem one, "What is the engagement score in career development activities for R/EM undergraduate students attending primarily White institutions of higher education", was analyzed using descriptive statistics exploration. The engagement score ranged from 0 (No Engagement) to 20 (High Level of Engagement). The mean engagement score of the R/EM student population was 10.66 (+/-2.936), the median score was 10.00, and the min was 5 with a max of 16 (Table 2, p. 42).

Subproblem two, "What is the engagement score in career development activities for White, majority undergraduate students attending primarily White institutions of higher education", was analyzed using descriptive statistics exploration. The engagement score ranged from 0 (No Engagement) to 20 (High Level of Engagement). The mean engagement score of the R/EM student population was 11.58 (+/-2.729), the median score was 12.00, and the min was 3 with a max of 19 (Table 2, p. 42).

Subproblem three, "What is the mean barriers score for R/EM undergraduate students attending primarily White institutions of higher education", was analyzed using descriptive statistics exploration. The barriers score ranged from 0 (No Barriers) to 20 (High Level of Barriers). The mean barriers score of the R/EM student population was 5.35 (+/-2.776), the median score was 5.00, and the min was 0 with a max of 13 (Table 2, p. 42).

Subproblem four, "What is the mean barriers score for White, majority undergraduate students attending primarily White institutions of higher education", was analyzed using descriptive statistics exploration. The barriers score ranged from 0 (No Barriers) to 20 (High Level of Barriers). The mean barriers score of the R/EM student population was 4.67 (+/-2.289), while the median score was 5.00, and the min was 0 with a max of 14 (Table 2, p. 42).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Engagement and Barrier Score Population

Variable	Race	m	SD	min	max
Engagement Score	White/Caucasian	11.58	2.729	3	19
	R/EM	10.66	2.936	5	16
Barrier Score	White/Caucasian	4.67	2.289	0	14
	R/EM	5.35	2.776	0	13

Subproblem five, "What is the difference in engagement scores in career development activities between R/EM undergraduate students and their White, majority peers", was analyzed using an independent-samples t test. A Levene's Test for Equality of Variance indicated equal variance between the two groups $p = .471$. The independent-samples t test comparing the mean engagement score of the White/Caucasian students and the R/EM students found a significant difference between the mean of the two groups ($t(898) = 2.551, p < .05$). The mean of the White/Caucasian students was higher ($M = 11.58, sd = 2.73$) than the mean of the Racial/Ethnic Minority students ($M = 10.66, sd = 2.94$). Cohen's d was calculated with an effect size of 0.12, a small effect. White/Caucasian students reported engaging in higher levels of career development activities compared to their R/EM undergraduate peers (Table 3, p. 44).

Subproblem six, "What is the difference in the barriers scores of R/EM undergraduate students and their White, majority peers", was analyzed using an independent-samples t test. A Levene's Test for Equality of Variance did not indicate equal variance between the two groups $p = .041$. The independent-samples t test comparing the mean barrier score of the White/Caucasian students and the Racial/Ethnic Minority students found no significant difference between the mean of the two groups ($t(67.275) = -1.884, p > .05$). Cohen's d was calculated with an effect size of 0.13, a small effect. The mean of the White/Caucasian students ($M = 4.67, sd = 2.29$) was not significantly different from the mean of the Racial/Ethnic Minority students ($M = 5.35, sd = 2.78$) although there was a trend towards significance $p = 0.064$ (p range between $0.05 – 0.10$) (Table 3, p. 44).

