Journey to the Professoriate: Exploring the Career Development of African American Male Faculty in Counselor Education

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JOURNEY TO THE PROFESSORIATE: EXPLORING THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE FACULTY IN COUNSELOR EDUCATION

by

LaCretisha Danielle McDole

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Much of the existing literature on African American faculty in counselor education and supervision programs focuses on the challenges that confront them as racial minorities (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Holcomb-McCoy & Addison-Bradley, 2005; Thompson, 2008; Turner & Myers, 2000). Findings from recent research studies have offered ways to support and guide African American faculty in combating racial discrimination and oppression within the academy (Jones-Boyd, 2016; Robinson, 2018). However, there are gaps in the literature about the personal and environmental factors that shape African Americans’ decisions to pursue the professoriate in counselor education and supervision, and factors that contribute to their persistence. Notably absent from existing literature is African American male representation and voice (Branch, 2018; Brooks & Steen, 2010; Dollarhide et al., 2018; Hannon et al., 2019). The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to explore the lived experiences of African American male faculty in counselor education and the factors that influenced their career development. More specifically, this study sought to explore three things: (1) How facets of social cognitive career theory (SCCT) (i.e., self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals) influence African American males’ decision to pursue a tenure-track faculty position in counselor education? (2) How African American males describe their experience as faculty members in counselor education programs? and (3) What experiences prepare African
American males to navigate barriers/challenges in pursuit of a tenure-track faculty position in counselor education? Semi-structured interviews with eight African American male counselor education faculty members revealed six emerging themes that captured their experiences: (1) Education: The Pathway to Opportunity, (2) “One Thing Led to Another…,” (3) “I Believe in You,” (4) Outsider Within, (5) “I Got Your Back,” and (6) Taking a Stand. Implications for institutions and counselor education programs are offered, and suggestions for future research are given.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Traditionally, doctoral education has been conceived as the primary means for preparing future university faculty (Curtin, Malley, & Stewart, 2016). During this preparatory stage individuals explore their abilities and desires to pursue an academic career as a tenure track faculty member (Austin, 2002; Haley, Jaeger, & Levin, 2014). Despite initial academic career aspirations, studies have found that it is not uncommon for doctoral students to pursue non-faculty careers in universities, or careers in non-academic settings all together (Haley et al., 2014; Isaacs & Sabella, 2013; Russo 2011). Factors such as demanding faculty lifestyle (Hunter & Devine, 2016; Rice, Sorcinelli, & Austin, 2000) and perceived lack of available tenure track faculty positions (Golde & Dore, 2001) may deter individuals from pursuing the professoriate. For doctoral students of color, racial discrimination, experiences with microaggressions, and lack of mentorship present as additional challenges that negatively impact the desire to pursue the professoriate (Johnson, Bradley, Knight, & Bradshaw, 2007; Henfield, Owens, & Witherspoon, 2011; Henfield, Woo, & Washington, 2013).

Counselor education programs are a microcosm of this phenomenon, wherein there exists a disparity between African Americans represented in counselor education doctoral programs and the underrepresentation of African American faculty in counselor education programs. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) Vital Statistics Report (2017) reported that of the 767 CACREP-accredited counselor education programs, and the 2,120 enrolled at the doctoral program level, 25.09 percent were African American; 4.86 percent of which were men and 20.24 percent were women. Even though there is
greater representation of African American doctoral students in counselor education doctoral programs, only 14.52 percent of nearly 2,500 full-time faculty identified as African American; 4.11 percent of which were men (CACREP Vital Statistics Report, 2018).

Previous research has explored the experiences of African American counselor education faculty members and offered several explanations for their lack of representation. Like faculty of color in other disciplines, African American counselor education faculty members reported being confronted by racism, discrimination, service overload, limited access to mentorship, hidden rules and unspoken expectations during tenure review, and lack of research support (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Branch, 2018; Brooks & Steen, 2010; Garriott, 2009; Holcomb-McCoy & Adkison-Bradley, 2005; Turner & Myers, 2000). These obstacles disrupt African American counselor education faculty members’ ability to perform in their faculty roles satisfactorily; consequently, impacting their ability to attain tenure and promotion (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Holcomb-McCoy & Adkison-Bradley, 2005; Thompson, 2008; Turner & Myers, 2000).

Despite the aforementioned, there are African Americans who have successfully overcome existing barriers and attained tenured faculty positions. Jones-Boyd (2016) interviewed six African American female counselor education faculty members to determine contributing factors of their success as tenured faculty at predominantly White institutions. The African American females in this study contributed their overall successes to their lived experiences and positive racial identities. Participants reported that early experiences of racial socialization helped them to demonstrate resilience and establish their ability to respond to obstacles and challenges early on. Participants also reported that family influence played a significant role in establishing a personal value for education, emphasizing academic
achievement as the avenue to a successful future. Support from other African American female counselor education faculty members, spirituality, and participants’ productivity and effectiveness in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service were also noted as contributing factors. Similarly, Robinson (2018) conducted a qualitative research study to identify factors that influence resiliency development of African American female counselor education faculty members as it relates to inequity within the system of higher education. In this study, 18 African American female counselor education faculty members revealed that cultural influence, interpersonal connection, divine connection, meaning making, adaptation, access and representation, and culture of counselor education were all factors that influenced their resiliency development.

While previous research in counselor education and supervision provides insight into the unique challenges that confront African American counselor education faculty members (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Holcomb-McCoy & Adkison-Bradley, 2005; Thompson, 2008; Turner & Myers, 2000), findings from emerging research studies (Jones-Boyd, 2016; Robinson, 2018) offer ways to guide and support African American counselor education faculty members in counteracting racial discrimination and oppression within the academy. However, absent from these studies is African American male representation and voice (Branch, 2018; Brooks & Steen, 2010; Dollarhide, Mayes, Dogan, Aras, Edwards, Oehrtman, & Clevenger, 2018; Hannon, Nadrich, Ferguson, Bonner, Ford, & Vereen, 2019).

In a study conducted by Chung and Harmon (1996), African American men had lower career commitment (i.e., an individual’s motivation and attitude toward their career, as defined by Blau, 1985) compared to African American women at a predominantly White university. A large proportion of the African American male participants with absent or unemployed fathers
revealed the impact of male role models in the career development of African American men (Chung and Harmon, 1996). Chung, Baskin, and Case (1999) asserts that African American males’ exposure to African American male career role models has a significant influence on career-related outcomes such as career aspirations, attitudes towards non-traditional careers, and career choice. To increase the number of African American male faculty members in counselor education programs, research must examine key components to the career development of those who have overcome barriers in pursuit of the professoriate.

**Statement of the Problem**

Many African American men are plagued by high levels of sociocultural and environmental stressors that contribute to anxiety, depression, substance use/abuse, and other poor health outcomes (Parham, Ajamu, & White, 2010; Watkins, Walker, & Griffith, 2010). According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Mental Health (2016), adult Black/African Americans are 20 percent more likely to report serious psychological distress than adult Whites. More than non-Hispanic whites, Black/African Americans are likely to be victims of violent crime, and consequently, more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Minority Health, 2016). Considering this information, it is evident that African American men could benefit from mental health services (Watkins, Walker, & Griffith, 2010). Unfortunately, the lack of African American men represented in the counseling profession may deter African American men from utilizing mental health services (Chandler, 2010). Additionally, the lack of African American men represented in the counseling profession may dissuade African American men from pursuing a career in the counseling profession (Lease, 2006), particularly as faculty members in counselor education programs where they are likely to encounter racial
discrimination (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Branch, 2018; Brooks & Steen, 2010; Garriott, 2009; Holcomb-McCoy & Adkison-Bradley, 2005; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000; Turner & Myers, 2000). The underrepresentation of African American men as faculty members in counselor education programs results in missed opportunities to decrease the negative stigma and stereotypes that impact the impressions and treatment of African American men (Smith & Roysircar, 2010). Furthermore, the underrepresentation of African American men as faculty members in counselor education programs limits the career aspirations and attainment among African American males (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000; Mau & Bikos, 2000).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of African American male faculty in counselor education and factors that influenced their career development. Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) will be applied as a conceptual lens to provide a structure for understanding the influence of personal, contextual, and experiential factors on an individual’s self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and goals to pursue the professoriate in counselor education programs.

**Questions Investigated**

The questions that guided this study included, but were not limited to, the following:

1. How do facets of social cognitive career theory (SCCT) (i.e., self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals) influence African American males’ decision to pursue a tenure-track faculty position in counselor education?

2. How do African American males describe their experience as faculty members in counselor education programs?
3. What experiences prepare African American males to navigate barriers/challenges in pursuit of a tenure-track faculty position in counselor education?

**Theoretical Framework**

Lent, Brown, and Hackett’s (1994) Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) renders an appropriate lens through which to explore African American male counselor education faculty members’ career development and reasons for pursuing the professoriate. Derived from Albert Bandura’s (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) emphasizes the process of how career interests are formed, how choices to pursue a given career are made, and how success is attained in given occupations (Gysbers, Heppner, & Johnston, 2003). SCCT focuses on three social cognitive processes: (a) self-efficacy, (b) expected outcomes, and (c) personal goals. According to SCCT, self-efficacy beliefs represent an individual’s personal beliefs concerning their ability to perform in specific domains, while outcome expectations include the presumed consequences of engaging in certain behaviors (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). Both self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations are developed through learning experiences had throughout the course of an individual’s life. SCCT illustrates how an individual’s self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals are formed by factors such as race, gender, social support, and systemic and perceived career barriers (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). In addition to exploring factors impacting occupational choices, the inclusion of contextual variables (e.g., parental involvement) in SCCT’s explanation of career development provides a framework in which to explore coping strategies individuals exercise to overcome perceived barriers or obstacles (Hackett & Byars, 1996). For this study, SCCT was particularly useful in exploring influences on African American male faculty members’ pursuit of the professoriate in counselor education.
Significance of the Study

As counselor educators, African American men are positioned to educate and prepare the next generation of professional counselors, counselor educators, supervisors, and leaders who will have a direct impact on the personal and psychological development, growth, and wellness of individuals, communities, and society at large (Branch 2018; Brooks & Steen, 2010; Dollarhide et al., 2018; Hannon et al., 2019; Okech & Rubel, 2018). Increasing the number of African American male counselor educators may challenge the deficit notions of African American men, and potentially influence other African American men to consider and pursue the professoriate in counselor education programs (Brooks & Steen, 2010; Hannon et al., 2019). Identifying personal, contextual, and cognitive factors that shaped African American male counselor education faculty members’ ability to overcome racial and discriminatory barriers in pursuit of the professoriate will provide a salient template of success for other African American males to follow (Cheatham, 1990; Evans & Herr, 1994; Quimby, Wolfson, & Seyala, 2007). One avenue to investigate the factors that have influenced their success is to examine the career development of these individuals (Evans & Herr, 1994; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000). By bringing attention to the career development of African American male counselor education faculty members, this study seeks to understand the career decisions and aspirations of African American men. African American counselor education faculty members can serve as mentors to African American male graduate students and help prepare them for the professoriate (Branch 2018; Brooks & Steen, 2010; Hannon et al., 2019). Without adequate representation, African American men will continue to be underrepresented in counselor education programs (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Holcomb-McCoy & Adkison-Bradley, 2005; Thompson, 2008).
Definition of Terms

*Career Development* - The continuous, lifelong psychological and behavioral processes and contextual influences shaping one’s career path (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2002).

*Outcome Expectations* - Beliefs about probable results or consequences of engaging in or performing certain actions and behaviors (Bandura, 1986).

*Personal Goals* – The intent of an individual that helps plan and regulate specific behaviors to achieve a desired outcome (Bandura, 1986).

*Self-efficacy* - An individual’s perceived level of ability to produce a desired outcome (Bandura, 1986).

*Tenure-Track Faculty* - The process by which an assistant professor becomes an associate professor, and then a professor with an indefinite academic appointment that can only be terminated for cause (Okech & Rubel, 2018).

**Chapter I Summary**

This chapter has highlighted the importance of studying the lived experiences of African American male faculty in counselor education programs and factors that influenced their career development. Attention was drawn to the paucity of research on factors that influence African American male faculty career development. This chapter also presented the purpose, significance, and theoretical framework for this study. The next chapter reviews literature on the career development of African American males, factors that influence African American males’ decision to pursue a career as a tenure track faculty member and challenges that African American male faculty members face. Additionally, strategies African American male faculty employ to overcome barriers in pursuit of the professoriate will be discussed.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a literature review on relevant theoretical and empirical research related to the career development of African American male faculty in counselor education. This chapter will first explore factors that shape and impact African American males’ career aspirations and career development process. Next, the nature of a career in academia as a counselor educator will be explored. Attention will be given to the tenure and promotion process, expectations, and responsibilities. Emphasis will be placed on the unique experiences of African American faculty. The need for research focused on African American male faculty in counselor education will also be addressed. Lastly, an overview of social cognitive career theory (SCCT) will be provided. The major constructs of SCCT and their application to the career development of African American males will be explored.

Factors That Influence African American Male Career Development

Career development is a lifelong process comprising psychological, behavioral, and contextual influences that shape an individual’s career path (Herr et al., 2004). The career development process involves the formation of career interests, career exploration, decision-making and planning, and integration of life roles (Herr et al., 2004). Though a daunting process for many, African American males are bombarded by uncontrollable factors that impede their career development (Chung, Baskin, & Case, 1999; Constantine, Erickson, Banks, & Timberlake, 1998; King & Madsen, 2007). A history of racial discrimination and oppression perpetuates career barriers for African American males by limiting career accessibility, opportunities, and advancement, ultimately confining them to lower-level jobs and preventing them from achieving their fullest potential (Blackmon & Thomas, 2014; Chung et al., 1999;
Lang & Lehmann, 2012; Lease, 2006). This interpersonal and institutional racial oppression may result in African American males’ heightened awareness and anticipation of prejudice and systemic injustice in the world of work (Fouad & Byars-Winston, 2005; Lease, 2006). Despite interest and cultural value congruence, some African American males will intentionally avoid pursuing certain careers if those careers are perceived as racially biased (Evans & Herr, 1991).

