EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTACHMENT STYLES AND

CAREER DECISION-MAKING SELF-EFFICACY AMONG AFRICAN AMERICANS

by

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DEDICATION

To my deceased grandparents (Harold and Murtis Mayes): Daddy and mama, words do not begin to express the emotion that I feel because the two of you are not here to see me graduate. Although I know you are with me in spirit, I just wish I could give you both a hug and hear you say, how proud you are of me. Mama, I miss your words of encouragement and sassy attitude. I can still hear you say, "get your education, no one can take it away from you." Daddy, you were such an inspiration. Your limited education did not stop you from striving for more. You showed me that hustle and determination are real game changers. You both cheered me on and provided whatever you could to make sure that I was taken care of. I miss you both and I am forever grateful for your love. Rest in peace.

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another and conquer the world. Our journey is limitless. I am forever grateful and thankful for our love!

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thank God for you all. From my heart to yours, thank you so much.

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ABSTRACT

KIMBERLY GRIFFIN
EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTACHMENT STYLES AND
CAREER DECISION-MAKING SELF-EFFICACY AMONG AFRICAN AMERICANS
Under the direction of Donald B. Redmond, Ph.D.

The ability to choose a career that promotes financial stability is more difficult
when unconscious factors influence decision-making. This is especially more
challenging for African Americans who exhibit an insecure attachment style. The present
study proposes that insecure attachment styles impact career decision-making self-
efficacy among African Americans. The research indicates that avoidant attachment
styles are correlated with African American self-confidence; thereby, impacting career
paths, job selection outcomes, and self-sufficiency.

A mixed methodology comprised of correlational and qualitative analysis was
appropriate to identify the relationship between African American's career decision-
making self-efficacy and attachment styles. A chain sample of African Americans
ranging in age from 18 to 75 was used. The quantitative research was facilitated
concurrently and triangulated with qualitative questions at the end of a survey. The
survey was comprised of demographic questions, the Revised Adult Attachment Scale
(R-AAS), and the Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ).
Qualitative questions were added to strengthen the quantitative results and capture the

lived experiences of the research participants from a phenomenological approach. The

data revealed statistical significance and a moderately strong positive correlation between

avoidant attachment style and career decision-making self-efficacy. In conjunction, the

data indicates that many African Americans avoid careers, due to insecure attachment

styles and low self-efficacy in career decision-making.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that African Americans lack job security on a national level. According to the U.S. Census (2015), African Americans are reported as the largest minority group with the lowest income earning potential. African Americans are also noted as having the lowest median income, which has been consistent over the last decade (US Census, 2015). Although studies support that African American adolescents perceive job security as an absolute necessity (Chambers & Kravitz, 2011), African Americans remain unemployed at a higher percentage rate than other races (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). If African American adolescents believe in the concept of job security, then what is impacting their career decisions between adolescence and adulthood that justify the reported national statistics? The answer is rooted in providing greater clarity on the internal and external factors that impact African American decision-making, career perceptions and self-efficacy toward career opportunities and stability.

Decision-making is a constant weighing of options experienced throughout life, which makes commitment to one option very difficult. Decision-making is the ability to decide on a particular choice over another (Halama & Pitel, 2016). Those choices are personal or professional and subjected to influential variables. Social and

cultural variables are two key influencers in personal, social, and career related decision-making (Pitel & Mentel, 2017). Social variables include building relationships that are necessary to make informed decisions. If the relationships are distorted due to conflicting beliefs of an individual's social context, informed decision-making becomes difficult to achieve. Likewise, the personality of one culture over another may yield different decision-making outcomes, depending on their social and cultural lens. Individuals may use a rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, or spontaneous decision-making style when faced with a situation (Halama & Pitel, 2016). A rational decision-making style requires logical and well thought out ideas about potential alternatives to a problem; intuitive decision-making is based on internal feelings or instincts; unlike dependent decision-making styles which are based on the direction and guidance from others. Avoidant decision-making is an individual's attempt to avoid decision-making and spontaneous decision-making is geared to making immediate decisions (Scott & Bruce, 1995). Similarly, social theorists have researched decision-making in regards to attachment styles, finding that more secure attachment styles allow for well-balanced decision-making; whereas, less secure (avoidant or anxious) attachment styles impact an individual's ability to make rational or logical decisions (Scott & Bruce, 1995).

The term attachment style is associated with attachment disorder. The term attachment disorder, however, refers to the need for therapy that addresses the maltreated kids usually in child protective services (Chaffin, Hanson, Saunders, Nichols, Barnett, et al., 2006). Nevertheless, traditional attachment theory, on which this study is based, implies that "caregiver qualities such as environmental stability, parental sensitivity, and

responsiveness to children's physical and emotional needs, consistency, and a safe and predictable environment, support the development of healthy attachment" (Stryker, 2010, p.16).

John Bowlby (1958), the originator of attachment research on children, posed that bonds between children and their caregivers mold a child's ability to relate to the world through healthy relationship building. Bowlby (1969) believed that individuals have an innate drive for affection and proximity to others which, when not present, develops a life-long attachment style of insecurity. Attachment styles are comprised of three main categories, secure attachment, avoidant attachment, and anxious attachment. Avoidant and anxious are considered insecure attachment styles (Ainsworth, 1968). These three attachment characteristics are the investigative results of Mary Ainsworth (1970), social theorist, who studied Bowlby's (1969) research and performed her own research on young children to observe attachment differences. Later, Hazan and Shaver (1990) utilized Ainsworth's findings and developed a measure of adult romantic attachment that is based on secure, anxious, and avoidant attachment styles in relation to adult romantic behaviors. Social theorists have continued to research attachment styles; yet, adult attachment in different genres have been minimally addressed. Adult bonds (relationships that are meaningful, romantic, and secure in nature) are thought to influence adult decision-making outcomes (Hazan & Shaver, 1990). However, most research on decision-making and attachment is from an adolescent viewpoint in high school settings. Other research has addressed attachment styles based on marriage and couple connections (Barry & Lawrence, 2013). Minimal research has addressed attachment from

an adult career decision-making self-efficacy perspective and even less research has explored attachment styles from a racial or cultural foundation. Although there are several factors that contribute to a stable lifestyle, career stability is one factor that strongly correlates to the trajectory of low-income lifestyles.

Statement of the Problem

Research supports that career decision-making is influenced by minimally secure attachment levels, such as avoidant or anxious attachment styles. Insecure attachment styles prevent individuals from consciously making decisions with confidence (Betz & Hackett, 1986). The degree of confidence that a person feels is related to self-efficacy. Although, Betz and Hackett's (1986) research supports that low levels of self-efficacy influence the ability to make career decisions, like most research, the study focused on college students.

Nevertheless, there is a gap in literature that fails to provide a deeper understanding of why African Americans have remained the least paid with the lowest earning potential for the past few decades. Exploration should start with viewing career decision-making and the influences on those career decisions among African Americans. Likewise, the earning disparities pertaining to African Americans is worthy of investigating because cultural understanding and progressive solutions that provide insight into what motivates African Americans (in career decision-making) can help change future outcomes.

Perceptions of the Problem

Researchers posit that employment options are not readily available due to lack of education and employable skills among African Americans. Ruggles (1994) offers that social theorists attribute slavery and other governmental holds, such as welfare, as the cause of social disorganization and instability among low income African Americans. In addition, social theorist Bowlby (1969), offers research on adult attachment that correlates with relationship building outcomes, suggesting that attachment styles influence how individuals relate to one another or commit to one another, which influences career decision-making.

McConnell and Moss (2011) note that maternal employment status is a direct influence on secure attachment, suggesting that maternal employment changes alter attachment responses to family life style changes. Therefore, mothers who continue to work low wage jobs potentially impact attachment insecurities within their family. Paternal attachment, however, is linked to career attainment and career self-efficacy, which was noted in a previous study among high school girls who sought to transition from school to work (Perrone, Webb, & Jackson, 2007). Consequently, unstable economic and career choices impact predictability and exploration of present and future life plans. The inability to develop life goals makes commitment to long term plans a fearful and insecure process that invokes the desire to remain noncommitted to life responsibilities (Wittenborn, Faber, & Keiley, 2012). In contrast, individuals with secure attachment styles can experience favorable transitions between both work and home interchangeably (Perrone et al., 2007).

A recent study explored the personal views of several career counselors to get their perceptions on career decision-making difficulties among their clients (Gati, Amir, & Landman, 2010). Career counselors are most often utilized in high schools, colleges, and universities. The career counselors reported that, based on their perceptions, clients have career decision-making difficulties because of internal, external, emotional, or cognitive concerns (Gati & Levin, 2014). The career counselors attributed internal/emotional career decision-making difficulties to "lack of motivation, internal conflicts, general indecisiveness, dysfunctional beliefs, and lack of information about the self" (Gati et al., 2010, p. 401); whereas, external/cognitive difficulties were contributed to "lack of information about the process, occupations, additional sources of help, and unreliable information" (Gati et al., 2010, p. 401). External conflict may be a reflection of coping skills, which are also needed to address internal factors like self-concept and self-identity (Saka, Gati, & Kelly, 2008). The results of the research indicate that 41% of the counselors in the study believed that external conflicts may derive from internal conflict (Gati et al., 2010). Researchers believe that age and career stage make a difference in external conflict; for example, teenagers who depend on their parents are influenced by external influences verses adults who deal with more internal conflict as a result of external conflict (Gadassi, Gati, & Dayan, 2012). Conflicts can impact the decision-making process and prevent individuals from developing the self-efficacy needed to make wise career choices.

Although the career counselor focuses on career development, career strategies, and aptitude assessments to aid in mapping out clear career paths (Bureau of Labor

Statistics, 2019), low self-efficacy can hinder progressive treatment outcomes. During the career counseling session, the counselor is responsible for helping guide the client through decision-making that pertains to their career outlook, life circumstances, career goals, and career related skills (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). Although a career counselor is a helpful guide in decision-making, the actual process of making a decision is potentially more difficult than anticipated for the client. Specifically, the process of making a career decision may be more difficult for individuals who are less exposed to career opportunities or have low self-efficacy about making certain career decisions (Gati, Krausez, & Osipow, 1996). It would benefit career counselors treatment planning and goal setting to first consider anything that might impede a client's ability to make career related decisions, such as insecure attachment styles and low self-efficacy.

Despite debates on the contributing factors that support the lack of career decision-making and outcomes for higher earning potential, African Americans are clearly impacted to a degree that prevents meaningful and long lasting career opportunities that support self-sufficiency. Self-sufficiency is the ability to be independent and sustain a standard of living that does not require external influences, such as government assistance (Lalayants, Montero, Abrams, & Curry, 2015). Self-sufficiency becomes a difficult task if work and a sustainable living wage are not pursued. It is assumed that self-sufficiency is a choice that is obtainable for all cultures and races to partake. However, the concept of attachment differences provides an interesting perspective that has not been identified as an influence on African American career outcomes. More attention in this area would help to unfold the impact of less

secure attachment differences, specifically insecure styles, as the basis for career instability.

Purpose

In 1965, the introduction of welfare introduced a set of limitations on wage earnings and capped the potential for financial attainment for individuals who received assistance (Ahn, 2015). The more money a family made, the less welfare they received. Government assistance made it difficult to consider career attainment during this era. However, in 1996 welfare reform was introduced to restructure governmental assistance for needy families by attempting to increase self-sufficiency through increased employment options (Ahn, 2015). The option to work for many low income (single parent) African American families became less beneficial because more working hours also increased childcare costs, which offset potential earnings (Damaske, Bratter, & French, 2017). From 1965 to current day, African Americans continue to rate lower economically in comparison to other racial groups and struggle to find a balance between career attainment and government assistance. What is preventing African American's from seeking higher wage jobs that lead to career attainment? To find the answer, this study was conducted to examine the relationship between insecure attachment styles and career decision-making self-efficacy.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Quantitative

Q_1 - Is there a correlation between attachment insecurity and career decision-making self-efficacy among African Americans?

H_0 - There is no relationship between insecure attachment styles and career decision-making self-efficacy among African Americans.

H_1 - There is a relationship between attachment insecurity and career decision-making self-efficacy among African Americans.

Qualitative

1. What will/has impacted your ability to work in your dream job and why?

2. Describe the factor(s) that influenced your level of confidence and motivated you to take the career path you chose?

Delimitations

Delimitations are parameters that the researcher chooses to add or leave out of the study, which may impact the overall results (Heppner and Heppner, 2004). The current study was limited to adults age 18 to 75, given that this age group is tasked most with career decision-making opportunities. In previous research, the focus has been on college students, which may have reflected different perceptions of career decision-making self-efficacy; therefore, this research focused more on the working class and those in career transition. Likewise, the parameters around the study were specific to attachment styles of African Americans with a suitable sample size to represent the overall population. A suitable sample was considered based on a 95% confidence level, .5% margin of error, and a population size between 50-100 individuals. Lastly, the collected data only focused on attachment styles and perceptions of African Americans toward career decision-making self-efficacy because African Americans have the lowest career attainment over other racial groups (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017).