Table 3

Independent-Samples T Test for Engagement and Barriers

	t	df	p	Mean Difference	SE Difference
Engagement Score	2.551	898	0.011	0.921	0.361
Barrier Score	-1.884	67.275	0.064	-0.681	0.361

Research Question

The research question, "What are the differences between racial/ethnic minority (R/EM) undergraduate students and their White, majority peers' engagement in career development activities and barriers experienced in the career development process while attending a primarily White institution of higher education", was analyzed using a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). A one-way MANOVA was calculated examining the effect of race

(White/Caucasian or Racial/Ethnic Minority) on engagement and barrier scores. A significant effect was found ($Lambda(2,897) = .989$, $p = .007$) with an effect size of 0.011 indicating a small effect. Follow-up univariate ANOVAs indicated that engagement scores were significantly improved based on race ($F(1,898) = 6.506$, $p = .011$). Barrier scores were also significantly improved based on race ($F(1,898) = 4.947$, $p = .026$) (Table 4, p. 45). Therefore, the null hypothesis, "there are no differences in engagement scores or barriers scores between R/EM undergraduate students and their White, majority peers while attending a primarily White institution of higher education" would be rejected and the alternative hypotheses "there are differences in engagement scores or barriers scores between R/EM undergraduate students and their White, majority peers while attending a primarily White institution of higher" would be accepted.

Table 4
Effect of Race on Engagement and Barrier Scores

Test	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Wilks' Lambda	0.989	5.044	2.00	0.007	0.011

Reliability

The CSS instrument variables were adapted and used to form an engagement construct and a barriers construct in order to determine the calculated scores for student engagement in career development activities and barriers experienced in the career development process. Both were evaluated for reliability and internal consistency. The engagement score construct had a Cronbach's alpha measuring .628, indicating a moderate reliability. The barriers score construct had a Cronbach's alpha measuring .538, indicating an acceptable reliability. Neither construct had been previously researched. Therefore, there is no comparison available. Also, since this is an adapted version of the CSS instrument, the intended purpose of the engagement and barriers constructs is for research purposes only and the Cronbach alpha scores, while typically $>=.7$, are still acceptable for this study.

Supplemental Analyses

Supplemental analyses were conducted to further explore the relationship between the demographic data and the engagement and barriers score.

The difference in gender (male vs. female) for the engagement score was measured using an independent-samples *t* test comparing the mean engagement score of male and female students. A Levene's Test for Equality of Variance indicated equal variance between the two groups $p = .428$. The analysis found a significant difference between the mean of the two groups ($t(898) = -3.437$, $p = .001$). The mean engagement score of the female students was higher ($M = 11.69$, $sd = 2.71$) than the mean of the male students ($M = 10.95$, $sd = 2.83$) indicating female students engaged in more career development activities than the male students.

The difference in gender (male vs. female) for the barriers score was measured using an independent-sample t test comparing the mean barriers score of male and female students. A Levene's Test for Equality of Variance did not indicate equal variance between the two groups $p = .027$. The analysis found a significant difference between the mean of the two groups ($t(318.387) = 2.511, p < .05$). The mean barriers score of the male students was higher ($M = 5.09, sd = 2.53$) than the mean of the female students ($M = 4.61, sd = 2.25$) indicating male students experience more barriers to the career development process.

The relationship between race and the amount of loan debt was measured using the Pearson R correlation. The Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated and found a weak correlation that was not significant ($r(684) = .025, p > .05$) with a very small effect size of 0.001. Race is not related to the amount of loan debt.

The difference in loan debt for White/Caucasian students and R/EM students was measured using and independent t test. The independent t test compared the mean loan amount of participants who were classified as White/Caucasian students to the mean of participants who were classified as R/EM students. No significant difference was found ($t(684) = -.654, p > .05$). The mean of the White/Caucasian students ($M = 44,190, sd = 38,316.46$) was not significantly different from the mean of the R/EM students ($M = 47,800, sd = 26,511.45$).

The relationship between race and the engagement and barrier score was measured using the Pearson R correlation. The Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated and found a weak negative correlation ($r(898) = -.141, p < .001$) with a small effect size of 0.02, indicating a significant linear relationship between the engagement and barriers score. When students face more barriers their engagement level decreases.