Career aspirations act as a fundamental guide for African American males in their career development and success (Chung, Baskin, & Case, 1999; Lease, 2006). Previous research has identified several influences that shape career aspirations including gender (Browne & Misra, 2003; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2008), social support (Felsman & Blustein, 1999; Redmond, 1990), education (Bell, 2015; Graham & Erwin, 2011; Redmond, 1990), expectations (Varner & Mandara, 2013; Wigfield & Eccles, 2002), and socio-economic status (Hill, Ramirez, & Dumka, 2003; Lapour & Heppner, 2009).

**Gender**

Governed by cultural schemas, gender-role beliefs (i.e., beliefs about behaviors and attitudes that reflect societal standards of gender appropriateness) bias the way an individual interprets and determines what would be considered a suitable career (Browne & Misra, 2003). Gottfredson’s (1981, 2002) theory of circumscription posits that children are introduced to gender roles at an early age. Parents, peers, teachers, and media are examples of sources that reinforce children’s gender role beliefs (Gottfredson, 2002). As children begin to label and categorize occupations as “masculine” or “feminine”, their behaviors and patterns of thinking become increasingly guided by gender-based stereotypes (Gottfredson, 2002).

Moreover, the intersection of race and gender alters what careers are considered practical and viable (Browne & Misra, 2003; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2008). Stereotypes imposed on
African American males that depict them as aggressive, defiant, amoral, lazy, and criminal prevent African American males from being seen as competent and capable of being successful in certain careers (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2008; Lang & Lehmann, 2012). As a result, African American males may lower their career aspirations (Witherspoon & Speight, 2009). In doing so, African American males are not only sacrificing their career aspirations, but their self-concept (i.e., how they perceive and evaluate their abilities) as the amount of sacrifice and compromise increases (Schmader et al., 2013).

Encouragement becomes essential in combating erroneous, diminishing, and oppressive racial stereotypes (Hill et al., 2003). Encouragement from individuals who are significant in the lives of African American males (e.g., parents, peers, teachers, coaches, and mentors) instills hope and provides sustaining motivation (Gushue & Whitson, 2006). Through encouragement, African American males learn that they are important, valuable, and worthy (Lynn, Bacon, Totten, Bridges, & Jennings, 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2002; Wilson-Sadberry, Winfield, & Royster, 1991).

Social Support

Parental support plays a significant role in the career development of African American males, being that parents serve as powerful agents of socialization (Blackmon & Thomas, 2014; Pearson & Bieschke, 2001; Whiston & Keller, 2004). Different from teachers, peers, coaches, and others in an individual’s network, a parent’s position is constant and persistent (Whiston & Keller, 2004). Trust and support fostered within the parent-child relationship establishes parents as a reliable resource for children throughout their lives (Whiston & Keller, 2004). Accordingly, children turn to their parents for guidance regarding important life decisions, including career exploration and development (Gushue & Whitson, 2006). In contrast, parents may inhibit
children’s career development if support, guidance, and encouragement in the parent-child relationship is lacking or nonexistent (Bryant, Zvonkovic, & Reynolds, 2006; Whiston & Keller, 2004).

The absence of fathers, which is relatively common in the African American community, further inhibits the career development of African American males as the career aspirations of African American males has been found to be linked to their father’s occupation, as well as their father’s attitude and beliefs about work (Allen, 1978). Factors such as the type of employment, employment stability, work-related stress, rigid work schedules, low earnings, and mass incarceration all influence the African American father’s attitudes and beliefs about work; and correspondingly, their presence and degree of involvement in their son’s life (Fisher & Padmawidjaja, 1999; Jodl, Michael, Malanchuk, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2001; Whiston & Keller, 2004). Consequently, many African American males seek out other males (e.g., a sibling, uncle, grandparent, coach, religious leader, or public figure) to be their role model (Bennett, Davis, Harris, Brown, Wood, Jones, Spencer, Nelson, Brown, Waddell, & Jones, 2004).

Researchers have also suggested that peer relationships contribute to positive identity development, self-esteem, school commitment, and sense of belonging (Felsman & Blustein, 1999; Shin, Daly, & Vera, 2007). Results from a study (Shin, Daly, & Vera, 2007) examining the relationship between peer support and school engagement among middle school urban youth of color suggested that positive peer support has a significant impact on youth being more involved in school. However, African American peer groups are presumed to promote risky behaviors and have a negative, detrimental influence on decision-making and academic achievement (Steinberg et al., 1992). Early research on the influence of peers on African American academic achievement have reported either a positive correlation (Cauce, 1986), a negative correlation
(Cauce, Felner, & Primavera, 1982; Steinberg et al., 1992), or no correlation at all (Seidman, Allen, Aber, Mitchell, & Feinman, 1994). According to Brown (2004), the influence of peer relationships is challenging to capture due to the fluctuation of peer relationships in an individual’s lifetime. In addition, the impact of peer influence varies over time (Brown, 2004). It is also important to note the environment in which peer support is drawn from (Brown, 2004).

In a study investigating the school performance of 120 (78 females, 42 males) African American high school juniors, Gonzales, Cauce, Friedman and Mason (1996) examined the effects of parental, peer, and neighborhood influences. Findings indicated a significantly positive relation between peer support and academic achievement among adolescents living in low-risk neighborhoods (i.e., neighborhoods with lower crime rates). Contrarily, no relation between peer support and academic achievement was demonstrated among adolescents living in high-risk neighborhoods (i.e., neighborhoods with higher crime rates). These findings suggest that high-risk neighborhoods prevent the formation of positive peer groups and productive peer activities (Gonzales, Cauce, Friedman, & Mason, 1996). Many African American males are introduced to after school programs, community organizations, and religious institutions to expand their support system and interact with other African Americans males whom they benefit from having a relationship with (Gonzales, Cauce, Friedman, & Mason, 1996; McMahon, Felix, & Nagarajan, 2011).

**Education**

African Americans males’ exposure, or lack thereof, to diverse career options and career role models affect their ability to envision and plan for their future career (Bell, 2015). In addition to family and community resources, K-12 schools have the opportunity to implement career development activities (e.g., career days, career interest inventories, and employer panels).
that facilitate students’ college and career readiness (Solberg, Howard, Blustein, & Close, 2002; Trusty, Niles, & Carney, 2005). At an early age, it is important for African American males to understand the relationship between their education and future career goals (Solberg et al., 2002). Emphasizing the importance of education prompts African American males to view school as relevant and essential to their success (Bell, 2015). However, frequent, negative classroom experiences drive African American males to dislike and disengage from school (Bell, 2015; Dinkins & Thomas, 2016; Goings & Bianco, 2016; Graham & Erwin, 2011).

Previous research studies have revealed how implicit biases held by school personnel shape their perceptions and expectations of their African American male students (Hunter, 2016; Thomas, Coard, Stevenson, Bentley, & Zamel, 2009). Hunter (2016) posits that racial inequalities experienced by African American students in the classroom are connected to teachers' biases and hierarchies of race and color. African American males’ early adverse school experiences can be attributed to school personnel’s low expectations of them (Bell, 2015; Dinkins & Thomas, 2016; Goings & Bianco, 2016; Graham & Erwin, 2011). Harsh disciplinary practices (e.g., frequent detention, suspension, grade retention, and special education referrals) often lead to African American male students’ feelings of alienation, academic disengagement, and resentment towards the education system (Hunter, 2016; Thomas, Coard, Stevenson, Bentley, & Zamel, 2009). Subsequently, more than any other racial group, African American males are likely to drop out of school or be sent to prison (Hunter, 2016; Owens, Lacey, Rawls, & Holbert-Quince, 2010; Thomas, Coard, Stevenson, Bentley, & Zamel, 2009). Aspirations to pursue careers that require higher education and are perceived as intellectually challenging quickly fade (Dinkins & Thomas, 2016; Goings & Bianco, 2016; Graham & Erwin, 2011; Lynn, Bacon, Totten, Bridges, & Jennings, 2010; Scott, & Rodriguez, 2015).
Expectations

Expectations reinforce the beliefs African American males hold true about themselves (Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003). Internalized low or negative expectations may result in underdeveloped potential and negative evaluations of self and abilities (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Gushue & Whitson, 2006). Likewise, internalized high or positive expectations empowers African American males and enables them to view their career aspirations as realistic and attainable (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Gushue & Whitson, 2006). Expectations aid African American males in creating goals for themselves (Daniel, 2001; Gushue & Whitson, 2006). Expectations that are specific and developmentally challenging have the potential to strengthen motivation, increase effort, and enhance performance and satisfaction (Daniel, 2001; Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003).

Some studies have implied that African American parents have higher expectations for their daughters than for their sons (Mandara et al., 2010; Varner & Mandara, 2013). This hypothesis stems from African American parents possibly anticipating their sons being confronted by more race and gender related barriers and biases (Hill, 1999). Such biases against African American males diminishes their likelihood of being successful (Plant & Peruche, 2005).

Socio-economic Status

Compromised of systemic forces that dictate and constrict privileges, resources, and opportunities individuals in society are afforded (Mueller & Parcel, 1981), socioeconomic status (SES) has prominent influence on the career development of African American males (Owens et al., 2010; Grinstein-Weiss, Perantie, Taylor, Guo, & Raghavan, 2016). Socioeconomic disparities that exist among racial-ethnic groups reflect ongoing marginalization, preventing minority upward mobility (Charles, Roscigno, and Torres 2007; Grinstein-Weiss et al., 2016;
Socioeconomic disadvantages present financial limitations, which have a direct effect on the educational and career pursuits of African American males (Addo, Houle, & Simon, 2016; King & Madsen, 2007; Lease, 2006; McWhirter, 1997; Owens et al., 2010). African Americans males of disadvantaged-SES backgrounds are more likely to attend schools that do not provide quality books, sufficient course materials, computers, academic rigor, or high-quality teaching that will help prepare them for college (Charles, Roscigno, and Torres 2007; Owens et al., 2010). Individuals from advantaged-SES backgrounds are more likely to have parents with higher levels of educational attainment, and thus, have access to information and resources to protect them against financial burdens associated with college and higher education (Charles, Roscigno, and Torres 2007; Grinstein-Weiss et al., 2016). In contrast, parents and individuals from disadvantaged-SES backgrounds may be less knowledgeable about financial aid options (e.g., scholarships or grants) (Fisher & Padmawidjaja, 1999). Consequently, these individuals are more likely to accumulate student loan debt (Addo, Houle, & Simon, 2016; Grinstein-Weiss et al., 2016). The possibility of accumulating such debt may deter individuals from attending college (Addo, Houle, & Simon, 2016; Fisher & Padmawidjaja, 1999).

**Choosing Academia**

To contextualize the experiences of African American faculty, the landscape of an academic career in higher education must be examined (Epps, 1998; Thompson & Dey, 1998). With significant influence from an overarching historical, social, and cultural context, higher education operates as an academic hierarchy where institutions are characterized based on level of prestige (Blackwell, 1981; Epps, 1998). Within this academic hierarchy the professoriate is recognized as a highly esteemed status (Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005). The ideal goal for many newly minted doctoral graduates is to acquire a tenure-track position in higher education
(Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005). In academia, tenure track positions offer individuals the opportunity to advance from one faculty rank to the next until tenure status is obtained. Academic tenure ensures academic freedom and job security within one’s scholarly discipline. A tenured faculty appointment may be held until an individual resigns, retires, is terminated for disability, is dismissed for cause, or laid off (Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005).

Tenure track faculty appointments may be comprised into three to five levels or ranks (Olsen, 1993). Traditionally, from lowest to highest, ranks consist of assistant professor, associate professor, and professor (Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005). Faculty members who hold a traditional tenure-track rank must undergo mandated tenure reviews whereby their contributions in the areas of teaching, research, and service are evaluated and used to determine promotion to the next highest faculty appointment (Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005; Olsen, 1993). Research-related activities include writing and publishing books, book chapters, conceptual papers, empirical studies, and pursuing grant opportunities (Okech & Rubel, 2018; Price & Cotten, 2006). Teaching responsibilities focus on curriculum development, classroom instruction, office hours, grading and assessing student learning, and student advisement (Okech & Rubel, 2018; Price & Cotten, 2006). Like research and teaching, service-related work can take various forms. Service activities may include active participation on program, departmental, or university committees and organizations as a member or leader, involvement in regional and national professional organizations, serving as a student organization faculty advisor, or providing consultation for community or government organizations (Okech & Rubel, 2018; Price & Cotten, 2006; Vick, Furlong, & Lurie, 2016).

It is imperative for individuals to know expectations for evaluation at each tenure track appointment level (Price & Cotten, 2006; Vick, Furlong, & Lurie, 2016). The type of academic
institution an individual chooses to pursue career goals is crucial, as the institution type governs faculty expectations and responsibilities (Vick, Furlong, & Lurie, 2016). Academic institutions may be classified as a two-year public or private institution, a four-year public or private institution, a predominantly White institution, or as Historically Black College and University (Okech & Rubel, 2018). Moreover, academic institutions may be classified as a research institution, wherein tenure track advancement is more contingent upon research publication and grants (Okech & Rubel, 2018).