Limitations

Although the data addresses gaps in literature, the study has limitations. Specifically, the study did not consider the impact of adults raised in same sex, single parent, or two parent homes with regard to parental relationships, potential influences on career decision-making, or self-efficacy. Likewise, the research did not reflect the participant's childhood or family history. In addition, the study lacked generalizability because the focus was specific to working African Americans. Generalizability is present when data obtained from a sample is general enough to relate back to the original population (Salkind, 2012). When the data from the sample size is not general enough to relate back to the population, it is said to lack generalizability (Creswell, 2009). A small sample size of less than 100 participants is not the most ideal for adequate data reporting and supports the assumption of generalizability.

Significance

The research is significant because it is an original study. There was not a specific study that captured data about the relationship between attachment styles and career decision-making self-efficacy among African Americans. This research is the first of its kind and contributes to the counseling profession and African American culture.

Most people are not aware of attachment style differences or the impact on their career decisions. If African American's gain knowledge about the influences of attachment styles and self-efficacy in career decision-making, they can understand the impact in other areas of their lives. African American's searching to understand life choices could have a change in perspective after becoming aware of attachment style

influences on their self-efficacy. Change can happen when new information provides insight into an unconscious issue. Change can positively contribute to future generations of African Americans and encourage clarity when seeking more conscious career opportunities.

This research could lead clinicians to treatment modalities geared to include multicultural consideration and supportive services with every client. Clinicians have the ability to develop more accurate treatment plans, given the knowledge that attachment styles potentially influence clinical outcomes for African Americans and other races. Clinicians will also gain knowledge about cultural behaviors associated with attachment that may pose obstacles in the treatment session. As a result, clinicians will hopefully show greater empathy and less judgment toward clients based on attachment differences. Clinicians will consider the attachment style as a real influence on client decision-making behavior and plan treatment plans accordingly.

<div align="center">Definition of Terms</div>

Attachment differences, attachment insecurity, and attachment instability. These terms will be used interchangeably to mean that a healthy, nurturing bond between two people (personal or professional), have been inconsistent, causing characteristics such as, lack of trust, low levels of commitment, insecurities, depression, and avoidance (Bowlby, 1969).

Self-sufficiency. The ability to be independent and sustain a standard of living that does not require external supports, such as government assistance (Ashford, S., Edmunds, J., & French, D, 2010).

Attachment styles. Attachment styles are an emotional connection that can be negatively affected by poor engagement from birth to adolescence. The concepts are relevant to children, yet, also believed to be relevant for adults. The attachment styles are described as secure, avoidant, and anxious attachment (Ainsworth, 1970).

Secure/insecure attachment style. An individual who is well balanced and able to connect with others and maintain successful and healthy relationships. When an individual lacks trust and struggles with committing to or maintaining positive relationships, the person is said to have an insecure attachment style (Van Petegem, Beyers, Brenning, and Vansteenkiste, 2013).

Avoidant attachment style. An individual's uncomfortableness with being close to or connecting with others (Van Ecke, 2007).

Anxious attachment style. An individual's feelings of uncertainty about the availability or connectedness of his or her partner (Van Ecke, 2007).

Decision-making. Decision-making is the exploration of ideas and ability to logically decide on one thing over another (Halama & Pitel, 2016).

Career self-efficacy. Based on Bandura's (1995) concept of self-efficacy, career self-efficacy is an individual's personal belief that he/she can make career decisions that will result in successful career outcomes (Whiston, 1996).

Summary

Due to the recent data on African American low economic levels, the chosen population for this study is African American men and women. This researcher explored the relationship between attachment styles and career decision-making self-efficacy

among African Americans. Bowlby (1969) introduced attachment bonds as being the ability to develop close and meaningful relationships between an infant and their caregiver. As a result, attachment styles that derived from his theory are secure, avoidant, or anxious. Attachment styles are believed to influence individuals in many ways, including career decision-making self-efficacy, which this study addresses. Career decision-making self-efficacy is the ability to make a choice concerning career goals and believing in the ability to accomplish those tasks. With expectation, clinicians who treat African Americans or other clients on career related concerns, will have better insight into the context of their internal challenges based on attachment style differences.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several researchers have explored the role of attachment theory and the impact on career decision-making and self-efficacy. However, there is a lack of information regarding attachment, career decision-making, self-efficacy, and African Americans in a single study. Therefore, in this chapter an exhaustive literature review will offer readers current literature on the implications of insecure attachment styles in relation to African American career decision-making self-efficacy. The aim is to explore the process of career decision-making, how that process differs for adults, and what factors influence those decisions for African Americans. In addition, a review of social cognitive career theory and pre-existing measures are explored to provide a more exhaustive understanding of attachment, career decision-making, and self-efficacy among African Americans.

Career vs. Job

The term "job" is defined as "a group of homogeneous tasks related by similarity of functions. A job consists of duties, responsibilities, and tasks (performance elements) that are (1) defined and specific, and (2) can be accomplished, quantified, measured, and rated" (Business Dictionary, n.d., para. 2). Based on the definition, a job is task oriented and relates specific skills to a specific task. Jobs offer limited opportunity for advancement because jobs are short term and specific in nature (Pemberton, 1997).

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In contrast, a "career" is defined as the actions taken to enhance, organize, and develop sequential job tasks into a life-long occupation (Business Dictionary, n.d.). The term career is defined as a combination of several occupations held in a lifetime (Joseph, Fong Boh, Ang, and Slaughter, 2012). The career path is often for people who have a passion and desire for a certain field of study. Passion and desire motivate individuals to increase the knowledge and education necessary to enhance themselves. (Pemberton, 1997). Enhanced knowledge and education are also vital because they are the factors that make the difference in highly compensated careers verses low paying jobs.

<div align="center">Career Decisions</div>

Career decision-making is essential in obtaining employment that provides self-sufficiency; however, the ability to make career decisions appears more difficult for some individuals compared to others. Career choices are motivated both physically (career changes that surpass organizational boundaries) and psychologically (career changes that are based on internal influences, beliefs, or desires), depending on objectivity or subjectivity towards career mobility (Joseph et. al, 2012). Both physical and psychological motivators are more prone to subjective opinions when factors like parental upbringing influence beliefs about career paths and mobility. Career choice is the catalyst for a career path. Joseph et al. (2012) noted that career paths are a blueprint that characterizes the occupational sequence of an individual's job history. The job history is developed over time based on individual skills and career obtainment; however, individuals are often guided in their decisions to develop their skills or seek a particular career path.

Since the 1900's researchers have examined individual decisions to choose one career over another (Swanson & Fouad, 2015). No one was more dedicated to helping individuals with career decision-making than Frank Parsons. Parsons is noted as the Father of Vocational Guidance because he began the modern vocational movement with the return of World War II (WWII) veterans (Zytowski, 2001). In the early 1900s, Parsons opened the Bureau of Vocational Guidance (BVG) as a result of the growth of industry and occupations related to the Industrial Revolution of the late 1800s (Swanson & Fouad, 2015). Parson designed the BVG with the intent to match individual's traits/skills with suitable careers (Field, 2017). Parsons is also renowned for developing trait and factor theory, a theory that focuses on matching skills and traits with career/job qualifications (Swanson & Fouad, 2015). Trait and Factor theory is still used in modern day to help individuals, especially in schools, determine job fit (Swanson & Fouad, 2015).

In conjunction, school counselors are tasked with helping students explore career options as early as sixth grade (Osborn & Reardon, 2006). They are also responsible for guiding high schoolers in the direction of career exploration that will serve as their major in college (Gushue et al., 2006; Rogers & Creed, 2011). Although students are not certain about long term career goals, career decision-making self-efficacy influences career goals and desires of entering the workforce (Tang, Pan, & Newmeyer, 2008). There are several career theorists that support career development and suggest that decision-making is a process that evolves over time. Holland (1996), one of the renowned theorists, is known for his career personality fit assessment that is used for career development in many

schools around the country. Holland believed that self-knowledge and adequate occupational requirements are imperative to have successful outcomes, like graduating and informed career decisions (Gladding, 2018). Likewise, Super's career development theory is comprised of nine stages, which include the stage of exploration between the ages of 14 to 24 (Super, 1980). During this stage, self-examination takes place and an individual's occupational exploration is nurtured through different life experiences (Gladding, 2018).

<p style="text-align:center">Career Decision-making and Adults</p>

Although there is minimal research on career decision-making self-efficacy among adults, similar patterns can be identified in adolescent studies. For example, high confidence levels are associated with positive career decision-making self-efficacy and career development, while low confidence levels of career decision-making self-efficacy are tied to career indecision and low motivation toward career exploration (Chaney, Hammond, Betz, & Multon, 2007).

The process of choosing a career involves identifying personal knowledge, skills, and abilities that will fit into a job set for the benefit of developing a long-term career path (Bullock-Yowell et al., 2013). Specifically, adult career decisions can involve changing professions, deciding on a college major, considering retirement, or becoming an entrepreneur. For many adults, decisions are based on maturity. Maturity is correlated with responsibility and acceptance of authority, which makes a difference in career stability for immature adults (Fouad & Keeley, 1992). However, making these decisions are halted by negative thoughts or fear of self and personal capabilities (Swanson &

Fouad, 2015). Maladaptive beliefs about career readiness and capabilities impact career decision-making and the ability to problem solve for the best career outcomes. Andrews, Bullock-Yowell, Dahlen, and Nicholson (2014) performed a study with a sample of 300 college students and concluded that maladaptive thoughts concerning perfectionism and career decision-making influenced esteem in career decision-making.

The premise of career decision-making is based on two factors, content and process. Career decision-making as a process refers to behaviors of individuals, while content/outcomes, refers to actual decisions (Betz & Hackett, 1986). Thus, adults make decisions based on perceptions of barriers or the ability to set and facilitate career goals (Whiston, 1996). Contextual variables can prevent a person from pursuing their career goals (Lent et al., 2000). Contextual variables, also referred to as contextual affordances, are perceptions that barriers or supports exist to encourage or hinder the start of a career or outcome expectations (Hartung, 2002). The perceptions are rooted in the background of environmental influences that suggest biases toward careers deemed suitable for women over men and men over women. As a result, women and men experience low self-efficacy towards careers that are not contextually supported nor seen as gender appropriate (Swanson & Fouad, 2015).

<div align="center">Social Cognitive Career Theory</div>

Career decision-making self-efficacy is rooted in self-esteem (Betz and Hackett, 1986) and is the basic concept of the social cognitive career theory. Social cognitive career theory is a fairly new concept, developed only two decades ago (Swanson & Fouad, 2015). Hackett and Betz (1981) introduced the concept of social cognitive career

theory and the emphasis on an individual's personal perception towards events linked to career decision-making (Swanson & Fouad, 2015). Social cognitive career theory (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 2000) is based on the assumptions that social factors (race, culture, ethnicity, and gender) influence career self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations. Social factors are believed to affect career interests, behaviors, and goals (Duffy & Klingaman, 2009). The level of perceived support from social factors can influence self-efficacy. Gushue and Whitson (2006) studied 104 African American freshman students and found a positive correlation between career decision-making self-efficacy and perceived support.

Social Cognitive Career Theory was adopted from Social Cognitive Theory. Social Cognitive Career Theory was applied to vocational psychology to offer an explanation for the development of personal career interests, choices, and performance (McLeod, 2016). Social Cognitive Theory derived from the works of Bandura (1986), who believed that confidence levels influenced a person's ability to complete tasks, which is known as self-efficacy. Tasks are motivated through an individual's belief that they possess the knowledge and capabilities to get things done. Hackett and Betz (1981) utilized self-efficacy within the social cognitive career theory to assess the career choices of women and their limited range of career options. Lent, Brown, and Hackett (2002) continued to research the concept of self-efficacy and outcome expectancies and developed a three-part model to explain the nature of career interests, the choices that derive from those interests, and the performance as a result of those choices.

Interests are a combination of self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectancies, which help individuals forecast their goals (Betz & Hackett, 1986). Once career goals are predicted, behaviors are put into action to make those goals a reality, which lead to performance or goal fulfillment (Lent et al., 2002). A great example of the interest model would include a person who likes to skateboard and has an interest based on self-efficacy beliefs that he is proficient as a skateboarder. As a result, the outcome expectancy is that he will continue to skateboard, maybe join a skateboarding club, and hang with friends who have common interests. This leads to goal fulfillment, which includes more practice to become better and meet previously set goals (Sampson, Dozier, & Colvin, 2011).

The choice model includes a combination of personal background and personal influences, such as gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, personality, and personal biases (Swanson & Fouad, 2015). The combination of personal background and influences impact learning and development, which encourages self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectancies. A person with the socioeconomic means is afforded the opportunity to have learning experiences (such as tutors or vacation destinations) that support social growth and influence career interests; thus, career choices are made with more confidence.

Once a career choice is made, the performance model suggests that an individual's persistence to perform the necessary tasks associated with the career become present (Sampson et al., 2011). The performance model offers that previously performed

outcomes influence self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectancies. Those self-efficacy

beliefs based on past performances continue to influence goals and attainment levels

(Swanson & Fouad, 2015).

<div align="center">Influences on Career Decision-making</div>

Self-Efficacy

Bandura was a key researcher in the concept of self-efficacy and the relationship

to decision-making. Self-efficacy is an innate ability to self-judge individual capabilities

to achieve or perform specific tasks (Lin, 2016). Those capabilities are individual

perceptions that motivate an individual to progress forward in life and career. Bandura

(1977) posed that self-efficacy encourages human behaviors that align with personal

drive and performance.