The effect of race and gender on the engagement and barrier score was measured using a two-way MANOVA. A two-way MANOVA was calculated examining the effect of race (White/Caucasian or Racial/Ethnic Minority) and gender (Male or Female) on engagement and barrier scores. There was no significant interaction effect between race and gender on the combined dependent variables ($F(2,895) = .947, p > .05$). There was also no significant effect found for gender ($F(2,895) = .784, p > .05$) and race ($F(2,895) = 2.751, p > .05$) although there was a trend towards a significant effect for race.

Discussion

This quantitative case study was a secondary analysis that examined racial/ethnic minority (R/EM) undergraduate student engagement in career development activities and barriers to the career development process while attending a predominantly White institution of higher education (PWI). The variable constructs, engagement score and barriers score, were designed from the Higher Education Research Institute's (HERI) College Senior Survey (CSS) in order investigate the experiences that R/EM college students have during vital developmental years where they build self-efficacy, attain competencies that support career readiness, and set career goals.

The study explored the differences in the R/EM student and White/Caucasian student population engagement scores and barriers scores. The study was comprised of 900 undergraduate students

from a Mid-Atlantic, faith-based PWI, and included undergraduates who were between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four, attended the college/university for a minimum of three years, and were classified as seniors graduating with a bachelor's degree at the time of the survey.

It was hypothesized that there are no differences in engagement scores in career development activities between R/EM undergraduate students and their White, majority peers while attending a primarily White institution of higher education and that there are no differences in the barriers score between R/EM undergraduate students and their White, majority peers while attending a primarily White institution of higher education. Analyses found that there are significant differences in both scores of R/EM and White/Caucasian undergraduate students. White/Caucasian undergraduate students engaged more frequently in career development activities and R/EM undergraduate students experienced more barriers to the career development process. Therefore, the null hypothesis, "there are no differences in engagement scores or barriers scores between R/EM undergraduate students and their White, majority peers while attending a primarily White institution of higher education" would be rejected and the alternative hypotheses "there are differences in engagement scores or barriers scores between R/EM undergraduate students and their White, majority peers while attending a primarily White institution of higher" would be accepted.

The racial/ethnic minority (R/EM) population of undergraduate students has been historically underrepresented in career development literature. According to Byars-Winston and Rogers (2018), it is imperative to understand and recognize the differences in student's cultural backgrounds and create programming and services that support the diverse needs of that population. This study served to provide insight into the research gap and help support the development of improved services and programming at primarily White institutions of higher education (PWIs) where this population of students often face obstacles in the career development process.

The researcher also sought to increase knowledge of some of the barriers that can have a hindering effect in the development process and prevent R/EM students from engaging in activities that can encourage career competency skill achievement, foster career decision making, and allow R/EM students to set and achieve their career goals. Predominant barriers that the R/EM participants experienced, as compared to the White peers, included the need to financially support their families, unsatisfactory racial/diversity of the student body, depression, being discriminated against at their college/university, faculty expressing stereotypes, feeling insulted or threatened because of their race/ethnicity, unsatisfied with their financial aid package, and lack of financial support from their families. Research conducted by Fouad and Byars-Winston found that R/EMs frequently faced challenges such as racism, racial disparities, discrimination, and social and financial obstacles, that their White, majority peers do not often encounter which supports the findings of this study. These obstacles create barriers for students in the minority population and discourage them from valuable experiences that can support their college to career transition.