Across disciplines, the tenure-track process is met with many challenges, making advancement in the professoriate overwhelming and nerve-wracking (Coleman et al. 2006; Olsen 1993). Initial difficulty may stem from having to learn how to navigate competing demands (Coleman et al. 2006). Thus, understanding the demands and expectations of faculty life, as well as the institutional dynamics equips African Americans with pivotal information to help guide academic career decisions. Several scholars have reported that African American faculty are most likely to be stagnated in the lowest academic ranks, work in less prestigious institutions, and earn lower salaries, resulting in low African American faculty retention and tenure rates (Allen et al., 2000; Gregory, 1994; Holcomb-McCoy & Adkison-Bradley, 2005).

**Experiences of African American Faculty**

The status of racial and ethnic minorities in the academic hierarchy parallels their status, lack of access, and lack of opportunity in U.S. society, maintaining discrimination and inequality in higher education (Blackwell, 1981; Epps, 1998). Consequently, racial and ethnic minority members of the professoriate are often confronted by obstacles that restrain their level of hierarchy advancement (Allen et al., 2000; Jones & Osborne-Lampkin, 2013). This is especially true for African American faculty who face unique barriers that negatively impact recruitment
and retention. Research studies that have examined the experiences of African American faculty have revealed the different racist ideologies and racially discriminatory behaviors that African American faculty are often subjected to (Constantine et al., 2008; Jayakumar, Howard, Allen, & Han, 2009; King & Watts, 2004; Thompson, 2008; Salazar, 2009). For example, participants in McGowan (2000)’s study on the teaching experiences of African American faculty at predominantly White colleges and universities provided insight into challenges African American faculty face in the classroom, specifically with White students. Participants disclosed that students would often demonstrate a lack of respect by questioning their authority and knowledge. Participants also reported receiving negative criticisms on course evaluations (McGowan, 2000). Similarly, Littleford, Ong, Tseng, Milliken, & Humy (2010) found that African American faculty who discuss subjects matters that emphasize race (e.g., racial discrimination, prejudice, and White privilege) are accused of having motives that are self-serving and bias. Littleford et al., (2010) proposes that such accusations come from students who felt guilt, discomfort, and defensiveness as a result of having their self-concept and worldview challenged.

The questioning and diminishing of African American faculties’ knowledge and expertise does not only occur in the classroom. African American faculties’ research efforts also receive scrutiny and criticism (Griffin, Pifer, Humphrey, & Hazelwood, 2011; Whitfield-Harris & Lockhart, 2016). African American faculty have reported being excluded from research and grant collaborations as their interest in research topics focused on racial, social, or gender issues are often not taken seriously (Allen et al., 2000; Fries-Britt et al., 2011; Griffin, Pifer, Humphrey, & Hazelwood, 2011). Thus, many African American faculty feel compelled to seek out
opportunities for research collaboration with scholars outside of their own department or university (Adams, 2006; Whitfield-Harris & Lockhart, 2016).

Several research studies maintain that African American faculty are succumbed by a sense of obligation to give voice to minority concerns and needs by serving on multicultural committees and extending themselves as advisors and mentors for students of color (Allen et al., 2001; Constantine, Smith, Redington, & Owens, 2008; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996; Williams & Williams, 2006). Time given to demanding service loads turns into time taken away from publication productivity, delaying the process of promotion and tenure (Allen et al., 2001). Mentorship may serve as a positive resource for African American faculty navigating such negative experiences (Salazar, 2009; Thompson, 2008). Data from the National Center for Education Statistics indicated that African Americans comprise only six percent of all college and university faculty members, compared to their White counterparts that represent 76 percent (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). The underrepresentation of African American faculty makes identifying a senior tenure-track professor who could potentially offer guidance and support a difficult task (Salazar, 2009). Consequently, African American faculty are more vulnerable to isolation and left alone to fend against systemic barriers.

Experiences of African American Faculty in Counselor Education

Within the realm of higher education, counselor education is a unique, multifaceted academic field and profession (Okech & Rubel, 2018). Charged with the responsibility of training and supervising counseling professionals who will provide mental health services to diverse clients, counselor educators are committed to professional development and counselor preparation (Hill, 2004). Responsible for not only research, teaching, and advising duties, counselor educators are also expected to exhibit personal wellness, mindfulness, and self-care
(Okech & Rubel, 2018). However, given the impeding stressors that accompany faculty life in academia, achieving and maintaining such expectations can be difficult (Hill, 2004; Yager & Tovar-Blank, 2007).

The experience of African American faculty in counselor education mirrors those of African American faculty in other disciplines. Prominent are the documented racialized conditions that impede the success of African American faculty (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Brooks & Steen, 2010; Holcomb-McCoy & Adkison-Bradley, 2005). Responses from a study conducted by Bradley and Holcomb-McCoy (2004) on the experiences of African American counselor educators affirmed the recurring theme of racism in academia. According to Bradley and Holcomb-McCoy (2004), racism in academic manifests through immoderate service obligations, lack of respect for research topics geared toward racial inequities and discrimination, and a heavy teaching load.

Recognizing job satisfaction as a major influence on African American counselor educators’ decision to enter and remain in academia, Holcomb-McCoy and Adkison-Bradley (2005) conducted a study that assessed the departmental racial climate where African American counselor educators are currently employed and its relation to job satisfaction. Participants (N = 48; 54% women, 46% men) completed a biodata questionnaire, the Racial Climate Scale (R. J. Watts & R. T. Carter, 1991), and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire–Short Form (D. J. Weiss, R. V. Dawis, G. W. England, & L. H. Lofquist, 1967). Findings indicated that tenure status and academic rank did not have a significant influence on African American counselor educators’ job satisfaction. Instead, perceptions of departmental racial climate were found to be the major contributing predictor. Findings from Holcomb-McCoy and Adkison-Bradley (2005) are consistent with findings from other studies that identified the correlation between

Behar-Horenstein, West-Olatunji, Moore, Houchen, and Roberts (2012) utilized a case study format to conduct a critical ethnographic investigation of an African American female counselor educators’ salient pre-tenure experiences at a predominantly White institution. The participant’s account of her pre-tenure experiences provided another example of the embedded racism in academia and the adverse impact it has on faculty of color. For example, the participant reflected upon the insensitive responses she received from her colleagues when attempting to confide in them. These responses were characterized as psychic-numbing, wherein one’s own personal traumatic experiences hinders them from acknowledging and empathizing with another individual experiencing similar events. Behar-Horenstein et al. (2012) asserts that psychic-numbing perpetuates continued marginalization of faculty of color. Results from Behar-Horenstein et al. (2012), as well as other related studies (Bradley and Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Burke, Cropper & Harrison, 2000; Holcomb-McCoy & Adkison-Bradley, 2005), offered several strategies to buffer against stressors and barriers, including demonstrating resiliency by setting boundaries, establishing mentorship relationships outside of the department, and initiating open dialogues to challenge cultural hegemony.

Less attention has been given to the experiences of African American male faculty in counselor education; specifically, studies that focus on resilience and do not reflect a deficit perspective of African American male faculty (Brooks & Steen, 2010; Dollarhide et al., 2018). Given the underrepresentation of African American male faculty, particularly in counselor education, research that identifies factors and strategies that attribute to their attainment of
tenure-track faculty status is needed; furthermore, studies that focus on how African American male faculty persist despite presented barriers and challenges (Williams & Williams, 2006).

**Obstacles Unique to African American Male Faculty**

It is likely that the experiences of African American males in the professoriate will involve racial microaggressions, marginalization, and devaluation (Griffin, Bennett, & Harris, 2013); remnants of similar challenges encountered throughout their elementary, secondary, and postsecondary academic journey (Mack, Watson & Camacho, 2014). The intersection of race and gender subject African American male faculty to gendered racism and institutional and systemic inequities (Cornileus, 2012). Despite possessing male privilege, African American male faculty’s racial identity is associated with many negative stereotypes (Hoch, 2004).

Wingfield (2007) investigated gendered racism in the workplace and interviewed 23 African American men and women to uncover the ways in which gender directs experiences with racism. Though participants’ occupational background varied, the majority reported that they worked in settings where African Americans made up an estimated 10 percent, or less, of the employee population. Participants indicated that working closely and effectively with colleagues was a major determinant of their job success. Wingfield (2007) suggested that the experiences with racism reported by African American women were informed by stereotypes such as the Mammy, Jezebel, and Sapphire. The Mammy stereotype depicts African American women as obedient, conforming, compromising; the Jezebel stereotype characterizes African American women as promiscuous and seductive; and the Sapphire stereotype portrays African American women as loud and confrontational. These stereotypes dictated how African American women were treated in the workplace. Despite voicing feelings of frustration and anger, African American women were not seen as threatening as African American men to their white
superiors. Wingfield (2007) asserts that due to their gender, African American women are instead perceived to be more malleable and controllable.

According to Wingfield (2007) African American male participants’ encounters with racism were driven by stereotypes that depicted African American men as militant, violent, and threatening. More than African American women, racial bias and stereotypes held against African American men prevented them from establishing relationships with colleagues (Wingfield, 2007). African American men reported having to regularly monitor their demeanor, speech, behavior, and responses to resist and avoid being labeled as an “angry Black man”. Wingfield (2007) notes that in the workplace African American men’s “male privilege” is minimized. Whether in or outside of the classroom, African American male faculty are seen as potentially dangerous (Smith et al., 2007). The hyper surveillance of African American male faculty provokes heightened suspicion, resulting in their need to constantly be on guard (Brooks & Steen, 2010; Griffin et al. 2011). In turn, collegiality and how African American male faculty interact with their colleagues and students (Griffin and Reddick, 2011) is affected.

Collegiality is recognized as a unifying, core value that directly impacts the functionality and productivity of an academic department and institution (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). Collegiality is evidenced in the interaction, collaboration, and cohesion among the members of the department (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008; Haviland, Alleman, & Cliburn Allen, 2017). Though recognized as an institutional and relational value, low morale, departmental politics, and behaviors that are divisive or uncompromising present as barriers to establishing collegiality (Haviland, Alleman, & Cliburn Allen, 2017). For African American male faculty who may be the only, or one of few, faculty of color, establishing collegiality may be more of a challenge due to racial climate, feeling invisible, unsupported, and excluded (Essien, 2003; Thompson, 2008).
As a result, African American male faculty may isolate themselves (Essien, 2003). For tenure-track faculty members, relationships with department chairs and tenured faculty members are crucial (Thompson, 2008). By isolating themselves, African American male faculty risk being perceived as disengaged, not contributing to the department, and thus, jeopardize obtaining promotion and tenure (Thompson, 2008; Warde, 2009).

Warde (2009) affirms the powerful impact of collegiality in interviews with African American male tenured professors who identified collegially as a contributing factor to their success. Participants explained how presenting themselves as collegial demonstrated that they were a reliable team player dedicated to the department. One participant stated how their efforts rendered support and advocacy from tenured faculty members, which led to being recommended for reappointment and eventually obtaining tenure.

Non-collegial environments not only fracture departmental functionality and productivity, but it produces a ripple effect that impacts students. Griffin and Reddick’s (2011) intersectional analysis of 37 African American professors’ mentoring experiences with students found that race and gender differentiate African American male and female professors’ approach to mentoring. Findings indicated that most of the African American female participants emphasized attending to students’ wellbeing by demonstrating attentiveness to their personal needs, stressors, or concerns. Many of the African American male participants described employing a more formal, prudent approach to mentoring. Several of the African American male participants explained that they employed a less intimate approach to mentoring, particularly with female students, as the relationship could be misperceived. Griffin & Reddick (2011) suggests that prevalent negative stereotypes that portray African American male as devious,
dangerous, and sexually voracious force African American male professors to impose intimacy restrictions on mentoring relationships.

**Factors that Influence African American Male Pursuit of Tenure in Counselor Education**

Several studies have provided insight into influential factors that shape individuals’ decisions to pursue the professoriate (Curtin et al., 2016; Lindholm, 2004; Ostrove et al., 2011; Portnoi et al., 2012). However, there is a lack of studies that focus on African American male faculty and factors that influence their decision to pursue the professoriate, specifically in counselor education (Brooks & Steen, 2010; Dollarhide et al., 2018; Hannon et al., 2019). To explore the perceptions of African American male counselor educators and their reasoning for entering and staying in the profession, Brooks and Steen (2010) conducted semi-structured interviews with 12 African American male counselor educators. Though participants expressed some dissatisfaction and frustrations regarding their experience within the academy, all the participants identified having the platform to contribute meaningful work as the underlying reason for remaining in academia. Participants noted their role in increasing the recruitment and retention of future African American male counselor educators when describing the importance of representation and mentorship.

In their phenomenological study, Dollarhide et al. (2018) examined the resilience of four African American male faculty in counselor education and their efforts to advocate social justice, as well as their persistence in higher education as faculty of color. Four themes emerged among the participants in this study including an embedded lifelong commitment to social justice, being empowered by persistence in the face of resistance, receiving support from allies/colleagues, and possessing a sense of purpose and meaning in social justice work. Findings from this study align with results from other studies that emphasized the significance of congruence between personal
and professional values, lending to greater professional resilience (Brooks & Steen, 2010; Harper, 2015; Strayhorn, 2014). Uncovering African American males’ motivation and drive to pursue the professoriate in counselor education presents implications for the development of counselor education and the counseling profession (Hannon et al., 2019). Such exploration is important given the nature and degree of discrimination and challenges that plague African American male faculty (Brooks & Steen, 2010; Dollarhide et al., 2018; Harper, 2015).