As early as middle school, students with high self-efficacy are noted to have

higher levels of enthusiasm (Lin, 2016). In contrast, students with low self-efficacy are

less enthusiastic about learning and completing tasks (Lin, 2016). Given that self-efficacy

has a major role in personal motivation, the need for early interventions to build self-

efficacy are needed in schools. Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, and Pastorelli (1996)

studied the behavior of adolescents and realized that those with low self-efficacy set less

challenging goals because they did not believe they could achieve the tasks of more

challenging goals. As a result, Bandura (1977) determined that goal-setting behaviors

were applicable to career self-efficacy. Likewise, academic self-efficacy was

significantly correlated with career self-efficacy, noting that students who set educational

goals are more likely to set higher career goals, consider more career options, and seek to

achieve career success. Bandura et al. (1996) also posits that students with low academic self-efficacy are less likely inclined to set career goals, show interest in career options, or find the motivation to achieve career goals.

Robbins, Lauver, Le, Davis, Langley, and Carlstrom (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of 109 previously researched studies on college student persistence and motivation. The data revealed that persistence was higher among college students with higher levels of self-efficacy than those with lower levels of self-efficacy. Weng, Cheong, and Cheong (2010) conducted a study on variables that influence success in college programs. They found that self-efficacy was a key factor that drove persistence among students.

Career self-efficacy. Career self-efficacy is defined as a person's ability to believe in himself and the capability to pursue a career (Betz and Hackett, 1986). Self-efficacy is a reflection of self-confidence. When coupled with unconstructive career thoughts, self-efficacy is low and leaves individuals' feeling that career decision-making tasks that lead to a viable future are unattainable (Tang, Pan, & Newmeyer, 2008). Career decision-making self-efficacy is the process of judging personal worthiness and capabilities in achieving a task needed to make confident career decisions (Lihui, Liu, Hongyan, 2018). In many cases, individuals have low self-judgement and question their ability to complete tasks necessary for career success. The choosing of a career is difficult for individuals who struggle with perceiving career choices as obtainable, beneficial, or worth the pursuit (Lin, 2016). Poor perceptions are related to low self-esteem in personal skills, abilities,

and self-concept and can change the motivation for pursuing a viable career that offers

sustainability (Betz and Hackett, 1986).

Sources of self-efficacy. Bandura (1986) theorized that self-efficacy beliefs

derived from four sources; previous performance, vicarious learning, verbal persuasion

and physiological experiences (Swanson & Fouad, 2015). The four sources of self-

efficacy are experienced among all people; however, individual perceptions are what set

people apart. Of the four sources, mastery experiences (previous performance) are the

most persuasive (Milner and Hoy, 2003). Mastery experiences are most powerful because

they are based on personal perceptions of past accomplishments experienced from

previous performances (Britner & Pajares, 2006). If the experience was perceived as

successful, there is an increase in self-efficacy; however, perceived unsuccessful

experiences will decrease self-efficacy. In conjunction with mastery experiences,

individuals also process their previously held beliefs about an experience, consider task

or experience difficulty, account for support during the experience, and consider the

amount of effort needed to complete a task (Britner & Pajares, 2006). Although mastery

experiences are considered the most influential indicator of self-efficacy, those past

experiences may provide distorted information when a person is learning a new task

(Usher & Pajares, 2008). Therefore, relying on perceptions of past experiences to build

self-efficacy is not the most effective way to yield success.

Vicarious experience (social modeling) is another source of self-efficacy that

supports mastery experiences. This source benefits an individual through observing the

success of others in similar experiences (Usher , 2009). When individuals have

uncertainties or limited prior experience, they rely more on social modeling (Britner &
Pajares, 2006). Self-efficacy is increased when the observer perceives that the social
model possesses personal similarities (Tang, Pan, & Newmeyer, 2008).

Verbal or social persuasion is the next source of self-efficacy, which includes
verbal and non-verbal influences from other people. Exposure to judgments from others
can increase or decrease self-efficacy. When individuals experience positive opinions, the
chances to enhance self-efficacy are greater; yet, negative opinions are defeating and
lower self-efficacy beliefs (Britner & Pajares, 2006). Verbal (social) persuasion is
important because so often children and adults will believe what they have been told,
which influences their ability to be successful.

Physiological response is the fourth source of self-efficacy that manifests through
feelings of anxiety, sweating, mood changes, nervousness, increased heart rate, or
headaches (Britner & Pajares, 2006). A physiological response is an emotional response
that can enhance or decrease self-efficacy. The individual's interpretation of the
physiological symptom determines their level of self-efficacy (Britner & Pajares, 2006).
In a recent study, Bullock-Yowell (2013) explored the difficulties in decision-making
among 150 unemployed adults. The researchers found that making conscious career
decisions was linked to anxiety. Anxiety is believed to be the link between lower
decision-making capabilities and career decision-making self-efficacy (Bullock-Yowell,
2013). Somatic symptoms, such as anxiety, decreases self-efficacy when the individual

does not learn to manage the symptoms (Milner & Hoy, 2003). When symptoms are managed effectively and are perceived as controllable, self-efficacy increases (Milner & Hoy, 2003).

Attachment

To understand the significance of attachment, clarity must be given to the origin of potential early psychological influences among the family unit. John Bowlby, a pioneer of attachment theory, provided insight as to why the internal model for building relationships can be distorted (Wright & Perrone, 2008). During childhood, early attachments are formed based on relationships that are grounded in healthy emotional bonds that develop between children and their parents (Willner, Gati, & Gaun, 2015). Those healthy experiences of attachment provide a schema that children identify as a blueprint for building relationships with others (Wright & Perrone, 2008). When the experiences are not projected in a healthy manner, the child may develop insecure attachment styles; avoidance or anxiety (Russell, Baker, & McNulty, 2013). Perrone, Webb, and Jackson (2007) assert that children are impressionable and learn through observation as parents engage in relationships, work, and life roles. With attachment insecurities being an intricate factor of poor relationship building, the inability to develop favorable career outcomes is understandable and will potentially continue for future generations, if not corrected.

John Bowlby's (1956) training was founded in developmental psychology and focused on maladjusted children (Bretherton, 1992). While working with the children, Bowlby noted the isolated and anxious characteristics of two boys and became interested

in family relationship patterns (Senn, 1977). Bowlby later wrote about parent/child

breakthroughs. He noted that when parents disclosed their own upbringing in the

presence of their children, the narrative impacted a difference in their troubled child

(Bowlby, 1956).

Similarly, Mary Ainsworth was studying security theory and the premise that

infants and young children must establish secure dependency on parents before exploring

unfamiliar life situations (Salter, 1940). Mary Ainsworth later joined Bowlby's research

team, which led to the identification of separation response: "protest (related to

separation anxiety), despair (related to grief and mourning), and denial or detachment

(related to defense mechanisms, especially repression)" (Bretherton, 1992, p. 763).

Bowlby maintained his belief surrounding ethological concepts, that separation anxiety is

experienced in children when an attachment figure is unavailable to nurture the escape

and attachment behaviors that are brought on during a situation (Brown & Wright, 2001).

In addition to Bowlby's work, Ainsworth (1967) was working on mother-infant studies in

Ghana. She observed development patterns that manifested in infant-mother attachment

based on three patterns: secure, insecure, and not-yet attached (Bretherton, 1992).

Ainsworth discovered that infants with secure attachment exhibited more contentment,

exploratory behaviors when with mom, and cried very little (Bowlby et al., 1956). Infants

that exhibited insecure attachment cried often (despite being held by their mother) and no

attachment behaviors were associated with not-yet attached infants (Ainsworth, 1963).

From the study, Ainsworth was able to correlate maternal sensitivity with secure

attachment and less sensitive mothers with insecure attachment styles in their infants

(Bretherton, 1992). This was the beginning of attachment styles as we know them;

secure, insecure (avoidant), and ambivalent (anxious).

Attachment responses. Attachment responses are aroused when threatening or

severely stressful situations are present (Simpson, Rholes, & Phillips, 1996). Therefore,

perceived or real threats to attachment bonds will activate attachment behaviors, such as

attention seeking, to reestablish fragmented attachment bonds (Mikulincer & Shaver,

2007). Threatening situations may include illness, physical danger, rejection, loss or

conflict that are designed to reestablish and maintain those bonds (Shaver & Mikulincer,

2009). This would suggest that feelings of threat and danger are met with different affect

regulation patterns. Stevens (2014) posits that affect regulation is the ability to self-

regulate and cope with emotions when faced with life situations. As a result, individuals

exhibiting anxious attachment styles will attract attention to their distress because they

anticipate that individuals who represent attachment bonds are unavailable (Swan, 2000).

Anxious attachment patterns are exhibited through forms of automatic emotional

activation (hyperactivation) when feelings of threats are present, which causes an

anxiously attached individual to have increased displays of distress (Mikulincer &

Shaver, 2007). In addition, the anxiously attached person will tirelessly pursue close

bonding and reassurance from their attachment figure to try to eliminate the anxiety

(Wittenborn et al., 2012). However, people with avoidant attachment styles are not

looking for relationship connections because they expect and perceive that attachment

figures will not be physically or emotionally available (Swan, 2000). As a result,

avoidantly attached individuals rely on themselves in any situation, especially when faced

with distress (Stevens, 2014). Yet, securely attached people who have high self-esteem

are confident in knowing that they can physically and emotionally rely on their

attachment figures (McConnell & Moss, 2011).

Attachment behaviors. Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) express that there is an

association between attachment styles and affective, cognitive, and behavioral responses,

that prevent or initiate emotional responses. Emotional responses tend to manifest when

individuals experience situations that threaten feelings of security (Swan, 2000). Security

among African Americans is reflected in early motherly sensitivity, which is potentially a

reflection of poverty experiences (Bakermans-Kranenburg, IJzendoorn, & Kroonenberg,

2004). Individuals will behave in ways to reestablish feelings of security (Shaver &

Mikulincer, 2009). As a result of different response outcomes, individuals will assume

varied emotional reactions to distress, such as fear of rejection, which influences

decision-making. For example, individuals with insecure attachment styles are

emotionally detached and lack expression (Stevens, 2014). Individuals with anxious

attachment styles exhibit exaggerated emotional responses to stimuli which are associated

with hyperactive behavioral patterns (Swan, 2000). The behavior portrayed is intensive,

emotional, expressive, heightened, and impulsive. Anxious styles also are reported to

exhibit more sensitivity to pain, emotional cues, and alterations in emotional expressions

more than other attachment styles (Whittenborn et al., 2012).

Unlike anxiously attached individuals, people with avoidant attachment styles

lack the activation that is congruently associated with emotional reactions (Mikulincer &

Shaver, 2007). Individuals with avoidant styles have reduced emotional expressions in relations to feelings or tolerance to pain (Swan, 2000). However, avoidant individuals can show heightened emotions when faced with severely stressful situations, such as fear of losing control or autonomy (Whittenborn et al., 2012). When chronic stress is present, researchers believe that depression is linked to attachment styles, specifically when attachment bonds are being challenged (Wei, Mallinckrodt, Larson, & Zakalik, 2005). This is evident for individuals who perceive that personal or work relationships are being compromised. Anxious individuals exhibit depressive symptoms in response to concerns about the level of attention from a partner or fear of relationship abandonment (Rholes et al., 2011).

Despite relationship and attachment comparisons, romantic relationships and attachment relationships were found to have inconsistencies. Hazan and Shaver (1990) posit that the usual characteristics of individuals with an avoidant attachment style, such as fear of control, used work as an alternative to interact with others because they see work as more important. Individuals with anxious attachment styles are not able to effectively separate work and personal relationships, allowing personal influences to impact work because their focus is on their personal life (Hazan and Shaver, 1990). In contrast, securely attached individuals can maintain balance between work and personal affairs, without any interferences (Eck, 2007). Likewise, young securely attached adults form mature career-based decisions, as a result of more sound career commitment and career exploration (Eck, 2007). Therefore, insecurely attached individuals are more

chronically indecisive; anxiously attached people are more emotionally dependent and worrisome, and avoidant attached people are distant, both emotionally and physically (Eck, 2007).

Attachment and commitment. The inability to commit to relationships that foster positive personal or career outcomes influence emotional behaviors among individuals (Hazan & Shaver, 1990). Due to attachment differences, emotional connections are attributed to poor engagement from birth to adolescence (Betz & Sterling, 1995). Specifically, insecure/avoidant attachment is correlated with self-efficacy, poor commitment, poor perceptions of relationship building, poor relationship development and career decisions-all critical factor's prohibiting career attainment (Starcke & Brand, 2012).

Despite opinions on lack of commitment, reviewed literature supports that households being run by single parents may have a graver influence on the career success of African American individuals than anticipated. A previous study related stress to higher cortisol responses in single men and women. This suggests that single parents are more responsive to psychological stress (Maestripieri, Baran, Saprienza, and Zingales, 2010). Cortisol is a hormone that helps the body regulate stress, a factor contributing to cognitive stagnation, decision-making, and commitment to careers that enhance life opportunities (Maestripieri, et al., 2010). In conjunction, Demirtas and Tezer (2012) explored the correlations between romantic relationship satisfaction and career commitment among 391 university students. After running two multiple regressions, the

data showed that happy individuals had more positive results toward self-efficacy predictors that relate to relationships and career commitment (Starcke & Brand, 2012).