In this study, R/EMs were found to engage in fewer activities as they experienced higher levels of barriers. Activities that the researcher identified, where R/EMs engaged less, included public communication, having a leadership position in an organization, participating in leadership training, participating in student clubs/organizations, receiving the right amount of contact with

faculty members, experiencing relevant coursework to future career plans, finding a faculty/staff mentor, and faculty providing the opportunity to apply classroom learning to real-life issues. This study in particular saw the lack of R/EM student participation in the CSS survey with only 6.9% of the sample size classified as R/EM when the school's typical ratio of White/Caucasian to R/EM is 73% White/Caucasian to 27 % R/EM. It shows that a large portion of that population did not participate in the survey or they were removed from the sample due to the fact that they did not complete the survey or answer all of the questions that were vital to determining the engagement and barriers scores. When faced with negative personal and cultural experiences, R/EM students often avoid engaging in activities where they may experience continued disparities or where they do not believe they have the ability to be successful because of lack of self-efficacy and confidence or they are not being provided the right support or services. R/EM students frequently deal with these types of cultural barriers to their career development and consequently find themselves negatively impacted by these obstacles that hinder their ability to attain their career goals (Constantine, Erickson, Banks, & Timberlake, 1998). For instance, some R/EM students when faced with barriers such as racism and discrimination may have more difficulty participating in activities such as career counseling, a mentorship, or student clubs/organizations if the other parties involved are members of the population that the student has experienced conflict with. For instance, a Black student who has experienced racism while attending college may be hesitant to work with a career counselor who is White and a member of the race through which he or she has had a negative experience with. Zunker (2012) advises that in order to overcome this type barrier and prevent conflict in a situation such as this, it would benefit the career counselor to ask the student up front how they feel about working with a White counselor in order to help show the student that they were more sensitive the issues of racism and that they cared about the student's needs. Barriers ultimately can prevent students from seeking out and engaging in activities that support their development. Barriers negatively influence the R/EM students' willingness or interest in setting career goals and working towards achieving them because they lack the belief that they have the skills and abilities necessary to successfully reach them (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000).

A student's self-efficacy level can be a strong determinant of whether or not a student will experience successful career development. Low self-efficacy will often defer a student from participating in vital opportunities, such as internships, study abroad, and joining clubs/organizations, for a student to strengthen the career interests, develop skills, and set career goals for their future. Mejia-Smith & Gushue (2017) found that self-efficacy expectations had a direct negative correlation with perceived career barriers and that a student's belief in their ability to cope with such barriers and have confidence in their competence of career-related tasks contributed to R/EM students avoiding or overcoming career barriers and achieving their career goals.

Unfortunately, R/EM students find support lacking at the institutional level and within their own families. Minority familial support systems can directly and indirectly effect the career development process. Many R/EM students' find it difficult to seek support at home when their family members have not had a collegiate experience of their own and cannot provide input or their own knowledge of navigating the career development process. Students providing financial support and juggling family obligations can also feel overwhelmed which imposes additional obstacles for this population to overcome (Parks-Yancy, 2012). Students from collectivist cultures

such as Africa, Asia, and Latin America, typically focus on the welfare of their own group and the needs of the group take precedence over the individual's self-interests (Zunker, 2012). For instance, when a student's family requires their time in supporting household and childcare while the parent(s) work(s) to support the family there is a conflict with the student's life roles. Do they support the family and miss out on participating in a career development experience such as an internship? When students feel conflict between their cultural values, life roles, and collegiate goals, it can cause feelings of isolation and loneliness which in turn can negatively impact a student's academic and career goal attainment (Storlie, Mostade, & Duenyas, 2016).

These cultural implications are clear representations of needs that are presented by the R/EM population which PWIs should respond to in order to support their academic and professional growth. Higher education professionals such as career development and student affairs staff, should also shepherd change by reaching out to the R/EM population in order to acquire knowledge regarding what their individual cultural needs and to identify areas where improved programing and additional services can lower the barriers that often discourage or prevent them from participating in career activities. By creating a more inclusive and supportive educational environment, R/EMs may feel more inclined to engage in vital activities that help them successfully transition from college to career. Additionally, in order for PWIs to accommodate the resources that support this population's career development, administrators within the organizations should provide funding to develop and maintain the programs and services that will have a great impact on not only the R/EMs college experience but also improve their overall chances of attaining their professional goals.