**Preparation for African American Male Faculty in Counselor Education**

With few African American male pursuing faculty positions in academia, specifically in counselor education programs, guidance on how to navigate this career field to ensure retention is required (Crawford & Smith, 2005; Grant & Ghee, 2015; Jones et al., 2013). Recent research asserts (Brooks & Steen, 2010; Dollarhide et al., 2018; Hannon et al., 2019), and effective programs affirm (Davis-Maye et al., 2013; Gaff, Pruitt-Logan, & Weibl, 2000; Heggins, 2001) that supportive, constructive interventions should be implemented to prepare prospective African American faculty (Antony & Taylor, 2001; Austin, 2002). Heggins (2001) states that African American males are more likely to seek informal networks outside of the university environment, as affiliations at some predominately White institutions may not be conducive to nurturing and amplifying the voices of African American males. Other scholars also support African American males’ participation in national organizations, networks, and leadership preparation programs committed to the professional development and advancement of African American men (Austin, 2002; Gaff et al., 2000).

One nationally recognized program that fosters the professional development of aspiring faculty members is the Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) program. The PFF program addresses the faculty preparatory needs of doctoral students. Developing a curriculum vita, preparing for
faculty interviews, and preparing a teaching portfolio are example learning outcomes. African American male participants reported that receiving deeper insight into the realities of faculty demands, department politics, and the tenure and promotion process was significantly beneficial and critical to their socialization in higher education (Heggins, 2004). In future research, it would be helpful to compare the perceptions and outcomes of PFF program participants with individuals who did not participate in PFF or a similar program (Gaff, Pruitt-Logan, & Weibl, 2000).

Brothers of the Academy Institute (BOTA) is another nationally recognized initiative created specifically for African American male scholars in the academy. The mission of BOTA is to empower and aid African American males in overcoming systemic challenges. Strategies, resources, and mentorships made available to guide African American males as they maneuver through research, publication, teaching, networking, tenure and promotion, and institutional climate issues (King-Jupiter & Green, 2008). The information shared and disseminated within these programs and networks establish a foundation for creating socio-political change in higher education for students and faculty of color, increasing levels of recruitment and retention (Antony & Taylor, 2001; Austin, 2002; Dollarhide et al., 2018; Heggins, 2001).

In addition to program and organization participation, mentoring has been recognized as instrumental in the professional development of faculty (Smith, Smith, & Markham, 2000). Zey (1991) described a mentor as a seasoned individual who provides guidance to another individual through advising, teaching, support, or advocacy. Faculty with mentors report higher levels of job satisfaction, produce more publications, have more research collaborations, receive more research grants, earn higher salaries, and are likely to receive more support in the tenure and promotion process compared to their counterparts who do not have a mentor (Ambrose et al.
A number of scholars contend that mentoring not only affects professional advancement or plays a crucial role in shaping professional identity (Crawford & Smith, 2005; Heggins, 2001; Jackson, 2004), but mentoring has been noted as an effective strategy for alleviating barriers in academia for faculty of color (Gay, 2004). Mentoring can be used to educate African American male faculty on how to confront and overcome racism in the academy (Smith, Smith, & Markham, 2000; Tillman 2001).

**Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)**

**General Overview**

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) describes the formation of academic and career interests, choices, and career persistence and performance as a product of self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). Additionally, SCCT emphasizes the concept of personal agency. Bandura (1986) refers to personal agency as an individual’s ability to exert some control over desired outcomes while avoiding undesired ones. Through the integration of environmental influences and contextual variables, SCCT provides insight into how personal agency is fostered or constrained (Lent et al., 1994). For African American males, perceptions and actual experiences of racism and discrimination threaten personal agency. Moreover, African American males may be dissuaded from pursuing certain career paths due to anticipated barriers which may limit access to resources and inhibit career aspirations (Lease, 2006). By drawing on the constructs of SCCT, cognitive processes that influence how African American males balance personal agency and resist barriers on career opportunities will be explored.
SCCT Core Constructs

Self-Efficacy Beliefs

Adapted from Bandura’s (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, self-efficacy represents an individual’s beliefs regarding their ability to execute a specific task and produce a desired outcome (Lent et al., 1994). Central to understanding an individual’s cognitive and emotional responses when confronted by challenges or adverse experiences, self-efficacy beliefs are considered a determinant of the amount of effort and persistence exhibited toward goal attainment. Individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to attempt and complete tasks despite impending obstacles; whereas individuals with low self-efficacy are more likely to avoid or give up on tasks that they perceive to extend beyond their abilities. Bandura’s (1986) posits that self-efficacy beliefs are shaped by four primary sources: enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological and affective states. The interpretation and internalization of messages received from these four sources can either foster or suppress self-efficacy.

Enactive Mastery Experiences. According to Bandura (1986), enactive mastery experiences are past accomplishments and failures individuals draw upon when assessing their ability to successfully execute a set task. The impact enactive mastery experiences have on self-efficacy beliefs are contingent on several factors, including preconceived notions about ability; perceived difficulty of tasks; the extent of effort applied, the amount of external help received; prior patterns of successes and failures; contextual circumstances; and how experiences are cognitively processed (Bandura, 1986). Developing sound, realistic self-efficacy beliefs require consistent, accurate feedback on performance. Ogbu (1991) argues that it is challenging for African American males to assess performance accomplishments due to the performance
feedback they receive often being inconsistent or inaccurate. Kunjufu (1995) contends that decreased efforts to foster and promote achievement among African American males at a young age result in disengagement and apathy.

**Vicarious Learning.** Vicarious learning occurs when an individual observes another person perform a task and uses that person’s experience to help determine whether they can perform the same task (Bandura, 1986). The similarities between the individual and the person being observed, how competent the person being observed is at performing the task, and the level of difficulty or ease the person being observed experienced while performing a given task all influence the impact of vicarious learning on self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). Vicarious learning is particularly useful to those who have no prior experience performing a given task. For example, Gibbs and Griffin (2013) found that PhD students utilized their vicarious learning experiences to inform and shape their outcome expectations and perceptions of faculty life. For African Americans, the lack of exposure to culturally similar career role models limits vicarious learning opportunities, ultimately affecting the likelihood of pursuing certain career paths (Hackett & Byars, 1996; Durodoye & Bodley, 1997).

**Social Persuasion.** Social persuasion consists of external messages individuals receive regarding their potential and ability to perform a specific task or achieve a specific goal (Bandura, 1986). The nature of social persuasion provided may be encouraging or discouraging to an individual, resulting in heightened or lowered self-efficacy. Social persuasion can be presented as constructive feedback, criticism, praise, encouragement, or discouragement, either verbally or nonverbally (Bandura, 1986). Sources of social persuasion may include parents, family members, peers, teachers, or stereotypes portrayed in the media. When the source of social persuasion is respected and perceived as credible and trustworthy, the positive messages
received from that source has a greater influence on an individual’s ability to persist towards achieving their goals in the face of challenges and doubt (Bandura, 1977). It is important that messages are congruent with performance capabilities and that the goal set is attainable. Social persuasion has been noted to hold less influence on self-efficacy than enactive mastery performance and vicarious learning due to the absence of experienced or witnessed success outcomes and sole reliance on external messages received (Zimmerman, 2000). However, Hackett and Byars (1996) contends that social persuasion is a particularly salient source of self-efficacy for African Americans. Gainor and Lent (1998) reported that social persuasion was a unique predictor of African American college students’ math self-efficacy, and the only unique predictor of math outcome expectations. Similarly, Usher and Pajares (2006) found that social persuasion influenced the academic self-efficacy for African American middle school students. Graham (1994) suggests that African American students rely more on messages received from external sources when forming self-efficacy beliefs.

**Physiological and Affective States.** Physiological and affective states represent physical responses and feelings individuals experience and rely on to gauge their level of confidence in accomplishing a given task (Bandura, 1986). Tension, stress, and anxiety perceived and interpreted as a deficit can trigger feelings of incompetence and lead one to question their capabilities (Bandura, 1977). As a result, self-efficacy is lowered as undesirable physiological and affective responses are avoided. For African Americans, stereotype threat can elicit physiological discomfort, emotional strain, and cognitive burden when navigating anxiety brought on by the possibility of confirming a negative stereotype (Beilock, Jellison, Rydell, McConnell, & Carr, 2006; Steele, 1997; Steele & Aronson, 1995). Consequently, expectations for performance in that domain are lowered and performance suffers (Osborne, 2001).
**Outcome Expectations**

While self-efficacy beliefs refer to individuals’ judgments about their ability to execute a specific task, outcome expectations represent individuals’ beliefs about probable results or consequences of performing a specific task. Bandura (2001) asserts that individuals are more likely to pursue courses of action that they perceive will yield positive results. For example, an individual may have high self-efficacy beliefs, but anticipated discrimination or oppression may have a greater influence on whether a given task is attempted (Pajares, 1996). Likewise, executing a specific task may result in positive outcomes, however, low self-efficacy beliefs may keep an individual from attempting that task (Pajares, 1996). Outcome expectations can be physical (e.g., salary, work/life balance, work environment, working hours, or retirement security), social (e.g., obtaining some form of power, receiving recognition, or being respected by peers), or self-evaluative (e.g., possessing a sense of pride, achievement, self-actualization, or fulfilment in work contributions) (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2002). Outcome expectations can increase levels of motivation and, along with self-efficacy beliefs, play a significant role in the formation of goals.

**Personal Goals**

Goals may be defined as desired outcomes an individual strives to attain or achieve (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). Choice goals and performance goals are noted as two primary types of goals in SCCT (Lent et al., 1994). Choice goals refers to a specific activity one is determined to pursue. Performance goals reflect the quality of performance one aspires to achieve. Brown and Lent (2013) suggest that goals serve as a powerful source of internal motivation as goals help to regulate, organize, guide behavior. Moreover, goals work to sustain behavior despite inevitable setbacks or delayed gratification. Lent et al. (1994) states that the goals an individual set for
themselves aligns with their perceived capabilities and expected outcomes. Success or failure experienced when attempting to achieve goals, in turn, leads to goals being reformed and self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations confirmed or altered (Lent et al., 1994).

**Relevant Studies and the Application of SCCT**

SCCT has been recognized as a comprehensive framework for understanding career choice, career interest, career satisfaction, and career performance (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002). Consequently, SCCT has been utilized in a large number of studies with diverse populations in varied contexts and disciplines. For instance, SCCT was employed to study the career development needs of battered women (Chronister & McWhirter, 2003) and individuals with criminal backgrounds (Cummings, 2008; Johnson, 2013; Thompson, Dahling, Chin, & Melloy, 2017). Additionally, SCCT has been applied to examine the academic and career choices of Latino youth (Flores & O'Brien, 2002; Navarro, Flores, & Worthington, 2007), first-generation college students (Gibbons & Borders, 2010; Gibbons & Shoffner, 2004; Olson, 2014), lesbian, gay, and bisexual students and employees (Arnett, 2013; Cheng, Klann, Zounlome, & Chung, 2017; Morrow, Gore, & Campbell, 1996), Chinese middle-school students (Jiang & Zhang, 2012), engineering students (Inda, Rodríguez, & Peña, 2013; Lent, Sheu, Gloster, & Wilkins, 2010), students in information technology and computing disciplines (Lent, Lopez, Lopez, & Sheu, 2008; Smith, 2002), and students pursuing entrepreneurial careers (Segal, Schoenfeld, & Borgia, 2007). Research studies that have investigated the application of SCCT to African Americans have primarily focused on career interest, career choice, and self-efficacy in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields (Alliman-Brissett & Turner, 2010; Gainor & Lent, 1998; Lent et al., 2005; Lent et al., 2010; Noble, 2011; Quimby, Wolfson, & Seyala, 2007).
Findings from Gainor and Lent (1998) supported the applicability of SCCT in explaining African American college students’ intentions to pursue math-related courses and majors. In this study, 164 first-year African American college students’ racial identity attitudes and math-related indexes of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, sources of self-efficacy and outcome expectations, interests, and academic choice intentions were measured. Gainor and Lent (1998) reported that students’ self-efficacy and outcome expectations increased interest in math-related courses and majors, suggesting that these students’ beliefs regarding their math capabilities, and expected positive outcomes, outweighed interest alone as a predictor of math choice intentions.

In their study investigating perceived racism and career interests in mathematics and science related careers among African American middle school students, Alliman-Brissett and Turner (2010) emphasized contextual variables that influence self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Participants consisted of 108 eighth grade African American middle school students. Self-report measures including the Racism and Life Experiences Scale–Brief (RaLES-B; Harrell, 1994), the Investigative Scale of Mapping Vocational Challenges (MVC; Lapan & Turner, 2002/2005), the Fennema-Sherman Math Attitudes Scale (FSMAS; Fennema & Sherman, 1976), and the Math Usefulness Scale (Turner et al., 2004) were used to assess perceived racism, math-related career interests, and math-related, math efficacy, and math-related career outcome expectations. Results indicated that perceived racism among African American youth directly and negatively impacted math self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Additionally, math interests negatively correlated with low academic performance in math. Parent support was found to be positively related to math self-efficacy and outcome expectations, highlighting parental influence on African American self-efficacy. Other researchers have also reported how supportive environmental influences can protect against the detrimental effects of
discrimination and other perceived barriers (Gonzales, Cauce, Friedman, & Mason, 1996; McMahon, Felix, & Nagarajan, 2011). Findings have emphasized the important role of parents in African American children’s career decision-making and persistence in educational and vocational endeavors (Linnehan, 200; Otto, 2000; Pearson & Bieschke, 2001).

Lent et al. (2005) employed the constructs of SCCT to investigate interests and career goals in engineering among students attending historically Black and predominantly White universities. Findings indicated that self-efficacy was the main determinant of choice goals, whereas interest and barriers exhibited modest influence. Though support and outcome expectations did not have a significant influence on the prediction of goals, support and barriers had a significant influence on self-efficacy. Interest, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, goals, and social support were discovered to be considerably higher for students attending historically Black universities. Despite being underrepresented in the engineering field, both African Americans and women reported higher levels of support. In this study, women reported greater support and less social barriers. Lent et al. (2005) posited that the students who identified as African Americans or women may have more barriers in pursuit of a career in engineering, and thus, proactively sought out support or relied more heavily on existing support. Lent et al. (2005) asserts that fostering a supportive environment may offset social barriers.