Culture

Career decision-making is uniquely addressed through cultural expectations and the educational system that exposes individuals to career decision-making processes (Willner, Gati, & Gaun, 2015). Processes for career decision-making have been researched more in Western cultures than any others (Mau, 2000). Western cultures offer individualistic and autocratic freedom in career decision-making, which fosters using intuition in decision-making. However, Latin American, Asian, and African countries are collectivistic countries that promote shared ideas, socialist ideals, and interdependence in career decision-making (Mau, 2004). These countries rely on dependency in their decision-making, unlike Americans who have a stronger desire for independence (Mau, 2000). The culture in America sets the tone for independence but are Americans really as independent as they seem? American students experienced low feelings of readiness and lack of information to make informed career decisions, seeking the perfect job and procrastinating more than other cultures when making career decisions (Willner et al., 2015). Procrastination is a reflection of avoidant behaviors that correlate with insecurity and low self-efficacy.

African Americans

Like other cultures, African Americans make career decisions with the intent to care for self or provide for their families. However, minority considerations may differ from other cultures. Mau (2000) posits that minority groups make decisions based on

family or group aspirations over their own personal dreams. In comparison to European counterparts, young minorities potentially struggle with decision-making as they attempt to discover their cultural identity or embrace ideologies from the majority culture (Mau, 2000). Perrone, Sedlacek, and Alexander (2001) noted that Caucasians are intrinsically motivated in their career decision-making, while African Americans are influenced to make career decisions based on earning potential.

Haun-Frank's (2011) qualitative study with African American students further exemplified the decision-making pressures that minorities experience. This would indicate that African American youth are just as susceptible to the same challenges as African American adults. Haun-Frank (2011) revealed that African American females gravitate to nurturing careers and males seek leadership roles, which may seem unattainable, but necessary for future growth. One participant in the study (Curtis) stated, "I have always felt a pressure to not be a statistic—or to beat the stereotypes. I feel like being a doctor or being a lawyer or a professor, will make you stand out and change some of those ideas because it is not expected of you (Haun-Frank, 2011, p. 224)."

The perceptions and expectations for African Americans career outlook is unique, compared to other cultural groups. The difference in the African American career outlook, compared to other minority groups is partly due to disadvantages during the career exploration stage. During the career exploration stage, African Americans lack of occupational exposure, identifiable career related role models, and experienced life challenges, diminish career decision-making (Austin, 2010). Career exposure is relevant for self-esteem, which impacts career decision-making, job selection, and career

commitment (Charleston, 2012). Unfortunately, some adolescents have limited exposure to life models that may positively influence their ability to experience positive career development. Many factors, such as exposure to stereotypical profiling, racial discrimination, socioeconomic status, and educational attainment, are thought to minimize career development and opportunities (Parris, Owens, Johnson, Grbevski, & Holbert-Quince, 2010). Research suggests that as early as middle school, inner city kids exhibit low self-esteem that restricts their ability to aspire to greater career occupations (Turner and Lapan, 2002). The adolescents find minimal value in education and aspire to work less challenging jobs, which influences long term career options and future career stability (Toldson & Owens, 2010). However, students who thrive in life are reported to experience resilience that is contributed to support from family, community, and belief in hard work (Barrow, Armstrong, Vargo, Boothroyd, 2007). For example, parent and teacher support among African American girls was noted as being a key factor for experiencing less mental health concerns and less exposure to adverse life experiences (Barrow et. al, 2007). Ironically, Barrow et. al (2007) noted that African American adolescents with high self-esteem were found to have low self-efficacy as adults. This discrepancy is potentially due to a lack of community and school support during adolescence, despite the love and support received from their parents. Therefore, self-efficacy for African Americans is correlated with positive perceptions toward community support, parental support, school support, and environmental experiences.

Attachment and African Americans

Mikelson, Kessler, and Shaver (1997) expanded the research of social theorists Bowlby (1969) and Hazan and Shaver (1987), and explored attachment styles from a national perspective, to include sociodemographic information, childhood adversity, parental representation, adjust psychopathology, and personality traits. The attachment style scale, a quantitative measure originated by Hazan and Shaver (1987), was used to assess secure, avoidant, and anxious attachment styles. Based on a sample size of 65,000 people, the results showed that African Americans compared to Caucasians and Latinos have less secure attachment styles; Caucasians have less anxious attachment styles and Latinos have less avoidant attachment styles (Mikelson, Kessler, & Shaver, 1997). The analysis also reveals an in-depth description of what secure attachment characteristics are based on to the research participants. Mickelson et al. (1996) described the characteristics most associated with secure attachment styles as being female, married-cohabitating, 45 years-old or older, Caucasian, with 13 or more years of education, making $20,000 or higher income, from the Midwest. This means that individuals with high levels of secure attachment, build positive, strong, and committed relationships, such as work careers, which are not linked with the characteristics associated with African Americans (Mikelson, Kessler, & Shaver, 1997).

Existing Measures

Although self-efficacy and career decision-making are often measured separately, several scales are used to measure the magnitude of career decision-making self-efficacy as one variable. Some scales, such as the Career Decision Profile (CDP), the Career

Decision-making Self-Efficacy Scale (CDMSES), and the Career Decision-Making

Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ), are noted as having strong validity between .70 and

.95 (O'Brien, Friedman, Tipton, & Linn, 2000). The CDMSES is a very popular scale

most often used in research to measure career decision-making self-efficacy (Betz, Klein,

& Taylor, 1996). Many of these inventories are given to adolescents or college students

who are making initial career decisions. The CDP and the CDDQ, however, are more

generalized and is used for both adolescents and adults. (O'Brien et al., 2000).

Other reliable and valid scales were used in a previous study to consider

attachment, separation, and vocational development. The researcher utilized the Career

Aspirations Scale (CAS) to assess career values, aspired advancement, and interest in

leadership opportunities, in conjunction with the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy

Scale (CDMSES), to determine career decision-making, goal selection, and future career

planning (O'Brien et al., 2000). Likewise, Andrews, Bullock-Yowell, Dahlen, and

Nicholson (2014) utilized the Career Thoughts Inventory (CTI), Frost Multidimensional

Perfectionism Scale (MPS-F), and the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale–Short Form

(CDSE-SF) to assess career decision-making self-efficacy and negative thoughts among

perfectionists for a sample of 300 college students. The CTI has high internal consistency

among adolescents and adults with alpha levels ranging from .93 to .97. In addition, test–

retest reliability was reported to be .86 and Cronbach's alpha of .97 for the sample of 300

college students (Sampson et al., 1996). Though the CTI, CDSE-SF, and other scales are

valid instruments, they do not capture the total scope of this research, based on the scaled

questions. The Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ) addresses

career decision-making difficulty from the premise of three main categories, lack of information, lack of readiness, and inconsistent information (Gati, Krausz, & Osipow, 1996). Lack of information is comprised of three sub categories, dysfunctional beliefs, lack of motivation, and general indecisiveness in making decisions. The subscales under "lack of information" are most pertinent for this study because these categories assess for self-efficacy.

To assess for attachment styles, Van Ecke (2007) utilized the Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R) scale to measure the relationships between attachment styles and experiences in close relationships. The ECR-R is comprised of 36 items that are scored on a 7-point Likert scale. The ECR-R measures for anxious and avoidant attachment styles, to assess an individual's uncomfortableness with being close to others. Van Ecke (2007) noted that lower attachment anxiety or avoidance scores signified secure attachment styles. Like the ECR-R, similar scales like the Adult Attachment Scales and the Relationship Styles Questionnaire, has also been used to measure attachment styles and relationship closeness. The Adult Attachment Scale, is the earliest scale developed to measure attachment styles (Collins & Read, 1990). The Adult Attachment Scale was later revised but continues to measure attachment through questions that identify closeness, dependence, and anxiety (Colllins & Reed, 1990). The R-AAS is more relevant for this

current study because the scale is comprised of general questions about relationships and closeness, whereas, the ECR-R includes specific questions concerning romantic relationships.

Summary

Due to previously noted statistical data and a gap in literature on African

American career decision-making outcomes, the need to explore the increase in African

American career instability was warranted. The role of attachment in adults has not been

given the same exhaustive research as children, especially for African Americans.

However, adult attachment styles are considered comparable to those of children and are

equitable for emotional connections that can negatively affect poor engagement from

birth to adolescence (Mikelson, Kessler, and Shaver, 1997). Researchers posit that

children and adolescents make better career decisions when they feel supported by

parents/teachers (Lalayant et al., 2015). Children make more obtainable and challenging

goals when attachment is secure, yet, lack esteem in their ability to set career goals for

positive outcomes when attachment styles are insecure (Mikelson, Kessler, and Shaver,

1997).

Adult behaviors and responses, based on a particular attachment style, are

manifested in their personal and professional relationships (Starcke & Brand, 2012).

Secure attachment styles are well balanced individuals whom can make logical decisions

concerning healthy relationships (career options) and believe in their ability to do so

(Bretherton, 1992). However, individuals with avoidant attachment styles depend on

themselves, not others, and tend to make career decisions that consume their time without

considering external influences (Simpson, Rholes, & Phillips, 1996). Insecure/avoidant

attachment styles are correlated with self-efficacy, poor commitment, poor perceptions of

relationship building, poor relationship development and career decisions (Starcke &

Brand, 2012). In contrast, anxiously attached individuals are dependent and make career decisions that are too enmeshed with their personal lives and lack self-efficacy in both personal and career decisions (Bartholomew & Shaver, 1998). The difficulty in career decision-making is increased when insecure attachment styles, such as anxious and avoidant styles, influence personal perceptions concerning the outcome of those decisions (Simpson et al., 1996). As a result, African American men and women are potentially more inclined to choose careers that are less challenging or lower in prestige, which perpetuates a cycle of employment that generates minimal income and low self-sufficiency (Austin, 2010).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The intent of the researcher was to utilize a mixed method study to identify the

relationship between attachment styles and career decision-making self-efficacy among

African Americans. Likewise, the secondary purpose was to explore the perceptions that

African Americans feel influence their career decision-making self-efficacy. In

accordance with the research study, the following question and hypotheses were

considered in relation to attachment styles, career decision-making, self-efficacy, and

African Americans.

Research Question and Hypothesis

There is minimally established previous research specific to attachment styles and

African American career decision-making self-efficacy. Therefore, this study was based

on investigative research and the following hypotheses were developed.

Q_1 - Is there a correlation between attachment insecurity and career decision-making self-

efficacy among African Americans.

H_0 - There is no relationship between insecure attachment styles and career decision-

making self-efficacy among African Americans.

H$_1$ - There is a correlation between attachment insecurity and career decision-making self-efficacy among African Americans.

Research Design

The current research was comprised of a convergent parallel mixed method design chosen to bring clarity to a research problems through the use of both qualitative and quantitative data collected concurrently in the same phase, evenly weighing the methods, analyzing the data separately, then merging the finding together for data reporting (Creswell, 2009). In this research, a cross-sectional correlational design was also used to capture the data and confirm the relationship between attachment styles (independent variable) and career decision-making self-efficacy (dependent variable) among African Americans. The term cross-sectional refers to research that compares a range of individuals from across several different sample groups (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). In conjunction, the term correlational is a statistical investigation that compares the relationship between two or more variables. The potential relationship between variables is an indicator of an association without causation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

Quantitative

To capture the broadest scope of attachment styles, previously used valid and reliable assessments were administered over the internet to a sample population of men and women ranging in age from 18 to 75. The age ranges potentially captured the greatest number of African American's career decision-making self-efficacy responses. This researcher anticipated capturing the initial career decision-making self-efficacy among high school graduates and individuals who are potentially retiring or considering their last

career change before retirement. The researcher considered two different scales in conjunction with specific questions to measure attachment differences, correlations between attachment styles and career decision-making self-efficacy, and perceptions concerning individual thoughts on career decision-making influences.

Qualitative

A phenomenological approach was used to enhance the study and capture the phenomenon as described by the participants (Creswell, 2009). A phenomenological study can consist of written reports, oral accounts, or face to face interviews of individual experiences around a particular phenomenon (Christensen, Johnson, & Turner, 2011). Therefore, career decision-making self-efficacy was examined qualitatively, using two open ended questions on the survey. This section explored the participants confidence levels and influences in choosing a career path. After the research was finalized, a separate analysis of the data was completed. The researcher was then able to compare and combine both qualitative and quantitative data to prove the research hypothesis.

Sample Participants

Chain sampling was used to obtain the greatest number of participants from the purposed population. The term chain sample, also thought of as a chain link, refers to other participants sharing the research survey with their personal and professional contacts, which increases the size of the sample population (Mack, Woodsong, Macqueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005). For reliability and validity purposes, it is proposed that the sample size consist of a minimum of 100 participants (Heppner & Heppner, 2004). This researcher aimed for a target of 100 African American participants, ranging

in age from 18 to 75. A large sample of 100 or more participants can increase data outcomes and avoid Type II errors. A Type II error occurs when the researcher accepts the null hypothesis when it is in fact false (Rothman, 2010). Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) suggests using the formula $N > 50 + 8m$, where m equals the number of independent variables. Based on the formula, this researcher would need 58 participants.