Finally, the differences between the White/Caucasian and R/EM populations of students in engagement and barriers within the career development process provide a telling story of one races oppression over another and the continued disparities between the two. While research has grossly underrepresented an underrepresented population, this study serves to show that there is a further need for additional exploration of where the differences exist so that the gap in successful career development can continue to be shortened.

Study Limitations

There are several limitations that were identified in this research study. The results of this study could be generalizable to racial/ethnic undergraduate students who attend primarily White institutions of higher education, are between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four, and have attended their college or university for three or more years. The age restriction is enforced because theoretical framework, which places a major focus on the career development of students in Super's Exploration period and occurs up until the age of twenty-four, does not potentially take into account those that are non-traditional, older students. Additionally, the CSS was not designed for the specific intentions of the secondary analysis of the researcher and therefore was not all inclusive in its design of variables that reflect the engagement of career development activities and potential racial barriers. Finally, while the IPEDS's data for the selected PWI indicated that the population for the 2018 year represented a 73% White/Caucasian population and 27% R/EM population, this study had an overwhelming response from White/Caucasian participants at 93.1% and only 6.9% of the participants identifying as R/EM students. Because this study was conducted with data from over a five year period, the ratios at the selected PWI may have slightly changed,

but with a lack of participation from the minority population that had the opportunity to participate, the scores may not be totally reflective of the experiences that those students had.

Recommendations Future Research

Recommendations for future research should focus on using a larger sample of primarily White institution of higher education (PWI) in order to evaluate if there are similar results from a more substantial population of undergraduate students. This would increase the number of R/EM students responding to the CSS and provide an even more accurate account of the student experience with engagement in career development activities and barriers to the career development process.

Furthermore, the CSS data from years 2017, 2018, and 2019 are still embargoed and have yet to be made available for researchers outside of HERI. With additional questions added to the newer surveys, there are even more valuable variables that can represent both engagement and barriers and may have a stronger response rate. Since the CSS is a national survey, future research could not only increase the population sample by including additional PWIs from across the country, it would also allow researchers to study responses from one year's worth of survey data and not have to eliminate newer variables that were not available in previous years', which in turn provides an opportunity for more recent data to be analyzed.

In this study, only White/Caucasian students and R/EM students were used as the two comparison populations. In order to understand cultural needs, it may be beneficial to exam the individual races to pinpoint more accurately what populations experience more barriers and whether or not they are engaging in as many career development activities. This could help identify areas of need where cultural influences may play a part in the engagement and barriers scores.

Additionally, this study was conducted through quantitative methodology. It does not necessarily explain the reasoning behind why R/EM students engage less as their barrier experiences increase or the stories behind their experiences. In order to better understand the R/EM student overall experiences a qualitative research study would provide a more in depth description and a better means for understanding ways of supporting the diverse career development needs of this population.

Conclusion

Although primarily White institutions of higher education are seeking to further diversify their college campuses, many schools are ill prepared for supporting the needs of this population in the career development process. With self-efficacy playing a large role in students abilities and willingness to engage in pertinent career activities, it is important for higher education institutions such as PWIs to expand their range of knowledge regarding R/EMs, provide additional programming based on their individual cultural needs, and offer ample opportunities for them to engage in activities that help them develop skills, competencies, and confidence which will aid in a successful transition from college to career.

Understanding the experiences and obstacles that this population faces while attending PWIs can help ensure that future R/EM students receive the necessary support which was previously overlooked. Modified programming, more supportive practices, and additional cultural developmental resources can lend to improved engagement scores and reduce the number of barriers faced by students while attending college.

While the findings of this study showed that there are significant difference in the engagement and barriers score of White/Caucasian and R/EM students, it serves as only as a small contribution to the inadequate amount of research available focusing on R/EM career development. Also, the findings, although important, would not be considered surprising to many because of the historical context through which racial disparities have occurred and still continue to occur. However, there is hope that this research and future research will provide us with the knowledge that society and organizations need in order to begin making a change in the student experience.

About the Author

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