Gushue and Whitson (2006) conducted a multivariate multiple regression analysis to examine the influence of ethnic identity, parent support, and teacher support on 104 African American ninth-grade students’ career decision self-efficacy and career outcome expectations. Several instruments including the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992), the Parent Support Scale (Farmer et al., 1981), the Teacher Support Scale (McWhirter, 1997), the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (CDMSES-SF; Betz, Klein, & Taylor,
Outcome Expectations (McWhirter, Rasheed, & Crothers, 2000) were used as measurements. Results found that parental support had a significant positive correlation with career decision self-efficacy. Similarly, teacher support had a significant positive correlation with career decision self-efficacy and career outcome expectations. Ethnic identity was not found to be a significant predictor of self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Gushue and Whitson (2006) recommend further studies that focus on possible sources of support to help African American adolescents counteract obstacles in their career development.

Contrary to other studies that support the applicability of SCCT to the conceptualization of career interest development among African Americans, a study conducted by Quimby, Wolfson, and Selaya (2007) on African American high school seniors enrolled in a polytechnic high school revealed that the tenants of SCCT was not a unique predictor of African American students’ career interests in environmental science. Results showed no correlation between perceived ethnic- and gender-related barriers and environmental science career interests. Researchers theorized that this may be due to the numerous educational opportunities afforded to the selected participants in this study, compared to African American students enrolled at traditional high schools in an urban setting. In the discussion, researchers explained that African American high school students may not have placed as much value on outcome expectations that were measured (e.g., status, prestige, salary). Instead, outcomes such as family approval and community recognition may have been viewed as more rewarding and rendered different results. Quimby, Wolfson, and Selaya (2007) suggested that future research should examine the intragroup differences in socioeconomic status among African American youth and the influence on career decision-making.
Current Gaps in SCCT Literature

Secondary and post-secondary college students have been the primary population for SCCT studies that have exclusively focused on African Americans (Alliman-Brissett & Turner, 2010; Gainor & Lent, 1998; Lent et al., 2005; Lent et al., 2010; Noble, 2011; Quimby, Wolfson, & Seyala, 2007). Few SCCT studies have extended beyond the post-secondary college student population to explore career development, career persistence, and formation of SCCT constructs for individuals during and after graduate training. Moreover, few SCCT studies have given specific and explicit attention to African American men. Notable is the scarcity of studies that have employed a qualitative approach. Conducting a phenomenological research study that utilizes the SCCT model to examine African American males’ pursuit of the professoriate in counselor education will lend itself to explicating the complexities within SCCT construct development for African American males.

Chapter II Summary

This chapter highlighted factors that influence the career development of African American males including gender, social support, expectations, education, and socio-economic status. Issues embedded in sociocultural and sociopolitical systems that hinder educational and career success of African American males were examined.

The historical and social constructs of higher education and its impact on the experiences of African American faculty were explored. Tenure track appointment responsibilities and expectations were reviewed to further readers’ knowledge and understanding of stressors and demands that challenge the pursuit of tenure track faculty positions. Challenges unique to African American faculty in counselor education were also explored. Noted in this chapter was the lack of research that examines the unique experiences and career development of African
American male faculty in counselor education. Existing research that reported factors that encourage and support African American males in pursuing tenure track faculty positions in counselor education was presented.

Social Cognitive Career Theory was introduced as a framework that can be used to identify factors and influences that empowered African American male faculty to pursue and obtain a tenure-track faculty appointment in counselor education. In applying SCCT and examining how its three major constructs (self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals) interact with contextual factors to influence the career development of African American male faculty in counselor education, this study will elucidate how African American males cope with, respond to, and overcome systemic barriers. The next chapter outlines the methodology for this study.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of African American male faculty in counselor education and the factors that influenced their career development. This chapter will provide a description of the research methodology chosen for this study, including the research approach and rationale. A description of the recruitment of participants and the role of the researcher will be illustrated in this chapter. This chapter will conclude with a description of procedures for data collection, data analysis, and establishing trustworthiness.

Research Approach

For this study, a qualitative research design was chosen, as qualitative methodology acknowledges the complexities of human experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and facilitates the exploration and extraction of meaning of those experiences (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative methods are known to produce a wealth of information and provide an in-depth understanding when exploring under-researched topics (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, qualitative methods have been recognized as a tool to gain firsthand insight, particularly into the viewpoints of underrepresented populations (Dumka, Gonzales, Wood, & Formoso, 1998; Hughes & DuMont, 1993; Stanfield & Dennis, 1993). Stanfield and Dennis (1993) assert that qualitative research gives voice to and empower underrepresented groups by bringing their perspectives to the forefront. In exploring lived experiences of African American male faculty in counselor education programs and factors that influenced their career development, knowledge gained from qualitative methods created opportunities for dismantling inequalities, disrupting oppressive conditions, and consequently, increasing the number of African American males pursuing a career as a tenure track faculty member in counselor
education programs (McAvoy, Winter, Outley, McDonald, & Chavez, 2000). There are five traditions of qualitative inquiry: narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Phenomenology was chosen among the five traditions of qualitative inquiry for this study.

**Phenomenology**

Phenomenology is a qualitative research approach that aims to describe and understand the essence or fundamental meanings of a phenomena experienced by several individuals first-hand (Moustakas, 1994). The intentional focus on aspects of lived experience can provide rich, detailed insight to reorient the way a phenomenon is understood (Finlay, 2011). According to Schwandt (1990), phenomenology research offers descriptive and interpretive opportunities to uncover participants’ perceptions, beliefs, and assumptions about a phenomenon from their worldview. Phenomenology may be categorized as transcendental or hermeneutic (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Transcendental phenomenology emphasizes the descriptions of lived experiences given by individuals, whereas hermeneutic phenomenology emphasizes the interpretation of meaning individuals prescribe to lived experiences (van Manen, 1997). Transcendental phenomenology seeks complete absence of researcher bias or assumptions to obtain a pure view of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Contrarily, hermeneutic phenomenology asserts that interpretation is essential to the process of understanding the essence of a phenomena. Moreover, hermeneutic phenomenology asserts that it is impossible to eliminate researcher bias or assumption, as the researcher is inevitably a part of the interpretation process. This process is referred to as a hermeneutic circle. (Heidegger, 1962). For the purpose of this study, a hermeneutical approach was applied as both the researcher’s understanding of the phenomenon
and participants’ worldview of the phenomenon will be incorporated as part of the interpretation of participants’ lived experiences (Patton, 2015).

**Participants**

According to the United States Census Bureau (2020), "Black/African American" refers to individuals who self-identify with one or more ethnicities or national origins of African descent. Examples include African American, Nigerian, Jamaican, Kenyan, Haitian, Liberian, and Ghanaian. Despite occupying a shared racial minority status in the United States, United States (US)-born and foreign-born Blacks have uniquely different racialized experiences due to differing cultural orientations (Bashi & McDaniel, 1997; Griffin, Cunningham, & George Mwangi, 2016). The social construction of race in the United States has a direct impact on educational attainment, economic resources, upward mobility, and quality of life (Assari S. (2018). Thus, individuals who self-identify as African American were recruited for this study. The inclusion criteria for this study required that participants 1) self-identify as African American, 2) self-identify as male, and 3) currently hold a full-time position as a tenure track faculty member in a counselor education program and have held that position for at least one year. Individuals were excluded from participating in this study if they 1) did not self-identify as African American, 2) did not self-identify as male, 3) did not currently hold a full-time tenure-track faculty position in a counselor education program, or 4) have not held a full-time tenure-track faculty position in a counselor education program for at least one year. Purposive sampling was employed to identify and select participants who met specific criteria for participation in this study (Palinkas et al., 2015). There are different recommended sample sizes for phenomenological research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Dukes (1984) suggests a sample size of 3
to 10 participants for a phenomenological study. A total of eight participants were recruited for this study.

Data Collection

Recruitment

The researcher contacted the Counselor Education and Supervision Network Listserv (CESNET-L) owner, Dr. Marty Jencius, for permission to post and recruit participants for the study (Appendix A). After obtaining approval, the researcher sent a formal invitation (Appendix B) through the Counselor Education and Supervision Network Listserv (CESNET). The researcher also used the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP) website to obtain a list of institutions in the United States with counselor education programs. The researcher then visited the faculty directory on the counselor education program websites to identify potential participants. The researcher contacted potential participants via-email (Appendix C) using their listed institutional email address. Snowball sampling was utilized, wherein participants were asked to identify and refer other African American male faculty members in counselor education programs who were eligible to participate in the study (Palinkas et al., 2015). Additionally, the researcher used their own professional and social networks to recruit participants.

Procedures

Formal invitations and recruitment emails included a pdf version of the informed consent (Appendix D). Additionally, the email included a hyperlink that directed participants to an e-consent form, an online version of the informed consent, administered using Qualtrics survey software. Participants were instructed to read the informed consent in its entirety. The informed consent included an overview of the study, a review of the participant’s rights, and the
information concerning the protection of individual privacy. After participants read the informed consent, they were asked to confirm their consent by checking “I consent, I wish to participate” or “I do not consent, I do not wish to participate” in the e-consent form. Upon receiving consent, participants were directed to a demographic questionnaire (Appendix E), administered using Qualtrics survey software. The demographic questionnaire instructed individuals to provide their age, racial background, sex, faculty rank, program type, and institution geographic location. A message at the end of the participant program questionnaire informed individuals that they would be contacted via email by the researcher to confirm their eligibility for participation in the study.

Individuals who were not eligible to participate in the study were contacted by the researcher via email (Appendix F), thanked for their interest in participating in the study, and notified that they did not meet the criteria for the study. Individuals who consented and were eligible to participate in the study received an email from the researcher (Appendix G) thanking them for their interest in the study. The email included a hyperlink that directed individuals to an interview scheduling form (Appendix H), administered using Qualtrics survey software. Participants were asked to indicate if they would like to have their interview conducted via telephone or via WebEx. Individuals were also asked to provide three dates and times that they will be available for an interview, their phone number, email address, and indicate if they would like to review their interview transcript and emerging themes from the data analysis to confirm an authentic portrayal of their experience.

Individual, semi-structured interviews served as the primary source of data collection. The semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix I) allowed for the use of questions, prepared by the researcher in advance, and any probing or clarifying questions as they arose (Flick, 2014). The interview questions that guided this study corresponded with the three tenets of Social
Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT): self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). Semi-structured interviews lasted approximately 45 - 60 minutes and were audio recorded. Participants were given the option to be interviewed via telephone or via WebEx, depending on their preference. WebEx is a virtual conference software that allows individuals to hold real time video and audio meetings. Seven of the eight participants chose to be interviewed via WebEx. One participant chose to be interviewed via telephone. Before beginning each interview, the researcher reviewed the informed consent form with participants. During and immediately after each interview, the researcher engaged in reflective journaling (Guest, Namey, & Mitchell, 2013).

**Data Analysis**

This section outlines a step-by-step description of the procedures that were used to organize and prepare the data collected for analysis. Thematic analysis was the chosen approach to analyze and interpret data in the current study. Thematic analysis provided a suitable strategy for identifying common themes among the lived experiences of African American male faculty in counselor education and factors that influenced their career development. Thematic analysis allowed for an exploration of both explicit and implicit dimensions of individuals’ lived experiences and patterns of meaning within the data to deepen the understanding of the investigated phenomenon (Ho, Chiang, & Leung, 2017).

Thematic analysis was the procedural method used to identify, organize, analyze, and describe themes that emerged from recurring patterns in the data. Thematic analysis allowed the researcher to utilize Social Cognitive Career Theory as a guide for identifying and interpreting meaning of significant themes related to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis required the researcher to engage in a hermeneutic circle, which involved
moving back and forth between examining parts of experience and the experience as a whole to capture the essence of the phenomenon (Ho, Chiang, & Leung, 2017; van Manen, 1990).

Additionally, this process required the researcher to engage in continual self-reflection on biases and assumptions to keep the researcher grounded in the context of the data (Limberg, 2000). Thematic analysis provided a basis for examining the unique experiences and perceptions of each individual participant, while highlighting similarities and differences across individuals (Limberg, 2000). The researcher employed Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-step approach for thematic analysis which involved 1) the familiarization of data, 2) the generation of codes, 3) the generation of themes, 4) the review of themes, 5) theme naming and defining, and 5) the presentation of results.

The initial phase of thematic analysis involved data familiarization (Braun & Clarke, 2006). NoNotes call recording and transcription service was used to record and transcribe interviews conducted via-telephone. NoNotes call recording and transcription service completed a non-disclosure agreement stating that uploaded audio files will be kept confidential and deleted from their database once the transcription has been completed and obtained by the researcher. WebEx was used to record and transcribe interviews conducted virtually. To verify the accuracy of transcripts, the researcher proofread individual interview transcripts while simultaneously listening to the audio recordings of each interview. The researcher anonymized each interview transcript and redacted any identifiable information to protect the identity of participants. To ensure research credibility and validity, member checks were performed (Lincoln and Guba, 1986) as each participant was sent a copy of their interview transcript via-email to verify that their experience and voice was accurately captured. None of the participants requested that any changes or additions be made to their interview transcript. The researcher then immersed
themselves in the data by reading and re-reading each individual interview transcript to establish a sound familiarity and an understanding of each participant’s narrative (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher highlighted statements that were meaningful and related to the research questions.