The participants were assessed to determine confidence in making career decisions, confidence in obtaining a career, and attachment style. The participants were only required to be African American and meet the age range requirement. To obtain a large group of participants, emails were sent to associations, community agencies, churches, and colleges where African Americans are the majority, as well as social media sites, such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

<center>Instruments</center>

This researcher utilized the Revised Adult Attachment Scale (R-AAS) to rate closeness with others, dependability of others, and worries about abandonment. In conjunction, the Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ) was utilized to ascertain the difficulty attributed to making career decisions and the level of self-efficacy in making those decisions. In combination, a qualitative research question addressed the lived experiences that are influential factors that impact career decision-making self-efficacy.

The Revised Adult Attachment Scale

The Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) was based on the assessment of Hazen & Shaver (1987) and Levy & Davis (1988) and was comprised of three descriptive sections.

The AAS was later revised by comprising the original work (Hazen & Shaver, 1987) into a series of 18 questions on a five-point Likert scale. The Revised-AAS (R-AAS) is most widely used to rate closeness with others, dependability of others, and worries about abandonment. In conjunction, the scale measures adult attachment styles labeled secure attachment, anxious attachment, and avoidant attachment as they relate to relationship closeness. In scoring, secure attachment style scores are high on closeness and dependent subscales and low on the anxiety subscale. Anxious scores are high on the anxiety subscale and moderate on close and dependent subscales. Low scores on all three subscales equal an avoidant attachment style. A high score falls above the Likert scale midpoint and a low score falls below the midpoint (Collins & Read, 1990). The Cronbach's alpha coefficients is reported as .69 for close, .72 for anxiety, and .75 for depend. The test-retest reliability was correlated after a two month period and the results were .52 for anxiety, .68 for close, and .71 for depend (Hazen & Shaver, 1987).

The Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire

The CDDQ is comprised of 34 items that are rated on a nine-point Likert Scale (Gati, Krausz, & Osipow, 1996). There are three categories (lack of readiness, lack of information, and inconsistent information) and 10 sub categories (Amir & Gati, 2006). Lack of Readiness consists of lack of motivation, general indecisions, and dysfunctional beliefs concerning confidence in making a career decision (Gati, Krausz, & Osipow, 1996). Lack of Information consists of lack of knowledge in career planning, lack of information about self, lack of information about different occupations, and lack of information on how to pursue career information (Gati & Levin, 2014). Inconsistent

Information consists of unreliable information, internal conflict of ideas/beliefs, and external conflicts that influence career choices (Gati & Saka, 2001). The CDDQ has a test-retest reliability of .67 to .80, with Cronbach-alpha internal-consistency coefficients ranging from .68 to .84, and the total CDDQ Cronbach-alpha ranging from .87 to .96 (Amir & Gati, 2006).

Procedures

A survey was developed to encompass both scales (AAS-Revised and CDDQ) and questions on one survey for participant convenience. Additionally, a consent form preceded the survey and was followed with a demographic survey. The researcher then applied for IRB approval. Each participant received an email stating that an IRB study was approved for research. Most of the sample population came from social media participants, while others were obtained from community agencies. Each participant received an invitation to participate and fill out the emailed survey on the topics of attachment and career decision-making self-efficacy. All data was entered into a statistical software package, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and NVivo 12 for analysis.

Data Analysis

SPSS was used to assess quantitative data and run the correlation to ascertain the relationship between attachment avoidance and career decision-making. Before the analysis, the data was screened to ensure that all participants were African American and all outliers were removed. Based on the research having two variables, a correlation was the best test fit for the current study (Field, 2009). Likewise, two open ended questions

from the survey were used to capture the participants experience using phenomenological analysis as the method for investigation. The data was documented into clustered themes that reflected the participants expressed feelings about career decision-making self-efficacy. The participants information remained confidential because the information was captured in a survey instead of face to face interviews. The research questions that were included in the survey were developed after reading literature on decision-making, self-efficacy, African American culture, and career outcomes for minority groups. Because African Americans are reported as having the lowest earning potential compared to other minority groups (US Census, 2015), survey questions were developed to gain insight into those national statistics.

The qualitative data was analyzed in NVivo 12 and coded to define themes, (things, people, or places) that were present after gathering the data. The data analysis process consisted of uploading the questions and answers into NVivo 12 to bring clarity to all the research information and collected responses.

To control for researcher bias during the coding process, attention to detail without falsifying data was extremely important. It was also important to make sure that consistency was practiced throughout the data collection and coding process. Once the answers from the survey were coded and entered into NVivo 12, the survey data was summarized for reporting purposes.

<div align="center">Ethical Considerations</div>

Ethics is a standard of applicable procedures in research that are used to reflect interaction between the researchers and their subjects (Mack et al., 2005). Ethical

standards in research are necessary because they help the researcher remain unbiased, develop trustworthy practices, and become less prone to making mistakes (Green, 2007). The Belmont Report listed three fundamental principles that are considered ethical standards for researchers; Respect for persons, Beneficence, and Justice (Mack et al., 2005). Respect for persons includes ensuring that participants are protected from exploitation and given autonomy during the research process (Creswell, 2009). Beneficence is the researchers commitment to reduce any risks, such as psychological, that are potentially associated with the research study (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2000). Lastly, a commitment to Justice is required to maintain fairness in collecting or distributing information related to research (Mack et al., 2005)

Therefore, this researcher provided an informed consent that consisted of identical information for every participant. The participants in the study received informed consent forms that explained the risks of the study. Some risks might include evoking thoughts of negative past experiences; therefore, the end of the survey offered counseling resources for those who may need additional opportunities to process the thoughts that were generated as a result of the survey. This researcher maintained fairness in distributing the survey by maintaining consistency and confidentiality in data collection and record keeping. Data collecting was completed through an electronic process without personal identifiers. A committee comprised of three professors reviewed the data to help control for bias. To avoid exploitive outcomes, each participant remained anonymous so that there was no traceable information to lead back to the participant.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher of the current study is an African American female doctoral student in a counselor education and supervision program. The primary goal of the researcher was to explore the lived experiences of African Americans and self-efficacy in career decision-making. Biases and expectations were taken into consideration before questions were developed. For example, as an African American female, it would be presumptuous to assume that all African Americans have similar cultural influences and life experiences. Therefore, the research questions remained open-ended and non-persuasive (Heppner & Heppner, 2004). However, this researcher believed that African American men and women might limit their responses if it appeared to implicate their parents as a negative influence. It was also believed that African American women and men have similar lived experiences. There was great anticipation to discover the outcomes of the research findings and provide insight for African American culture.

Summary

Due to African American poverty levels and low career attainment, this researcher considered that there might be a deeper correlation associated with the problem. Specifically, attachment avoidance may be directly correlated with poor perceptions towards career attainment, career decision-making, and self-efficacy, factors that contribute heavily to poverty levels.

The present study utilized a convergent parallel mixed method design combined with a cross-sectional correlational design and phenomenological design approach. This methodology uses both quantitative and qualitative research to obtain the most

information to address the research question. SPSS was used to correlate attachment and career decision-making self-efficacy among African Americans, using the CDDQ and the R-AAS scales.

Likewise, qualitative responses were collected, coded, and analyzed using NVivo 12. The qualitative answers were in response to two questions: 1. What will/has impacted your ability to work in your dream job and why? 2. Describe the factor(s) that influenced your level of confidence and motivated you to take the career path you chose? Answers to these questions supported the data obtained from the quantitative research and provided a stronger example of the lived experiences in career decision-making self-efficacy and the relationship to attachment styles.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This chapter is comprised of the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data-used to examine the relationship between attachment styles and career decision-making self-efficacy. The collected data from the Revised Adult Attachment Scale (R-AAS) and the Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ), was used to determine insecure attachment styles and self-efficacy. The results from both assessments are presented in descriptive, inferential, and phenomenological data reports.

The descriptive section includes a discussion about the results and collected data on the demographic survey, R-AAS, and CDDQ. The inferential data section includes a discussion of the statistical analysis used to confirm or negate the tested hypotheses. The descriptive and inferential data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to ascertain demographic, mean, standard deviation, and correlations between variables. The phenomenological (qualitative) data was obtained from the two exploratory research questions. The qualitative information was analyzed from a narrative focus, then clustered and coded manually. The information was then entered into NVivo 12 software to confirm that the manually coded data was correctly coded and themed. All data was based on a usable sample of 57 respondents.

Descriptive Statistics

After the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the current research study, a survey was generated to administer to participants through the internet/social media. An invitation, which included the survey link, was developed and sent to three social media outlets; Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, as well as community agencies and churches. The invitation was open for four weeks. The invitation provided information concerning the consent and IRB approval number. The consent included time commitment, voluntary status, and emails for follow up questions/concerns. Next, the consenting participants filled out the survey, which included two supplemental questions within the demographics section that addressed attachment and career status.

The survey was open to participants for four weeks, using chain sampling. After which, a population of 79 individuals opened and agreed to respond to the survey. Of those who chose to participate, 56 were female, 20 were male, and three did not respond. Sixty-eight respondents identified as African American, five identified as Caucasian, two chose other, one chose biracial (African American and Mexican), and three did not respond. The participants ranged in age from 18-75, with the majority ranging in age between 45-54 years of age. The next highest age ranges were between 35-44 years of age, 25-34 years old, 55-64 years old, 65 years or older, and 18-24 years old. Participant's salary ranged from less than $30,000 to over $150,000 annually. The majority of the respondents reported household incomes that ranged between 90,000 and $150,000 annually.

Twenty-two responses were deleted from the survey to account for outliers, potential errors, and those whom did not satisfy criteria. The final number of participants in the sample consisted of 57 African Americans, 15 men and 42 women. Based on the 57 participants who answered the supplemental questions, 43 responded "yes" to working in their desired career field, and 14 answered "no" to working in their desired career field. In response to finding it easy to build long lasting relationships, 42 respondents answered "yes" and 15 chose "no."

Please specify your gender:
■ Female
■ Male
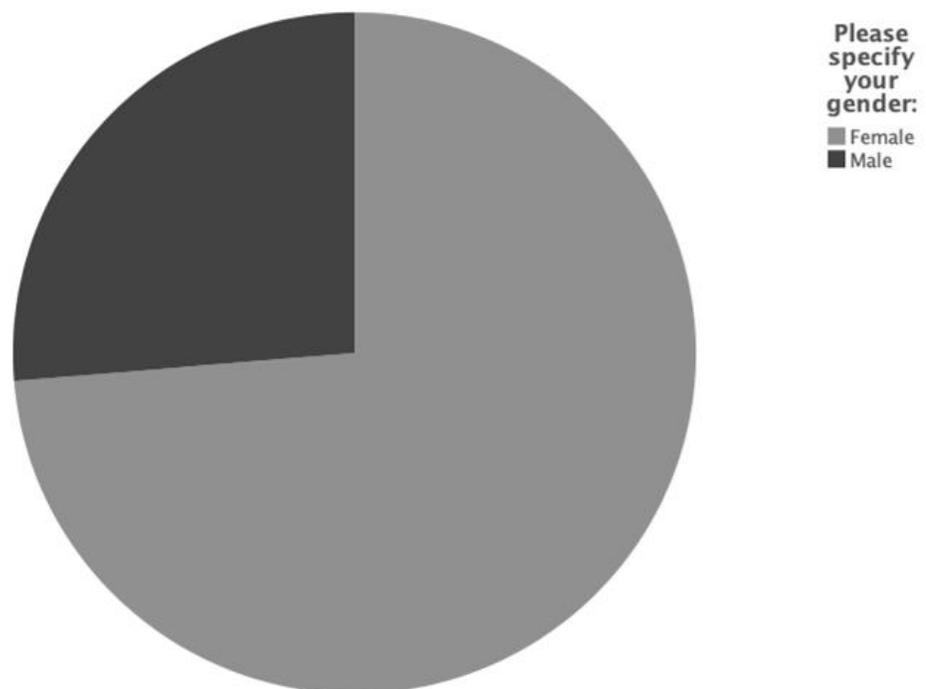
Figure 1. Gender