The researcher then categorized highlighted data extracts based on content similarities and assigned codes that described the content. The researcher identified patterns among generated codes and produced preliminary themes that captured the connection and meaning of codes in each category. A table in Microsoft Word was created to compile the data, and columns within the table were used to organize and group data extracts, codes, and preliminary themes. Following the development of preliminary themes, codes associated with each theme were reviewed to verify that they supported the theme. Modifications to codes and code categorization were made as needed. The researcher reread interview transcripts to check for any data that may have been missed and needed to be coded. Preliminary themes were also reviewed to determine if any of the preliminary themes needed to be refined, combined, divided, discarded, or made into subthemes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Additionally, the researcher reread interview transcripts to ensure that themes fit in relation to the data. The aforementioned data analysis process was completed for each individual transcript. Another member check was performed as preliminary themes were shared with participants to verify the analysis, interpretations, and conclusions.

The researcher compiled a list of preliminary themes from each participant interview transcript and grouped preliminary themes based on content similarities to create meta-themes and subthemes that reflected the pattern of experiences across the group of participants (Willig, 2001). Excerpts from participant interviews that captured the essence of meta-themes and subthemes were identified. Lastly, a write-up of participants’ lived experiences as African
American male faculty in counselor education and the factors that influenced their career development was produced.

**Trustworthiness**

The goal of trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry is to support the argument that the researcher’s findings are worth considering (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are four criteria of trustworthiness. Several strategies will be employed to satisfy the criteria of trustworthiness including peer debriefing, member checks, thick description, purposive sampling, audit trail, and reflective journaling.

**Credibility**

Credibility demonstrates the accurate representation of information drawn from participants in the research findings (Guba, 1981). The researcher used peer debriefing and member checks to establish research credibility. A peer in the counselor education program reviewed and screened the researcher’s data collection and analysis procedures (Patton, 2015) and asked open-ended questions to challenge the researcher’s viewpoint. Peer debriefing aided in identifying any significant details that were missed and provided feedback to strengthen credibility (Bitsch, 2005). Lincoln and Guba (1985) affirm that member checking is one of the most effective ways of eliminating the possibility of misrepresentation and misinterpretation of participants’ shared experiences in a study. Member checking allowed participants to review interview transcripts and emerging categories and themes from data analysis to ensure accuracy in researcher interpretation (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Participants had the opportunity to correct or add information to confirm an authentic portrayal of their experience. Participants were informed that if they chose to review interview transcripts and emerging themes, they would have 14 days to send the researcher any corrections or additions. This message was included in
the informed consent and in the reminder email (Appendix J) to participants who indicated that they would like to review their interview transcript and emerging themes. The researcher sent a reminder email to individuals after seven days (Appendix K). None of the participants requested that any changes or additions be made to emerging themes, thus the researcher assumed that no corrections or additions needed to be made and moved on with the study.

**Transferability**

Transferability suggests the applicability of research findings to other contexts (Given, 2008). Other contexts may be similar phenomena or populations. According to Li (2004), transferability may be obtained through thick description. Thick description involves the detailed, comprehensive account of research procedures. Purposive sampling provided another way to determine transferability. The detailed description of participants selected through purposive sampling helped others better determine to what extent research findings may be transferred to another context (Given, 2008).

**Dependability**

Dependability affirms that the research study may be repeated, and the result of research findings would be consistent (Bowen, 2009; Li, 2004). In addition to peer debriefing, an audit trail was used to establish dependability. The researcher kept a thorough account of the data analysis process that guided coding, the formation themes, and final interpretations (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The researcher’s reactions and thoughts were also included in the audit trail to offer a rationale for the conclusions made.

**Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to the neutrality of researching findings. An audit trail documented the researcher’s decision-making throughout the data analysis process to demonstrate how
research findings were derived from data, in contrast to researcher influence (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Additionally, the researcher engaged in reflective journaling to maintain awareness of potential influences that may impact meaning-making and data interpretations (Lasater & Nielsen, 2009).

**Ethical Considerations**

When conducting qualitative research, it is crucial to consider ethical concerns in all stages of the research process (Richards, 2015). The researcher addressed major principles associated with research ethics to ensure that the research study is conducted ethically. The major principles include informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality (Richards, 2015).

Prior to obtaining any information from participants, the researcher sent an informed consent form, which outlined the purpose of the research study, data collection procedures, potential risks and benefits of participation, data confidentiality, how research results would be disseminated, and the voluntary nature of participation. The researcher’s contact information and the contact information for the researcher’s educational institution’s institutional review board was provided. The researcher read the informed consent to participants before conducting interviews and offered participants the opportunity to ask any questions regarding their participation.

Any identifiable information such as names and place of work were removed from interview transcripts and replaced with pseudonyms to protect the identity of participants. A non-disclosure agreement will be signed by the NoNotes call recording and transcription service to keep interview audio recordings and transcripts confidential. Interview audio recordings and transcriptions are kept on a password-protected computer that only the researcher has access to.
Interviews conducted and recorded via WebEx will be stored in researcher’s password protected WebEx account. The audio recordings were transcribed immediately following the interview.

**Relationship to the Research**

As an African American female aspiring to become a tenure-track faculty member in counselor education, the researcher holds a personal and professional investment in the research study. The researcher’s familiarity with the challenges associated with attaining higher education and identifying career role models to help navigate the career development process, fuels the researcher’s passion and determination to identify ways to support African Americans in their career development. While the researcher had access to resources and received family and community support that contributed to her progression towards her career goals and helped her overcome challenges, the researcher recognizes that others, particularly African American men, do not have the same access and support. The researcher believes that sharing the experiences of African American male faculty in counselor education and the factors that influenced their career development may help other African Americans males pursue and achieve a career in the academy. To monitor, decrease, and prevent biases from influencing the study the researcher engaged in reflective journaling throughout the research process.

**Chapter III Summary**

This chapter detailed the methodology implemented to conduct this study. A rationale for the use of a phenomenological qualitative research approach to explore the lived experiences of African American male faculty in counselor education and the factors that influenced their career development was provided. The use of interpretative phenomenological analysis to interpret data was explained. The procedures for data collection, data analysis, and establishing trustworthiness
were described. The chapter presents the findings and themes among African American male faculty in counselor education and the factors that influenced their career development.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter contains the results of the phenomenological research study on the lived experiences of African American male faculty in counselor education and factors that influenced their career development. The first section of this chapter will briefly restate the purpose and design of the research study. Next, the demographic data of the research study participants will be provided. The following section of this chapter will present a description of the process that was used to analyze data collected from research interviews. Lastly, this chapter will conclude with identification and description of themes followed by a summary of the major findings.

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of African American male faculty in counselor education and factors that influenced their career development. By bringing attention to the career development of African American male counselor education faculty members, this study seeks to understand the motivations and career influences that shaped their career goals and supported them in obtaining their career goals, providing a salient template of success for other African American males to follow (Cheatham, 1990; Evans & Herr, 1994; Quimby, Wolfson, & Seyala, 2007).

Hermeneutic phenomenology was chosen to describe and understand the essence of participants’ lived experiences and their perceptions, beliefs, and assumptions about factors that contributed to their career development. A hermeneutic phenomenological approach facilitates the exploration and extraction of meaning, providing rich, detailed insight into what participants experienced and how they experienced it. Knowledge gained from a hermeneutic phenomenological approach can create opportunities for dismantling inequalities, disrupting
oppressive conditions, and moreover, increase the number of African American males pursuing a career as a tenure track faculty member in counselor education programs (McAvoy, Winter, Outley, McDonald, & Chavez, 2000). Three research questions guided this study:

1. How do facets of social cognitive career theory (SCCT) (i.e., self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals) influence African American males’ decision to pursue a tenure-track faculty position in counselor education?

2. How do African American males describe their experience as faculty members in counselor education programs?

3. What experiences prepare African American males to navigate barriers/challenges in pursuit of a tenure-track faculty position in counselor education?

Several strategies were employed to recruit participants. First, after obtaining approval from the Counselor Education and Supervision Network Listserv (CESNET-L) owner, a formal invitation (Appendix B) to participate in the study was sent to members of the Counselor Education and Supervision Network Listserv (CESNET). Second, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP) website was used to obtain a list of institutions in the United States with counselor education programs. The faculty directory on counselor education program websites was used to identify and contact potential participants via-email (Appendix C) using their listed institutional email address. Third, snowball sampling was used, and participants were asked to identify and refer other African American male faculty members who are eligible to participate in the study (Palinkas et al., 2015). Lastly, the researcher used their own professional and social networks to recruit participants.
Description of Participants

All participants were required to 1) self-identify as male, 2) self-identify as African American, and 3) currently hold a full-time position as a tenure track faculty member in a counselor education program and have held that position for at least one year. A semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix I) was used to conduct individual interviews which served as the primary source of data collection. Participants were given the option to be interviewed via telephone or via WebEx, a virtual conference software. A total of eight participants were recruited for this study. Seven of the eight participants chose to be interviewed via WebEx. One participant chose to be interviewed via telephone. Participants ranged in age from 30 to 59. All the participants were born and raised in the United States. Six of the eight participants teach at a predominately white institution (PWI). Two of the eight participants teach at a Historically Black College or University (HBCU). Six of the eight participants are assistant professors, one participant is an associate professor, and one participant is a professor. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant as an effort to protect anonymity and confidentiality to the extent possible. A description of research study participants collected from the participant demographic questionnaire follows.

African American Male Counselor Education Faculty Members

Participant 1 (P1) is an African American male between the ages of 40-49 years old. P1 was born and raised in the United States. P1 has been in the professoriate for 5-10 years. Currently, P1 serves as an Assistant Professor in a counselor education program at a private, Predominately White Institution (PWI) in the Northeast. P1 has been at their respective college/university for 1-5 years and has served in their current tenure-track position for 1-5 years. P1 obtained a tenure-track faculty position less than one year after graduating with their doctoral degree. As a tenure-track faculty member, P1 has taught Group Dynamics and
Participant 2 (P2) is an African American male between the ages of 40-49 years old. P2 was born and raised in the United States. P2 has been in the professoriate for 5-10 years. Currently, P2 serves as an Associate Professor in a counselor education program at a public, research intensive, Predominately White Institution (PWI) in a Northeast, suburban setting. P2 has been at their respective college/university for 5-10 years and has served in their current tenure-track position for 5-10 years. P2 obtained a tenure-track faculty position less than one year after graduating with their doctoral degree. As a tenure-track faculty member, P2 has taught Research Methods, Counseling Techniques, Professional Issues and Ethics, Counseling and Lifespan Development, Counseling in Schools, Advanced Career Counseling, Practicum, Internship, as well as other courses.

Participant 3 (P3) is an African American male between the ages of 50-59 years old. P3 was born and raised in the United States. P3 has been in the professoriate for at least 10 years. Currently, P3 serves as a Professor in a counselor education program at a Predominately White Institution (PWI) in the Midwest. P3 has been at their respective college/university for 1-5 years and has served in their current tenure-track position for 1-5 years. P3 obtained a tenure-track faculty position less than one year after graduating with their doctoral degree. As a tenure-track faculty member, P3 has taught Research Methods and Multicultural Counseling and Psychology.

Participant 4 (P4) is an African American male between the ages of 50-59 years old. P4 was born and raised in the United States. P4 has been in the professoriate for 1-5 years. Currently, P4 serves as an Assistant Professor in a counselor education program at a public, Historically Black College or University (HBCU) in a Southeast, urban setting. P4 has been at
Participant 5 (P5) is an African American male between the ages of 30-39 years old. P5 was born and raised in the United States. P5 has been in the professoriate for 1-5 years. Currently, P5 serves as an Assistant Professor in a counselor education program at a private, Predominately White Institution (PWI) in a Southwest, rural setting. P5 has been at their respective college/university for 1-5 years and has served in their current tenure-track position for 1-5 years. P5 obtained a tenure-track faculty position less than one year after graduating with their doctoral degree. As a tenure-track faculty member, P5 has taught Research Methods, Tests and Measurements, Counseling Techniques, Professional Issues and Ethics, Multicultural Counseling and Psychology, Counseling and Lifespan Development, Counseling Theories, Marriage and Family Therapy Theories, Marriage and Family Therapy Assessment, Practicum, Internship, as well as other courses.

Participant 6 (P6) is an African American male between the ages of 50-59 years old. P6 was born and raised in the United States. P6 has been in the professoriate for 5-10 years. Currently, P6 serves as an Assistant Professor in a counselor education program at a Historically Black College or University (HBCU) in the Southeast. P6 has been at their respective college/university for 5-10 years and has served in their current tenure-track position for 5-10 years. P6 obtained a tenure-track faculty position less than one year after graduating with their doctoral degree. As a tenure-track faculty member, P6 has taught Tests and Measurements, Intro to Addictions, Practicum, and Internship.
Participant 7 (P7) is an African American male between the ages of 50-59 years old. P7 was born and raised in the United States. P7 has been in the professoriate for at least 10 years. Currently, P7 serves as an Assistant Professor in a counselor education program at a Predominately White Institution (PWI) in the West. P7 has been at their respective college/university for at least 10 years and has served in their current tenure-track position for at least 10 years. P7 obtained a tenure-track faculty position 1-5 years after graduating with their doctoral degree. As a tenure-track faculty member, P7 has taught Group Dynamics and Procedures and Multicultural Counseling and Psychology.