Table 1

Supplemental Question - I Work in My Chosen Career

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	43	75.4	75.4	75.4
	No	14	24.6	24.6	100.0
	Total	57	100.0	100.0	
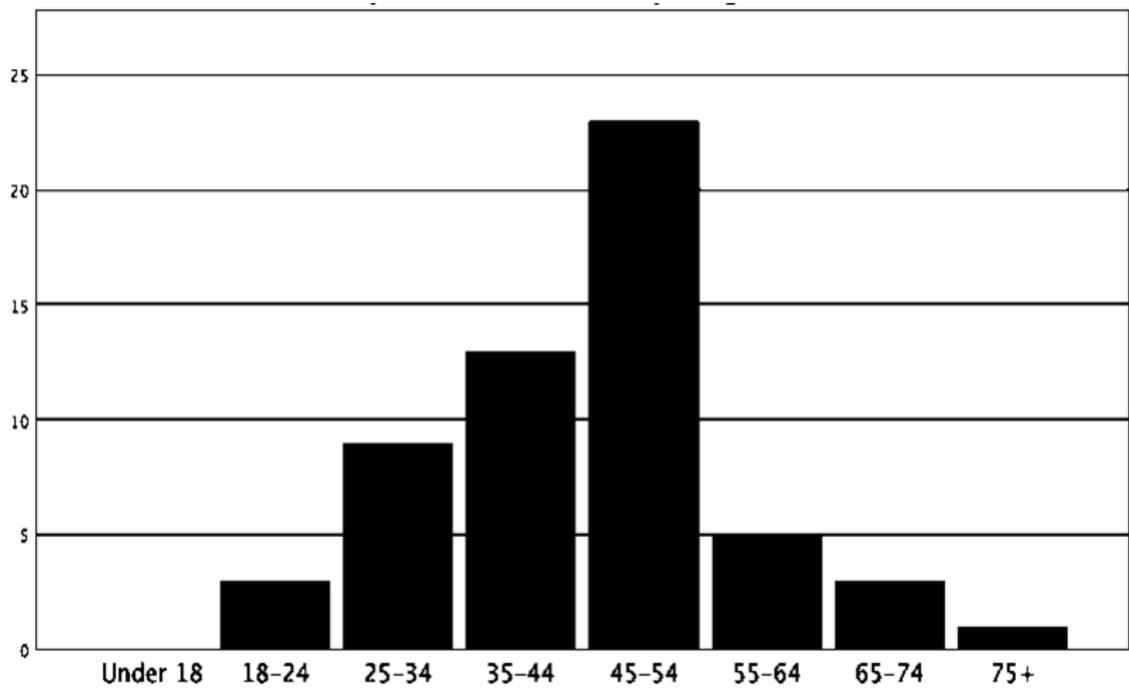
Figure 2. Age Ranges

Table 2

Supplemental Question - I Find It Easy to Build Long Lasting Relationships

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	40	70.0	70.0	70.0
	No	17	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	57	100.0	100.0	

Inferential Statistics

A correlational analysis was used to determine if a relationship exists between two variables: attachment styles and career decision-making self-efficacy. The data was used to answer the research question and to confirm or negate the hypotheses. The hypotheses consisted of the null hypothesis which states that there is no relationship between variables, attachment styles and career decision-making self-efficacy. The next hypothesis, H_1, addressed whether there was a correlation between attachment insecurity and career decision-making self-efficacy among African Americans. Survey participants completed the demographic section (Figure 4), followed by the R-AAS and the CDDQ (Table 3-7).

Correlational Data Analysis

The bivariate analysis, also known as a correlation, was considered when the Pearson (r) correlation was used to show the strength between, the predictor and the criterion. The R-AAS was correlated with the CCDQ and the scores showed that there is a moderately strong positive strength between the two variables with a score of $r = .46$

and a p=0.01 level of significance. Based on the data, this researcher rejects the null

hypothesis (H$_0$), there is no relationship between attachment styles and career decision-

making self-efficacy among African Americans and accepts the H$_1$ hypothesis, there is a

correlation between attachment insecurity and career decision-making self-efficacy

among African Americans. The mean scores for the total sample of R-AAS and CDDQ

participants are captured in Table 4.

Table 3

Correlation between R-AAS and the CDDQ

		R-AAS	CDDQ
R-AAS	Pearson Correlation	1	.460**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	57	57
CDDQ	Pearson Correlation	.460**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	57	57

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
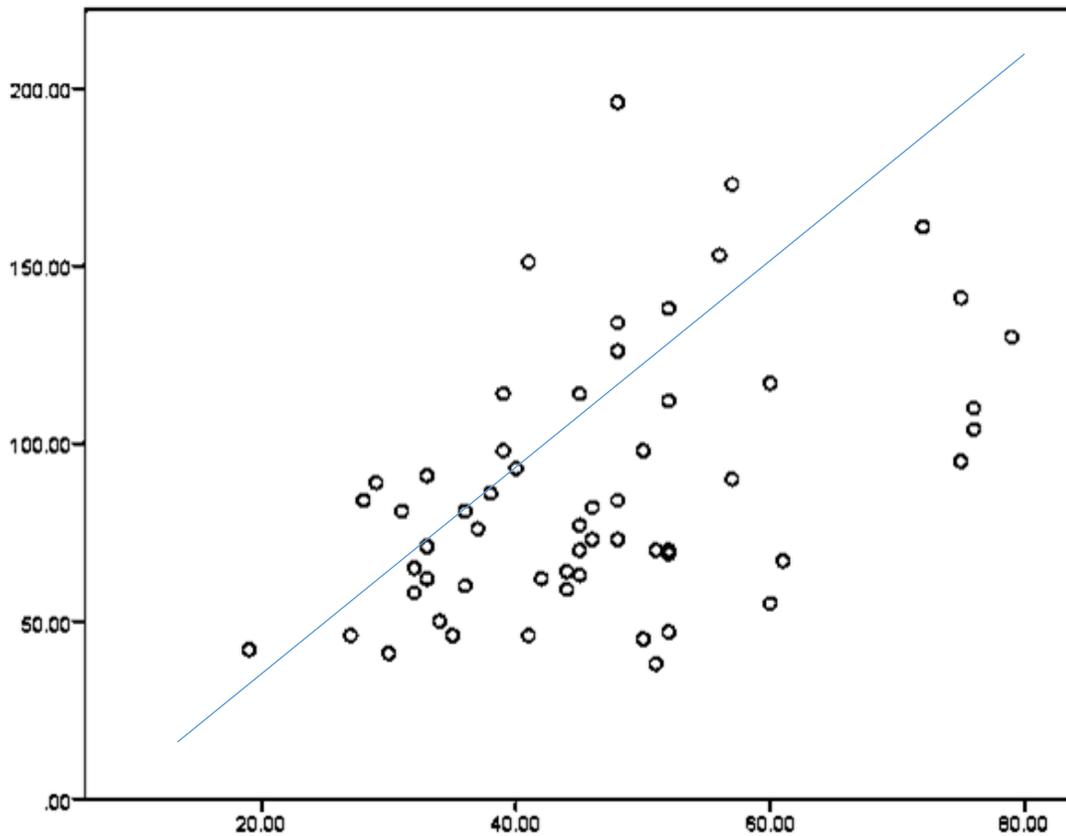
Figure 3. R-AAS and CDDQ Scatterplot, *r* = .46

The R-AAS has a total of three subscales, close, depend, anxiety/avoid. Each

subscale score on the R-AAS can range from 6 to 30. The researcher calculated the

means, standard deviations, minimum scores, and maximum scores on each sub-scale.

The total R-AAS scores range from 19-79. The total mean for the entire participant

sample (N=57) was 46.50, with a standard deviation of 13.61.

For this research study, the alternative scoring for the attachment style 'avoid'

was correlated with the CDDQ to confirm the strength of the hypotheses. The data

supports that African Americans have a high avoidant attachment style, with a mean

score of 33.40 and a Pearson (*r*) correlation of .40. Anxiety, which is also considered an

insecure attachment style, had a Pearson (*r*) correlation of .44 when correlated with the

CDDQ.

This suggests that African Americans struggle with building meaningful

relationships that are intimate and trusting because avoiders lack emotional connections

and anxiously attached individuals are fearful, overly emotional, and impulsive

(Roisman, Booth-LaForce, 2014). Ironically, the scores on the R-AAS show that

individuals range between moderately insecure and moderately secure attachment styles.

Only one individual scored in the secure attachment category (Figure 5).

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
R-AAS	57	19.00	79.00	46.5088	13.61344
CDDQ	57	38.00	196.00	87.5614	36.24471

In comparison, the CDDQ was analyzed based on three subscales: lack of

information, readiness, and inconsistent information. Based on the analysis, African

Americans scored higher in the readiness category. This category reflects a lack of

motivation to make career decisions, indecisiveness in making decisions, and

dysfunctional beliefs about making decisions due to irrational thoughts or expectations.

The Readiness category, with a mean of 32.10, suggests that self-efficacy is an area of

consideration for African Americans when making career decisions (Table 7).
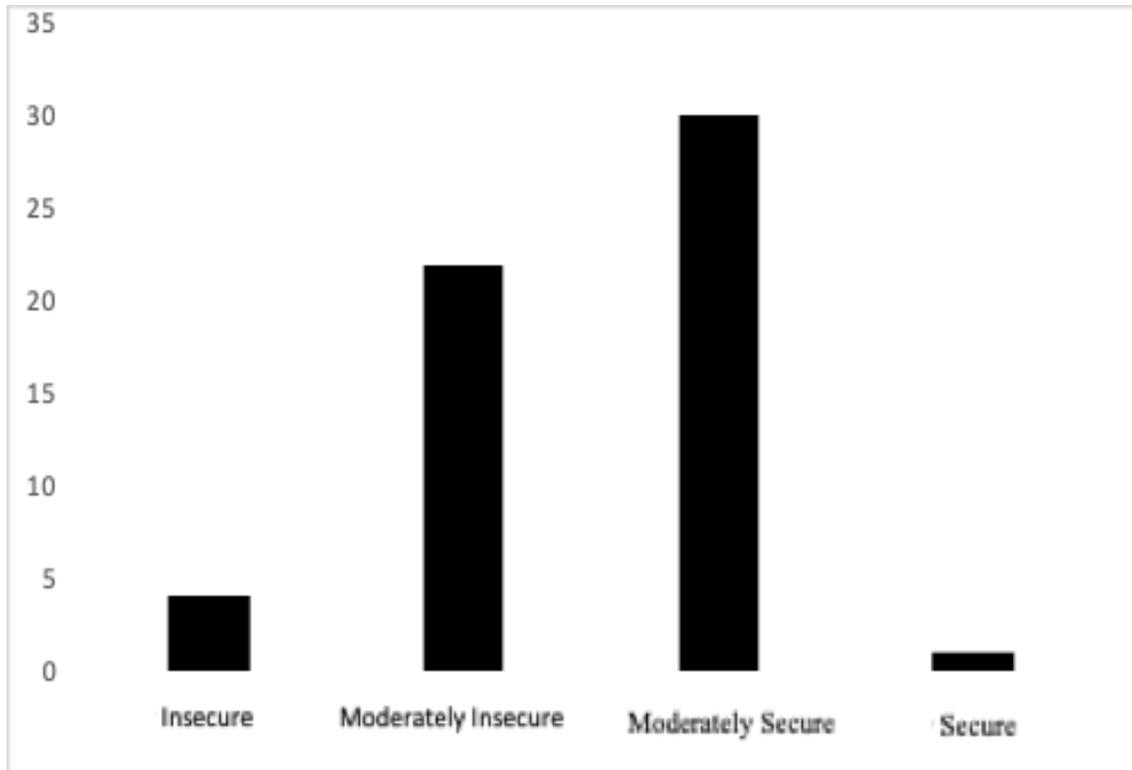
Figure 4. Table R-AAS Subscale Responses

Table 5

R-AAS Subscales

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Depend	57	6.00	29.00	17.4386	5.17555
Close	57	10.00	30.00	21.1579	4.27530
Anxiety	57	6.00	29.00	13.1404	6.26623
Avoid	57	13.00	51.00	33.4035	8.57292

Table 6

CDDQ Subscales

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Lack of Info.	57	50.00	12.00	62.00	24.9474	15.40573
Readiness	57	52.00	10.00	62.00	32.1053	11.91290
Inconsistent Info.	57	52.00	10.00	62.00	21.7193	13.66010

Table 7

Correlation of CDDQ and R-AAS Subscales

		Avoid	Close	Depend	Anxiety
	Pearson Correlation	.404**	-.323*	-.403**	.440**
CDDQ	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.014	.002	.001
	N	57	57	57	57

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Qualitative Analysis

Due to the gap in literature on the phenomenon of African American career decision-making self-efficacy, this researcher was compelled to explore attachment styles in relation to career decision-making. The term "attachment styles" appeared in the literature as a recurring factor associated with career decision-making and self-efficacy. After further research on the topic of decision-making, the comparison of attachment styles and career decision-making was chosen because relationship bonding is key to

establishing positive connections that influence self-efficacy and career pursuits. The goal of phenomenological research is to support the quantitative data and capture the essence of the respondents lived experiences in the form of themes (Smith, Larkin, & Flowers, 2009).

The relationship between attachment styles on career decision-making self-efficacy among African Americans was explored through gathering the responses from two exploratory questions at the end of the survey. The results were captured from the short answer responses. The questions were as follows:

1. What will/has impacted your ability to work in your dream job and why?

2. Describe the factor(s) that influenced your level of confidence and motivated you to take the career path you chose?

Although 57 participants were used for the quantitative analysis, data was collected from a total of 64 participants who met criteria and completed the qualitative portion of the survey. Each response was observed and analyzed manually for thought patterns and word repetition, then analyzed through the use of NVivo 12 software to confirm the themes. Word patterns were computed and used to generate themes for coding the collected data (Smith et al., 2009). Each response was read and a total of 128 nodes where retrieved. The 128 nodes were narrowed down into seven phenomenological terms because of commonalities in meaning. The common terms for question one and two were career, job, work, dream, family, ability, people, and school. All of the terms were then clustered together to develop overall themes. As a result, two nodes (codes) emerged: extrinsic motivators and intrinsic motivators. Extrinsic motivators consisted of

four themes, family/people influences, money, education/experience, and life

circumstances. Intrinsic motivators consisted of two themes, passion/natural ability and

faith.

Table 8

NVivo Word Frequency Length and Count

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage
career	6	21	2.23%
job	3	19	2.02%
work	4	19	2.02%
dream	5	17	1.81%
family	6	16	1.70%
ability	7	13	1.38%
people	6	13	1.38%
school	6	13	1.38%

Extrinsic Motivators-Code

Family and people influences. Family was associated with the term, people.

Participants stated that family members and opinions from others were influential in their

career choices. These influences include making a sacrifice for family, providing support

for family, receiving support or positive reinforcement from the family, and being

affected by family problems. This tells us that family dynamics have a major impact, both

positively and negatively, on the career decisions that African Americans make in

adulthood. Sample statements include:

-"The time I have invested being home with my children has greatly impacted my ability to work in my dream job. I feel so much of my time is dedicated to my children that I don't have the time (and energy) to focus on my career (when I do go back into the job market)."

-"People and their ability to see in me what I see in myself and then giving me the opportunity while not feeling threatened by what I bring to the organization."

-"My father demanded that I work in a school. He threatened to withdraw me from school if I changed to nursing."

-"My life experiences and the example of careers of my family members impacted my career decision. I knew I would be a teacher at 5 years old."

-"Positive reinforcement, relationships built, people rely on me for advice, people want my help and come to me for my services."

-"I went to the career center on campus during the first semester of my freshman year and choose speech language pathology out of a book. SLPs work in schools and hospitals. That satisfied my father."

-"Family and always being told that I would achieve "great things" was a primary factor that influenced my confidence in achieving my goals. Getting exposure and being challenged were also key factors."

-"My husband and I decided I would be a stay at home parent because it's what worked best for us financially and emotionally. I decided to remain a stay at home parent to help focus on what career direction I want to take that will allow me to have a steady income but remain flexible to be available for my children."

-"Influential factors included good advice from a counselor, support of family and friends, the will and determination to succeed."

-"Affirmation of others around me supporting me in my decision. The ability to work as an intern in the field I love also influenced the level of confidence."

-"Having started a family early in life changed or impacted my ability to reach for any career."

Money. Many participants stated that need for income make a huge impact on their current career choice. Some participants were in their career choice because the career was lucrative and helped support their family. Others felt that they ultimately began to love their career once they realized that the career was a financially stable opportunity. Samples responses include:

-"I am currently working on my chosen field but due to politics and the pay I'm considering moving into the corporate sector."

-"Start-up costs and/or the appropriate certification."

-"I have a certain salary requirement that I must maintain, as I attempt to transition from a job that I really enjoy to my dream job, I am concerned that I will not be able to CONSISTENTLY maintain my standard of living. Therefore, I am making the effort to continue within my current role while working to build assurances in my dream role. i.e. 60-70 hour work week."

-"My dream job is to be in a private practice. It is very difficult to accomplish this as one has to have ongoing consistent income in the meantime while building a practice. As a result, instead of working exclusively as a private practitioner I

have had to take on jobs in various clinical settings and I did not necessarily want but definitely needed to sustain my family."

-"Autonomy and my income, I want to have the freedom to do good work and make the money I want while being flexible."

-"Needing consistent income while I search and land the dream job."

-"Fear of not making enough money doing it."

-"The expense of paying for school. I do not want to take out a student loan and I can't afford to pay for school on my own."

-"The need for higher pay and the satisfaction of pleasing myself."

-"The necessity of making a salary to support my family impacts my ability to work in my dream job. My dream job would pay less."

Education and experience. Participants noted that education, such as advanced degrees, and skill development contributed to their current career. The need for more education or the increase in education made an impact on the current career choice. Sample responses are:

-"My ability to work in my dream job will be impacted by an increase in the amount of experience I receive in that field."

-"Continuing to grow and develop in my expertise through training and increased education."

-"I had to work, develop the skills, supplement my education, increase my knowledge base to grow into the role."

-"My previous success academically during childhood definitely influenced my confidence and motivated my career path."

Life circumstances. Respondents noted that life circumstance, such as getting laid off, moving, limited choices, and being in the right place at the right time contributed to working in their current career. Participants also stated that opportunities may or may not have been available. Sample responses are as follows:

-"Opportunity has impacted my ability to work in my dream job because I don't have the right connections."

-"My personal characteristics, likes and dislikes. In addition, availability of opportunities in my career field impacted me strongly."

-"I got laid off and didn't want to go back into the corporate world so I started my own business."

-"Limited choice."

-"Geographical relocation impacts my ability to work in my dream job. I need to stay in the southeastern United States to be close to aging parents."

-"I made excellent career choices, I choose Nursing and Christian Education. Being in the right place at the right time."

-"Motivation-Honestly, I didn't want to be a salesman and this was the only field I could get a job in that didn't require me to go back to school."

Intrinsic Motivators-Code

Passion and natural ability. The terms drive, natural ability, talent, and desire, contributed to the theme "passion." Participants stated that they always knew that they

would pursue a particular career choice. Responses were also indications that respondents felt a natural desire or innate ability towards a particular career choice.

-"My desire and passion to work with children."

-"I am in my dream job because I have wanted to do this since I was a little girl. I love making people look absolutely beautiful, having them walk out feeling on top of the world because I did that for them."

-"My love for technology made me choose the career path that I am in."

-"The motivation behind my current career choice was a passion I discovered when volunteering."

-"My natural ability led me to my current role, leaders chose me for the role."

-"Natural love and passion are my drivers."

-"I have always had a gift and passion for my field of work."

-"I genuinely love people and desire for our people to be healthy and whole this also motivated my career path."

-"Purpose. I have felt driven to my profession all my life. It is through my profession that my purpose is being fulfilled."

-"As a child, I always wanted to be a teacher. My 6th grade teacher had a profound effect on me. She taught me how to really learn-how to comprehend difficult reading passages. With that, I started implementing these skills on how to self-teach myself through high school. From there I knew I wanted to teach children who were just like me. She opened my eyes and I too do the same with my students."

-"Being gifted in financial matters and seeing how those gifts have helped others.

The desire to work for good."

-"I always wanted to help others. I know I was born to serve and help others

elevate in life."

Faith. Respondent's answers reflected their faith in God and belief in prayer to

guide their career choices. Sample responses are as follows:

-"God's planning for our life."

-"God. I am very spiritual. It's all about purpose to me. For now, I am where I am

because that's where I feel He's called me."

-"God and knowing His will for my life."

-"Faith and Jesus Christ's example of using talent for HIS children."

-"I prayed and God answered."

-"Just going out there and doing it. Had to come out of my career first to realize

this is what I wanted to do. God showed me that path."

<center>Summary</center>

After the data analyses, the correlation between an avoidant (insecure) attachment

style and career decision-making self-efficacy was confirmed as being a moderately

strong (positive) correlation. R-AAS scores for participants ranged in the moderately

insecure to moderately secure category, with only one person in the secure category. In

the qualitative research, two codes (Intrinsic and Extrinsic) emerged, followed by six

themes. After analyzing participant responses from the qualitative questions in the

survey, the intrinsic themes were passion/natural ability and faith. The extrinsic themes

were family/people, money, education/experience, and life circumstances. The themes

that developed were based on how positively or negatively motivated the respondents

were in their career choices. The continuation of the research is covered in chapter five.

The chapter five overview will include a summary to review the findings, discussion, and

future recommendations for potential research.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this mixed method research study was to explore the relationship between insecure attachment styles and career decision-making self-efficacy among African Americans. The purpose for the research was motivated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics data, which emphasized that African Americans have the lowest earning potential and are the largest unemployed minority group (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). The researcher was motivated to explore the hypotheses that insecure (anxious or avoidant) attachment styles would positively or negatively impact career decision-making.

This research became important to the researcher after having the opportunity to work with homeless families for three years. It became evident that one of many factors contributing to housing insecurity was the lack of career stability. Although many factors may contribute to career stability, social cognitive career theorists believe that social factors (race, culture, ethnicity, and gender) influence career self-efficacy which in turn is believed to affect career interests, behaviors, and goals (Duffy & Klingaman, 2009).

This researcher began to question what prevented or motivated individual career attainment. There was limited research on the relationship between career decision-making and attachment styles. However, this researcher was able to find areas of

research that suggested African Americans exhibited an avoidant attachment style. An Avoidant style (also considered insecure attachment) referred to a person's discomfort with being close to or connecting with others (Wright & Perrone, 2008). As a result, individuals with avoidant attachment styles are not looking for relationship connections because they expect and perceive that attachment figures will not be physically or emotionally available; therefore, they rely on themselves, which impacts their ability to trust others and make decisions (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

Quantitative Summary

Q_1 - Is there a correlation between attachment insecurity and career decision-making self-efficacy among African Americans?

With all things considered, this researcher decided to utilize a mixed methodology in a survey format to address the research question. This researcher used the R-AAS to assess attachment styles and the CDDQ to assess the level of self-efficacy. The answer to the research question is, yes. Based on the results from the research, there is a correlation between avoidant attachment styles and career decision-making self-efficacy among African Americans.

H_0 - There is no relationship between insecure attachment styles and career decision-making self-efficacy among African Americans.

Based on the results of the study from N=57 participants, there is a moderately positive correlation between attachment styles and career decision-making self-efficacy. This means that when one variable increases, the other variable increases. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

H₁ - There is a correlation between attachment insecurity and career decision-making

self-efficacy among African Americans

The R-AAS and the CDDQ were used to collect data represented in descriptive, inferential, and phenomenological data reports. When correlated together, the R-AAS and the CDDQ was determined to have a moderately positive correlation between the two variables, $r=.46$, with a $p=.01$ level of significance. Based on the research data, the H₁ hypothesis is accepted.

The R-AAS also revealed that African Americans have an avoidant attachment style. This could mean that certain career paths are avoided or pursued due to lack of trust in others, the thought of building deep and meaningful relationship bonds is too uncomfortable, and external input/influences sway decision-making. As a result, avoiders potentially engage in shallow relationships. Avoiders will leave the relationships (in this case-work relationships) if they become too intense or uncomfortable to maintain.

In conjunction, Readiness, one of the three subscales (Lack of information, Readiness, and Inconsistent Information) on the CDDQ, was highly rated. The Readiness subscale encompassed a variety of questions to support that African Americans felt unprepared and lacked readiness for career decision-making. The outcome is reflective of poor motivation, indecisiveness, and dysfunctional beliefs about choosing a career based on capabilities and expectations.

Qualitative Summary

To compliment the quantitative data, a qualitative phenomenological method was used to enhance the study. Participants filled out two questions at the end of the survey.

The last two questions were answered based on the participants personal thoughts on the factors that have impacted their ability to work in their dream job and the factors that have influenced their level of confidence in choosing their career path. The questions were as follows:

1. What will/has impacted your ability to work in your dream job and why?

2. Describe the factor(s) that influenced your level of confidence and motivated you to take the career path you chose?

Responses were from a total of 64 participants who met criteria and completed the qualitative portion of the survey.

The results to the questions yielded two themes, intrinsic and extrinsic influences. The themes that developed were based on how positively or negatively motivated the respondents were in their career choices. The intrinsic themes (passion, natural ability, and faith) were associated with phrases like, *I always knew* or *it just comes naturally*. The extrinsic themes, family, people, money, education, experience, and life circumstances were both positively and negatively influential to participants. They used phrases, such as, *that's what I had to do* or *that made him happy*. The extrinsic theme of family is a major theme because the foundation of attachment differences is rooted in a child's inability to bond with others as a result of parent inefficiencies.

Discussion

As we mature to adulthood, work is expected as a means of self-sufficiency. However, there is a difference between working and pursuing a dream or passion. A job is the ability to work for wages with minimal advancement or opportunity for growth

(Pemberton, 1997). A career develops from a combination of experiences and skills that derive from a passion to do the work (Pemberton, 1997). The passion and desire to obtain a career can suffer when a person perceives a lack competency (Swanson & Fouad, 2015).

Previous data from the United States Census (2015) confirmed the career disparity between African Americans and other races. The disparities are contributed to social and cultural factors, a shared belief of social theorists. Another factor to consider is the concept of attachment style differences in relation to career decision-making self-efficacy. This study was pursued to explore the relationship between insecure attachment styles and African American self-efficacy in making career decisions.

Attachment styles (secure, avoidant, and anxious) impact personal and professional relationships (Starcke & Brand, 2012). This becomes evident when insecure attachment styles, such as avoidant, influence the ability to develop meaningful professional career opportunities (Simpson et al., 1996). As a result, African Americans are prone to seek less prestigious or challenging career prospects (Austin, 2010). Keep in mind, this does not mean that African American's are not ambitious. It does suggest that African American's have low self-efficacy and doubt their abilities to pursue careers that are perceived as unattainable.

For many adults, decisions are based on maturity. Maturity is correlated with responsibility and acceptance of authority (Fouad & Keeley, 1992). However, maturity in decision-making is irrelevant if negative thoughts or fear of self and personal capabilities are present (Swanson & Fouad, 2015).

Limitations

This research was susceptible to limitations partly due to the collection of data, sample population, and sample size. Data collection was limited to online survey distribution, which was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and NVivo 12. Therefore, the self-selection to participate or not could have influenced a bias in participant outcomes between genders. In this study, there were more women represented (n=43) than men (n=14).

Another limitation consisted of individuals not fully completing the survey, which impacted the number of available results. The overall sample size was 57 participants for quantitative analysis and 64 participants for qualitative analysis. In addition, the study was predominately promoted on social media sites, such as Facebook and Instagram. If the study had been promoted more heavily on additional sites and for longer than 30 days, there may have been more participation.