Participant 8 (P8) is an African American male between the ages of 30 -39 years old. P8 was born and raised in the United States. P8 has been in the professoriate for 1-5 more years. Currently, P8 serves as an Assistant Professor in a counselor education program at a private, Predominately White Institution (PWI) in the Northeast. P8 has been at their respective college/university for 1-5 years and has served in their current tenure-track position for 1-5 years. P8 obtained a tenure-track faculty position less than one year after graduating with their doctoral degree. As a tenure-track faculty member, P8 has taught Research Methods, Tests and Measurements, Professional Issues and Ethics, Multicultural Counseling and Psychology, as well as other courses.

**Data Analysis**

Data collected from interviews with research participants were analyzed using Braun & Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis approach. Thematic analysis provided a structure for organizing themes. Furthermore, thematic analysis allowed the researcher to utilize Social Cognitive Career Theory as a guide for identifying and interpreting meaning of significant themes related to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Social Cognitive Career Theory was a particularly useful theoretical framework for answering the research questions as it
emphasized the process of how career interests are formed, how choices to pursue a given career are made, and how success is attained in given occupations (Gysbers, Heppner, & Johnston, 2003). To conduct the thematic analysis of data, the researcher employed Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-step approach for thematic analysis which involves 1) the familiarization of data, 2) the generation of codes, 3) the generation of themes, 4) the review of themes, 5) theme naming and defining, and 5) the presentation of results.

NoNotes call recording and transcription service was used to record and transcribe the one interview that was conducted via-telephone. WebEx was used to record and transcribe the other seven interviews that were conducted virtually. To become familiar with the data, the researcher reviewed interview transcripts produced by WebEx and NoNotes. The researcher proofread individual interview transcripts while simultaneously listening to the audio recordings of each interview to verify accuracy. A copy of interview transcripts was then sent to participants for member checking. None of the participants requested that any changes or additions be made to their interview transcript.

The researcher reviewed interview transcripts a second time and highlighted statements that appeared to be meaningful and related to the research questions. The third review of interview transcripts involved categorizing highlighted data extracts based on content similarities, then assigning codes that described the content. Next, the researcher identified patterns among generated codes and produced themes that captured the connection and meaning of codes in each category. A table in Microsoft Word was created to compile the data, and columns within the table were used to organize and group data extracts, codes, and themes. Following the development of preliminary themes, codes associated with each theme were reviewed to verify that they supported the theme. Modifications to codes and code categorization were made as needed. The researcher reread interview transcripts to check for any data that may
have been missed and needed to be coded. Preliminary themes were also reviewed to determine if any themes needed to be refined, combined, divided, discarded, or made into subthemes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Additionally, the researcher reread interview transcripts to ensure that themes fit in relation to the data. The researcher kept detailed notes regarding her decisions throughout this process.

To describe the scope and meaning of each theme, comprehensive, concise definitions were formulated. A copy of the Microsoft Word table of generated codes, themes, and theme descriptions was sent to participants for member checking. Participants were invited to check, correct, or add information to ensure that their experience was accurately captured and authentically portrayed. None of the participants requested that any changes or additions be made to the themes or theme definitions. Lastly, a write-up of the research study results was produced.

**Findings**

The findings of this study have been categorized into six emerging themes that describe the lived experiences of African American male faculty in counselor education and factors that influenced their career development. The themes are: (1) Education: The Pathway to Opportunity, (2) “One Thing Led to Another…,” (3) “I Believe in You,” (4) Outsider Within, (5) “I Got Your Back,” and (6) Taking a Stand. Themes, subthemes, and supporting participant quotes are presented in the context of coinciding research questions (see Table 1).
Table 1

Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ1: How do facets of social cognitive career theory (SCCT) (i.e., self-efficacy</td>
<td>1. Education: The Pathway to Opportunity</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals) influence African American</td>
<td>2. “One Thing Led to Another…”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>males’ decision to pursue a tenure-track faculty position in counselor education?</td>
<td>3. “I Believe in You”</td>
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<td>RQ2: How do African American males describe their experience as faculty members</td>
<td>4. Outsider Within</td>
<td>a. Scrutinized but Not Recognized</td>
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<td>in counselor education programs?</td>
<td></td>
<td>b. Existing in Two Worlds</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c. Black Male Privilege</td>
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<td>challenges in pursuit of a tenure-track faculty position in counselor education?</td>
<td>6. Taking a Stand</td>
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**Theme 1: Education: The Pathway to Opportunity**

Education played a prominent role in the career development of all eight participants. As a source of direction and guidance, education helped illuminate the pathway that ultimately led participants to a career as a tenure-track counselor education faculty member. One of the ways in which education influenced participants’ self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals was through exposure. As participants recollected upon their K-12 academic experiences, several of them shared how exposure to African American educators broadened their perception of future possibilities and strengthened their self-confidence. For example, P5 explained:
I went to an all-Black Catholic school in (State). So, everybody was Black. My teachers were Black. My nurses, doctors, principals, and priests, everybody was Black. I went there until I was about in high school.

P5 went on to describe how his K-12 academic experiences “shaped the narrative” of his identity:

I was able to avoid identity foreclosure that I think a lot of the culture places on African Americans because you are African American. To be able to go to my doctor, my doctor be Black, and my principal be Black and to have those conversations, it was like built in mentorship. That’s one, but then two, I feel like my understanding of the culture was not… let's see, what's the best way to put it… it was not filtered because of white fragility. I was able to see the full scope of the history of America and how that influences my place in America. Yeah. It was just kind of an unfiltered point which forced me to confront things about the way the world is... probably earlier than most kids do, which I think helped me have perspective when it comes to my education ---- perspective meaning, it's practical uses. I was able to see education as a tool instead of a burden.

P7 stated that he viewed education as a “passport” and described his motivation to pursue higher education as more internal than external, until he had his first African American teacher in the 8th grade. He recalled the experience as being “hugely informative”:

… my 8th grade teacher, Mrs. (Teacher’s Name), coming out of (City, State), and I'm from (City, State), so she came from an urban context to teach in a relatively small, not rural context, but in a smaller city context, (City, State). And so, first, she was a very beautiful woman. She was very intelligent. I think she was harder on us as black students than she was on our majority peers… she was very tough on us. We liked her though. It
was a lot of fun. So that was pretty much… I think that was probably one of the most foremost educational experiences I had because now we're seeing… beforehand I did not see visual representation of people of color be one of my teachers. I had one person teach in Spanish, but they only came in for a few days. It was a Latino person. But that was the first time. That was very informative.

Other participants described how their families and community instilled in them the value of education and set high expectations for participants to do well in school. For example, P1 described his upbringing surrounded by educators and education being pushed at home, school, and church:

And so, a lot of teachers were my church members. And they also, because I have young parents, they taught my parents too. And then my grandmother, my grandmother worked in the school system. And so… I knew a lot of teachers growing up. My high school principal was one of the deacons at my church. His wife was a schoolteacher. She taught my brother, you know. And… My high school assistant principal was also a deacon at my church and his wife taught at my middle school too. My pastor’s wife was a schoolteacher. My pastor had a doctoral degree, so, you know. And so, that was… that was… education was all around me. And so, I knew I was going to go to college. My high school counselor was a member of my church. And so… um… college was, was pushed.

Similarly, P4 noted how his teachers’ familiarity with his family formed a culture of accountability that set high expectations for academic performance:

… like I said, I'm the youngest of six, so they knew me because they knew my siblings. And so, there was a high expectation, not just from the teachers, but the administrators as well. You know, like, “I know your mom, I will call your mom.” Um… in 3rd grade…
and this is how comfortable they were with it… Um… in 3rd grade, Ms. (Teacher’s Name) would say, “(Participant’s Name), if you don't comb your hair, imma get you up in front of this class and comb your hair for you. But it was… it was comfortable. I felt very comfortable there and I felt like my teachers… Each teacher I had up until 4th grade, which was our elementary cap year of experience, I felt like those teachers definitely had my back. Yeah, and… and it felt… it felt like a community.

Others placed emphasis on the importance of education being stressed in home:

P2: I think some of my family values and expectations, my parents’ values and expectations, communicated to us, meaning my siblings and me, were that, um… education was important, um… and to the extent we could, we needed to do our best and put our best foot forward and ideally doing well in school could translate to opportunities later in life.

P3: My dad and my mom… they were always about education. Always. It was, “You’re going to go to college or you’re going to go to the military… whatever you do, you’re getting the hell out of the house at 18.” And that’s how they rolled.

P6: …I had grown up in a household that really stressed education, importance of education. And uh, you know, my dad was a big advocate of that. My dad was probably the bigger advocate of that… about the importance of getting an education.

Regarding peer influence on participants’ beliefs and attitudes about education, opinions varied.

P2 explained how his peers played a role in prioritizing education:

Yeah, I mean, I generally rolled with, you know, my, my peer group, um… I generally rolled with folks who, um, performed fairly well. Like, you know, we were, you know, we tried to be honor roll students. Some of us were in honors classes. We tried to stay active. Our parents and the folks in our community, they always encouraged us to stay
active out of the classroom. So, sports and some of us attended the same church, you know, those things… Those kinds of activities were always predicated by meeting academic expectations in our household, so… so, if I wanted to play soccer, I had to have a certain GPA and… and the expectation in our house was A's and B's, unless there was something really standing in the way of that. So, we generally, we generally did well.

Contrarily, P6 explained that thought he and his peers valued education, more emphasis was placed on securing a well-paying job after graduation and sustaining a decent living:

Well, um… you know, school was… among my peers… was really… uh… it was what we did, but it, you know, there wasn’t… I really can’t say there was a… a… a high level of importance placed, among my peers. In fact, we went to school and the thought would be that we would graduate. But, you know, but once again, what that looked like in the seventies when I graduated was a little bit different because a lot of times people graduated and they were going to work in the factory because, where I grew up, that was the big thing. ‘Okay, we're going to go, we’re going to graduate, we’re going to go work at the factory, and then we're going to get a new car,’ and that kind of deal. It wasn't, ‘Oh, we’re going to college.

P6 went on to explain how even the high school counselors did not really encourage or advocate for African American students to pursue higher educations:

And even the professors… the high school teachers and guidance counselors, that’s what we use to call them then… I mean, they weren’t advocating that, you know, you go to college or anything, unless you went to the local Black college.

For P4, education provided clarity and career direction which he sought after obtaining his masters and realizing the career he was in was not a good fit:
I got my… my bachelors from (Name of University). I love my HBCUs. And then I went to, um… (Name of University) for my masters in school counseling. And I remember graduating, I was like, ‘Yes! I am set! I got it! This is it,” you know. I figured that was going to be my career for life. And about 5 years in I realized, ‘This is… this is not it. This is not that utopian that I thought it was.’ So, um, I got… I got… bored, honestly. But I also knew I needed to transition to something else. I didn't know what, I did not have this in mind. I said, ‘Okay, well, I know I'm not going to do this for the rest of my life. So, what am I going to do?’ And I said, ‘I like school. I think I'll apply for a doctoral program.’ So, I woke up that morning and just applied. I didn't have a specific goal in mind. I just knew I wanted to get back in school. School has always been that avenue to something greater for me.

The relationship P8 had with school differed from the relationship other participants described. P8 talked about how he enjoyed school at first, but an adverse experience completely changed his attitude toward school:

So, I think, probably up until about 2nd grade, I was actually like a really good student. I liked being in school. I enjoyed school. Um, all that. And then somewhere either 3rd or 4th grade, I think it was a combination of things that really changed my relationship with school. So, I actually don't remember much of 3rd grade at all. So, I'm not sure if it was 3rd grade, but certainly in 4th grade, I had a… not good teacher, I think is the best way to say it. I had this older white woman who, in hindsight probably was a little racist. Um… and… the most significant thing I remember was this altercation happening where I was, uh… I don't know, I was probably being… I was probably talking out or I was probably doing something like that, and she… The end result of it was she pulled my ear in response to the way that I was behaving. And I remember that was a big thing. I
remember not enjoying school at all 4th grade. And this also intersects around the time that my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. So, my mom’s a survivor. And between her… between me trying to reconcile what it means for, like, this potentiality of my mother dying and probably that just really bad academic experience, pretty much there forward I was the antithesis of a good student.

P8 went on to share how this experience further impacted his engagement in high school and college:

I knew and I had these goals that we're all contingent on school. I just didn't do any of that. I just didn't do it. I was cutting all the time. It was a lot of stuff. I also ended up being my GED. So, I ended up dropping out of high school when I realized that there was no viable option for graduating and ended up getting my GED instead. And that attitude persisted. That attitude of disengagement, lacking motivation, persisted even through my first attempt at college.

P8 explained how he eventually returned to school:

So, I went to a CUNY senior college, but just failed everything the first year. I didn't get myself together probably until I met my now wife. You know, I took a year off or so and I met her, and we began dating. And early into her… early into our relationship, her mother got sick and that kind of… I don't know, maybe it did something to me. And I also had some pressure from some friends to kind of just get my s*** together. So, I worked and then I slowly reintegrated myself back into school on a part time basis. I did community college. I did 2 years of that. And then I went to a senior college, finished up my bachelors and I was, I was good. I was like, I think I graduated like a 3.4, 3.5, something like that. And it wasn't until I went to my master's program that I really
committed myself to school. Still working full time, but just a different sense of urgency, different sense of motivation.

**Theme 2: “One Thing Led to Another…”**

The theme “One Thing Led to Another…” highlights experiences that led participants in discovering their interest in the field of counselor education. Initially, all eight participants had no intentions on pursuing a career as a tenure-track counselor education faculty member. Entering the field of counselor education was either a secondary or delayed career choice. Several participants transitioned into the field of counselor education as original career plans did not work out. For example, Participant 1 shared how he wanted to attend medical school but realized that he “wasn’t really prepared for the rigors of college.” P1 elaborated:

…everything came so easily for me. I really didn’t have to study, you know? But I wasn't prepared to actually do the work to… um… fulfill those dreams of mine. I wasn't told about what actually went into what I needed to do to do what I wanted to do.