Finally, the study lacked generalizability because the sample may not have been a quality representation of all African Americans across socioeconomic levels. Based on the demographic data, more mid-to-high level salaried participants were captured in the study. More low-income respondents might have offered an understanding to their struggles with being in low income positions.

Theoretical Implications

The results of the current study are extremely significant for African Americans. They will have the potential for career opportunities that may not have been considered before understanding the relationship between attachment, self-efficacy, and career

decision-making. To understand influences like attachment styles on decision-making could change a person's way of thinking and perceptions about life goals. Whiston (1996) poses that adult perceptions of barriers and their abilities to set and facilitate goals will impact career decision-making. For example, a child that is raised in low income housing and excels in science, may have a desire to be a doctor; yet, the child perceives that becoming a doctor is unrealistic based on his internal and external messages. In a different scenario, a middle class female has a desire to be an actress, however, her perceived fear of not being good enough to compete with other actresses prevents her from pursuing her dreams. Although the examples provided demonstrate a lack of self-efficacy from both individuals, the deeper restraint and positive correlation is related to their avoidant attachment style. The lack of a secure attachment style, which is the ability to bond well with others and make meaningful and trusting connections, is what guides a person's career (Van Petegem et al., 2013). If African Americans understand that career decisions are guided from deeper mental restrictions, they can process decisions (like choosing a career path) more consciously. Career counselors who work with minority clients, specifically African Americans, must consider their insecure attachment as an influence on self-efficacy and the ability to choose careers based on true passion and ability. Counselors are tasked to learn more about the role that attachment styles play in career self-efficacy and decision-making.

Based on the research results, clinicians should also consider the insure (anxious) attachment style when treating clients with anxiety. The R-AAS would help identify anxiously attached clients and pose a different approach to treating them. Individuals

with anxious attachment styles will attract attention to their distress because they so desperately seek to bond with an attachment figure and receive reassurance to eliminate their anxiety (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Anxiously attached individual's may cause themselves more distress in career decision-making because the desire to bond becomes greater than the desire to make wise career choices. Once an individual's insecure attachment style is identified, movement toward secure attachment is possible. Although there are differences in opinion, literature suggests that developing a secure attachment style is possible. For example, therapists can help clients lessen their negative thoughts about intimacy and incorporate bonding activities that strengthen their perspective on closeness to build secure attachment perceptions (Stanton, Campbell, & Pink, 2017).

Clinicians who add the R-AAS and the CDDQ to treatment interventions, consider client insecurities, and consider differences in decision-making for minority clients, will develop more accurate treatment plans designed to address the barriers African Americans face.

<center>Future Recommendations</center>

The Occupational Outlook Handbook (2019) reports that the demand for career counselors is projected to increase 13 percent from 2016 to 2026, which is deemed a higher average growth rate than any other human service or counseling occupation. The expected growth is related to the expected increase in jobs after baby-boomers retire, leaving many new career opportunities. More career counselors are needed in universities, state agencies, and the private sector to help individuals such as new graduates, military veterans, and laid off employees, learn skills to prepare for their

career transitions (Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2019). Although career skills are helpful, these skills are not useful if the underlying issue with career success is low self-efficacy. Interventions that incorporate minority sensitive strategies are important. For example, if a counselor is aware of their African American client's avoidant attachment concerns, the counselor is more likely to understand that decisions about career choices are less likely made with high self-efficacy. Therefore, training, assessment interventions, and skill building is required to change behaviors and maladaptive thoughts that hinder career success.

In addition, future research is important to continue understanding the impact of attachment styles and self-efficacy on minorities. A researcher could consider attachment styles and socioeconomic status or parental influences. Perhaps a researcher could continue the research and compare each minority to other races. There are many opportunities to cross reference attachment styles or career decision-making self-efficacy with other culturally influencing factors.

Likewise, other statistical analyses (other than a correlation) could be used to address comparisons between additional variables. Future researchers could incorporate face to face interviews for a more in-depth qualitative approach to the study. Also, a comparison of demographic information (such as income, age, and education) was influential on the outcome of the study and should be given more attention in future research. Any future research should expand to reach individuals independent of social media.

Summary

        In this chapter, the study's findings were summarized and discussed. Limitations, theoretical considerations, and future recommendations were also addressed. The research question and hypotheses noted in Chapter 1 were addressed. The research aimed to demonstrate a relationship between attachment insecurity and African American perceptions toward career decision-making self-efficacy. The research results support the decision to accept the hypothesis and reject the null hypothesis. Specifically, there is a correlation between insecure attachment styles and career decision-making self-efficacy among African Americans. Because of the research outcomes, this researcher recommends expanding the study with a larger sample size, mainly pursuing an equal representation of African American men and women to make the results more generalizable to the overall African American population.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

<u>Demographics Survey:</u>

1. Marital Status:
Single, never married
Single
Married
Widowed
Divorced
Separated
Domestic Partner
2. What is your religious preference
Christian
Muslim
Catholic
Protestant
Other
No preference
3. I find it easy to build long lasting relationships?   Yes   No
4. I work in my chosen career?   Yes   No
5. What is your salary range?
150K or more/year
90-150k/year
70-90k/years
50-70k/years
30-50k / years
Less than 30k per year
6. Please specify your gender: Male   Female   Other
7. What is your age:
18-24
25-34
35-44
45-54
55-64
65-74
75+
8. Household size: Please specify the number family members in the house hold (Father, Mother, and Children only)
2
3
4
5
6+

9. What is your ethnicity origin (Race): Please specify your ethnicity
White
Hispanic or Latino
Black or African American
Native American or American Indian
Asian/Pacific Islander
Other
10. Education: What is the highest level of education you have completed
No School
Some High School
High School/GED
Vocational Training
Associates Degree
Bachelor Degree
Master Degree
Professional Degree
Doctorate

APPENDIX B

R-AAS SCALE

Revised Adult Attachment Scale (Collins, 1996)- Close Relationships Version

The following questions concern how you *generally* feel in *important close relationships in your life*. Think about your past and present relationships with people who have been especially important to you, such as family members, romantic partners, and close friends. Respond to each statement in terms of how you *generally* feel in these relationships.

Please use the scale below by placing a number between 1 and 5 in the space provided to the right of each statement.

1---------------2---------------3--------------4--------------5
Not at all   **Very**
characteristic   **characteristic**
of me   **of me**

1)   I find it relatively easy to get close to people.

          _____

2)   I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on others.

          _____

3)   I often worry that other people don't really love me.

          _____

4)   I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like.

          _____

5)   I am comfortable depending on others.

          _____

6)   I don't worry about people getting too close to me.

          _____

7)   I find that people are never there when you need them.

          _____

8)   I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others.

          _____

9)   I often worry that other people won't want to stay with me.

          _____

10) When I show my feelings for others, I'm afraid they will not feel the

_____

same about me.

11) I often wonder whether other people really care about me.

_____

12) I am comfortable developing close relationships with others.

_____

13) I am <u>un</u>comfortable when anyone gets too emotionally close to me.

_____

14) I know that people will be there when I need them.

_____

15) I want to get close to people, but I worry about being hurt.

_____

16) I find it difficult to trust others completely.

_____

17) People often want me to be emotionally closer than I feel comfortable being.

_____

18) I am not sure that I can always depend on people to be there when I need them.

_____

APPENDIX C

CDDQ SCALE

Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire

Circle 1 if the statement does not describe you and 9 if it describes you well. Of course, you may also circle any of the intermediate levels.

Please do not skip any question. **For each statement, please circle the number which best describes you.**

1. I know that I have to choose a career, but I don't have the motivation to make the decision now
   ("I don't feel like it").

   Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

2. Work is not the most important thing in one's life and therefore the issue of choosing a career doesn't worry me much.

   Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

3. I believe that I do not have to choose a career now because time will lead me to the "right" career choice.

   Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

4. It is usually difficult for me to make decisions.

   Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

5. I usually feel that I need confirmation and support for my decisions from a professional person or somebody else I trust.

   Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

6. I am usually afraid of failure.

   Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

7. I like to do things my own way.

   Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

8. I expect that entering the career I choose will also solve my personal problems.

   Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Describes me well

9. I believe there is only one career that suits me.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 *Describes me well*

10. I expect that through the career I choose I will fulfill all my aspirations.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 *Describes me well*

11. I believe that a career choice is a one-time choice and a life-long commitment.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 *Describes me well*

12. I **always** do what I am told to do, even if it goes against my own will.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 *Describes me well*

13. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not know what steps I have to take.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 *Describes me well*

14. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not know what factors to take into consideration.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 *Describes me well*

15. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I don't know how to combine the information I have about myself with the information I have about the different careers.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 *Describes me well*

16. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I still do not know which occupations   interest me.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 *Describes me well*

17. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I am not sure about my career preferences yet (for example, what kind of a relationship I want with people, which working environment I prefer).

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 *Describes me well*

18. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not have enough information about my competencies (for example, numerical ability, verbal skills) and/or about my personality traits (for example, persistence, initiative, patience).

Does not describe me <u>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</u> *Describes me well*

19. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not know what my abilities and/or personality traits will be like in the future.

Does not describe me <u>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</u> *Describes me well*

20. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not have enough information about the variety of occupations or training programs that exist.

Does not describe me <u>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</u> *Describes me well*

21. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not have enough information about the characteristics of the occupations and/or training programs that interest me (for example, the market demand, typical income, possibilities of advancement, or a training program's perquisites).

Does not describe me <u>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</u> *Describes me well*

22. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I don't know what careers will look like in the future.

Does not describe me <u>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</u> *Describes me well*

23. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not know how to obtain additional information about myself (for example, about my abilities or my personality traits).

Does not describe me <u>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</u> *Describes me well*

24. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not know how to obtain accurate and updated information about the existing occupations and training programs, or about their characteristics.

Does not describe me <u>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</u> *Describes me well*

25. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I constantly change my career preferences (for example, sometimes I want to be self-employed and sometimes I want to be an employee).

Does not describe me <u>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</u> *Describes me well*

26. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I have contradictory data about my abilities and/or personality traits (for example, I believe I am patient with other people but others say I am impatient).

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 *Describes me well*

27. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I have contradictory data about the existence or the characteristics of a particular occupation or training program.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 *Describes me well*

28. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I'm equally attracted by a number of careers and it is difficult for me to choose among them.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 *Describes me well*

29. I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not like any of the occupation or training programs to which I can be admitted.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 *Describes me well*

30. I find it difficult to make a career decision because the occupation I am interested in involves a certain characteristic that bothers me (for example, I am interested in medicine, but I do not want to study for so many years).

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 *Describes me well*

31. I find it difficult to make a career decision because my preferences cannot be combined in one career, and I do not want to give any of them up (e.g., I'd like to work as a free-lancer, but I also wish to have a steady income).

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 *Describes me well*

32. I find it difficult to make a career decision because my skills and abilities do not match those required by the occupation I am interested in.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 *Describes me well*

33. I find it difficult to make a career decision because people who are important to me (such as parents or friends) do not agree with the career options I am considering and/or the career characteristics I desire.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 *Describes me well*

34. I find it difficult to make a career decision because there are contradictions between the recommendations made by different people who are important to me about the career that suits me or about what career characteristics should guide my decisions.

Does not describe me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 *Describes me well*

Finally, how would you rate the degree of your difficulty in making a career decision?

Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 *High*

APPENDIX D

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

MERCER
UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board
For Research Involving Human Subjects

Tuesday, January 8, 2019

Ms. Kimberly M. Griffin
3001 Mercer University Drive
Penfield College of Mercer University
Atlanta, GA 30341

RE: Exploring the Relationship Between Attachment Styles and Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy
Among African Americans (H1812306)

Dear Ms. Griffin:

On behalf of Mercer University's Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research, your application submitted on 07-Dec-2018 for the above referenced protocol was reviewed in accordance with Federal Regulations 21 CFR 56.110(b) and 45 CFR 46.110(b) (for expedited review) and was approved under category(ies) 07 per 63 FR 60364.

Your application was approved for one year of study on 08-Jan-2019. The protocol expires on 07-Jan-2020. If the study continues beyond one year, it must be re-evaluated by the IRB Committee.

Item(s) Approved:
New application for mixed methods research study using a survey through Survey Monkey to explore the relationship between attachment insecurity and African American perceptions toward career decision making self-efficacy, which contributes to overall career stability.

NOTE: You MUST report to the committee when the protocol is initiated. Report to the Committee immediately any changes in the protocol or consent form and ALL accidents, injuries, and serious or unexpected adverse events that occur to your subjects as a result of this study.

We at the IRB and the Office of Research Compliance are dedicated to providing the best service to our research community. As one of our investigators, we value your feedback and ask that you please take a moment to complete our Satisfaction Survey and help us to improve the quality of our service.

It has been a pleasure working with you and we wish you much success with your project! If you need any further assistance, please feel free to contact our office.

Respectfully,

Ava Chambliss-Richardson

Ava Chambliss-Richardson, Ph.D., CIP, CIM.
Director of Research Compliance
Member
Institutional Review Board

"Mercer University has adopted and agrees to conduct its clinical research studies in accordance with the International Conference on Harmonization's (ICH) Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice."

Mercer University IRB & Office of Research Compliance
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