P1 explained how the required science classes he needed to take as a bio-pre-med major lowered his GPA, resulting in him changing his major to psychology:

I went to (name of University), undergrad. And, you know, I wanted to be… I was a bio-pre-med major. But when I took those science classes, it f*cked up my GPA. I was like, ‘okay, this is not…this is not the pathway I want to take…’ you know? So I did the psych major, knowing you can’t do anything with a psych degree. So, here I am with a degree that was worthless and a horrible GPA. So, I knew that I, you know… there was nothing I could really do. So, I worked a whole bunch of odd jobs.

After landing a university assistant hall director position, P1 realized how much he enjoyed working in student affairs with students and enrolled in a visions program that allowed him to
take a couple of classes in the student affairs master’s program. P1 expressed how the program was not a good fit:

… and I got the 2 classes, and it was not a good fit for me, at all. It… I just didn't feel at home. I didn't feel at ease in the classes. Um, and so, needless to say, that wasn't a good fit. I didn't do really well in the classes. I, you know, the drive back and forth from (name of city) to (name of city) for classes. I started getting muscle spasms and…and…and…and things of that nature. So, it was all stress related.

P1 decided to investigate other graduate programs in other disciplines that would still lead him to a career in student affairs. Ultimately, he chose to apply to counseling programs. After obtaining his master’s in clinical mental health counseling, P1 applied to counselor education and supervision PhD programs:

And so, I ended up interviewing at (lists schools) and in my personal statements they knew I wanted to stay in student affairs, you know? I didn't want to be a professor. I didn’t mention that at all. I didn't want to be a counselor. I got to (name of University) and they gave me a graduate teaching assistantship. And so, I was fully funded for my PhD. They handed me a book and a syllabus and said, ‘Here, this is your class, you teach this class. You're responsible for your lectures, you’re for your assignments, you’re responsible for your exams, projects, all that stuff. You create all of that.’ That totally just reoriented my thinking about my career.

Like P1, P2 also wanted to pursue a career in student affairs:

I envisioned being like, you know, getting a PhD in higher education or higher in administration and becoming a vice president for student life, or a dean of students. That's what I initially envisioned because the work that I was doing was really in student activities and student leadership development. So, at that time, I knew I wanted to get a
terminal degree. It was a professional goal that was pretty clear. It changed to counselor education as a result of life experiences. I was having a… a… I was having a successful career, early part of my career as a student affairs professional. Worked my way up to like, mid management, I guess. I was the director of an office on a campus for student activities and then I transitioned into school counseling after a move.

To obtain state certification to work in schools and public schools, P2 had to take classes in an accredited school counseling program. As a result of taking counseling classes to fulfill the state certification requirements, P2 discovered a growing interest in the counselor education field. He explained:

> Those things began to really open my eyes and make me more curious about counseling, professional counseling more broadly, and school counseling in particular. And, um… because I've had success as a student, I've done school well, um… I was… after some years as a school counselor, I was like, yeah, I can do this and I can, I can teach. I think I can teach people to be good school counselors and prepare people to be good school counselors. So, it evolved to a point, or reached a point where I said I wanted to be an instructor in a counseling program. And I was also always curious about being able to do research to inform the field and answer my… and really just answer my question, in a selfish way, answer my, my intellectual questions.

P3 expressed how he “had no idea” he wanted to be a faculty member:

> I had no idea I wanted to be a faculty member. I had no idea. The first 12 years of my work experience, I was on the student affairs side of the house. Director of the student support center, director of the counseling center, coordinator of the developmental studies department… those kinds of positions. In my last year of the doctoral program my advisor said, “(Participant’s name), what are you going to do when you graduate?” I told
him, “Well, I’m not really sure. I think I’m going to be an administrator in college student personnel or something like that.” He said, “You like teaching and you like research… (Name of University) got a position open… why don’t you apply for that?” So, I applied. I gave them 15 years as a faculty member and an administrator. I went from assistant professor to full professor in 10 years.

P4 wanted to improve his skills as an insurance rep so he could better serve his clients, so he decided to go back to school. This decision is what led him to the field of counselor education:

After I graduated from (Name of University), I was an insurance rep and I did some counseling, um… anger management counseling for men who committed domestic violence offenses. It was a diversion program; go to jail or take this counseling program. And so, that was my introduction to it, and I was absolutely horrible at it. Absolutely. And I said, ‘Bruh, you have to get more education. Like, like, this is… this is too important for you to just bs this, so you have to get better at this.’ So that's when I looked at the different programs. I didn't want to necessarily do community, but I like working with kids, um… I like working in the schools. So that was that path that led me to, ‘Okay well, take a look at the school counseling.’ Yeah. So that was it.

P5 described his journey to becoming a tenure-track counselor education faculty member as “serendipitous,” stating:

I didn't ever see myself… I didn't even know a PhD was possible for me. It was like… a struggle. If you would have told me when I was 12, that I would have written a couple books for ACA and things like that, I would have never believed it. I could barely read. I struggled in math. I struggled comprehending things. It was just a struggle.

P5 explained how he initially wanted to be a sports psychologist and how he did not learn about the field of counselor education until he graduated from his master's program:
I honestly didn't learn about it until about the last year. Seriously, I didn't know it existed. Man, I was so behind the curve. I didn't even know counseling existed until graduation day. I just knew what a sports psychologist was because I was introduced to them back from when I played sports. I thought I wanted to be a sports psychologist. But then graduation day... I'm shaking my adviser's hand as I was leaving and she's like, ‘Are you going to apply to the counselor education program? I was, like, I have no idea what counseling is. I have no idea we even had a counseling program. I didn't know what I was going to do. I was still going to continue to play soccer and… I don't know. I went home graduation night and looked up the program and then applied the next day. I got into the spring semester.

P5 went on to explain how being asked to help masters students in an applied techniques pre-practicum class while serving in a supervisory role, made him interested in pursuing his PhD in counselor education:

I got to do some pseudo mock supervision but then teach students about theories and teach them about…. I didn't know what the hell I was doing, but it felt good. It was the time we spent with students and helping them grow and move and just the excitement they felt from getting better. Like that first session where it made me feel like that, I was a professional athlete again. Teaching made me feel that same kind of dynamic relationship. That’s what drew me in. Yeah. That's what made me decide. I didn't know what the hell a PhD entailed.

Likewise, P7 had an experience in his master’s program that drew him into teaching and wanting to pursue a career as a counselor educator:

Well, in my master's program… when I was in a… I had this experience where a teacher asked me to come teach their class. And at the time I wasn't really thinking about
teaching. I wasn't thinking about anything and I was really kind of living in a crazy lifestyle. No, it wasn't crazy, but it wasn't congruent. And my teacher saw something in me and asked me to teach this class for three semesters in a row. And I remember the very first time I started teaching; I was crying. I was just crying because, one, I was honored, I was given a platform, I had something to say… and that was enough to bring me to tears. Then I found that I was good at it and I saw people responding emotionally and physically to things I was saying in the classroom. And it became, I think, addictive…

Additionally, P7 had a friend in the field of counselor education who he learned from vicariously:

And so, I learned about it vicariously through the experience of a friend who got their degrees so they could teach in a counseling program. And so, I didn't know anything about counselor education. It was probably more fortuitous than anything. Just having… It's one of my best friends as well. So, learning from him in terms of his journey, and we have parallels. That would be the way I would learn about counselor education.

P6 also had a friend who introduced him to the counselor education field:

I'm a vet and when I first came home, um, from my first deployment… or actually not when I first came home from my first deployment, but… but, when I actually got out of the service, uh… I had multiple deployments at that time… I, uh… I went to work. I was… spent about a year… I was really out there trying to find myself and, you know, once I came home. And… and I went to work at an urban ministry. And this was something… many years ago… and the person who I worked with had just graduated from a counseling program.
P6 explained how one of his friends persuaded him to take a course in the counselor education program she was enrolled in:

And… I’ll never forget… it was a European American female, and we are best friends to this day. It was one of those things where she was so excited about it and telling me about it. She kept saying, “Oh! You need to go into counseling! You need to…” this, that, and the other. And I had always had an interest in psychology, but I didn’t… had no idea… the differences between counseling and psychology. And so, she said, “… how bout take a course at the school I went to.” And so, I did. And the course was interesting. I thought it was interesting. I thought it was… would be beneficial.

In his reflection, P8 stated:

So, I didn't learn about counseling. I got lucky with counseling. So, what happened was, um… when I took my abnormal psych class in… in community college, I was like, ‘yo… done.’ So, I went the route of psychology and I got my bachelors… excuse me… I got my bachelor's in psychology. And around the time that I was finishing my psych program, I didn't know what was coming next. And, you know, I think, you know, I… and I'm going to be blunt when I say this… I think I'm kind of like a lot of students coming out thinking that you can do something with a bachelors or masters in psych when you cannot do a d*** thing.

P8 credited his mom for connecting him to someone who could offer him some direction:

And my mom hooked me up with an old colleague of hers who was a school psychologist at the time, and he taught in a counseling program. And he all but recruited me. He was like, “Yo, this where you want to be. Come get your master's degree, come get your terminal license. It’s good money.” So, he all but recruited me and I went to his program. I applied to his program, and I got into his program.
Theme 3: “I Believe in You”

Throughout their narratives, participants reflected on the feedback they received regarding their potential and ability to be a tenure-track counselor education faculty member. P1 noted the support he received from faculty in his doctoral program:

… you know what, my doc program faculty, they were very supportive. They were, they were real with their feedback. But they were very supportive. Um… they really gave me concrete feedback about my writing, my potential. They were like, ‘you know what, you got this.’

P1 also shared the feedback he received made him feel:

It motivated me to be the best that I can. It motivated me to work and work harder, because I didn’t want to make myself look bad or anybody else.

P2 stated that the feedback he received primarily came from his family:

Well, the most positive and frequent feedback and support that I got was from my partner, my wife, you know. At that time, we were married for 10 years. Now we've been married for 20 years. But, um, you know, nothing that I've been able to accomplish has been without the support of my wife and my two children. My general family is supportive, like my larger family system. My parents, thankfully, are still alive. My wife's parents who were still alive. Some of my grandparents are still alive. They've all been encouraging, even when they may have questioned some of the decisions that we made, they've always been… even in questioning, they've always been supportive. So that's been… that's super helpful.

Moreover, P2 acknowledged the communities he belongs to as a source of positive feedback:

…and then the community… the communities where I'm a member. I'm a fraternity member; I'm a member of (name of fraternity). My line brothers, the chapter that I was in
as a graduate student, they've all been supportive. So, I mean, I've just benefited from just a large, large support network of men and women who, you know, were like family. So, from several sources, primarily my wife. But certainly, other people as well; just reminders and affirmations that I could do it and really just helping reaffirm my agency and efficacy in being able to complete the task or complete or reach the goal, and reminders that my clinical and research curiosities were worth the investment.

For P4, student growth served as his positive feedback and indicated to him whether he was “on the right track”:

Yeah… yeah… um… it's weird. I'm a weird dude because I don't really pay attention to… like, I’ve received awards… I received… I was counselor of the year, um, in 2017. I received that from (name of association), something like that. Um, I don't pay too much attention to them. They're fleeting. They're nice. They’re nice. I hate going to ceremonies and… and give speeches and things like that. But… honestly, to me, the biggest thing was… to let me know, regardless of any other outside noise, was the interactions, the feedback, the growth more than anything, I saw in my students that always let me know I was on the right track. They are… they are my barometer, um… because that's who I am invested in. That's who I am spending, you know, that time with during the semester. And so, the feedback I get from that is what propels me to invest more energy.

P5 shared a similar sentiment as he talked about receiving positive feedback on his ability to build relationships with students and faculty and maintaining his identity. P5 stated:

The feedback I got was mostly around my potential and around my ability to build relationships with students and my ability to build relationships with other faculty members. So, I don't think people really focused on whether or not I am a good tenure or not, or if I can be part of a tenure process. It was more about wanting me to maintain who
I was as a person while I was going through the tenure process; and so, the positive feedback was around that... my identity, solidifying my identity, keeping my identity, staying true to my mission as a person and as a counselor educator.

Other participants mentioned individuals saw something in them that they, at the time, did not see in themselves. For instance, P6 described how a former professor pushed him in pursuing higher education because they recognized his potential:

I had one professor… um, it was a white professor who really pushed me to go to college, because I wasn’t planning on going to college. I was actually just going straight into the Marine Corps. It was actually, um… the… I was in ROTC. And I had good grades in high school, and I had scored well on the SAT, because I wasn’t going to take the SAT, and uh… because I wasn’t going to college. And my… my, uh… one instructor… or one teacher told me to go. And then the marine recruiter told me I should go because I had scored high on the armed services vocational aptitude test. For me, no one in my family had gone to college. I think I had one cousin at that point in time who I really knew that was in college and getting ready to graduate from college. And so, that was about it. And, uh… and so I walked in, took the SAT, you know, scored high on it. And then next thing I know, I was getting letters from universities about attending and coming to their different colleges. And I was fortunate to get accepted to several colleges.

Similarly, P3 had a teacher who helped him see his potential and pushed him in pursuing higher education:

My undergrad teacher did. Two semesters before I graduated, she asked me,

“(Participant’s name), what do you want to do? Have you thought about grad school?”

And honestly, I hadn’t. I hadn’t thought about grad school. I just paused. And she saw the 21-year-old guy who was not confident, who didn’t know he could be successful in
graduate school. Without saying anything, she just looked at me and said, “(Participant’s name), you can do the work.

P3 went on to share how his undergraduate professor called the president of another university to ask about their graduate school admissions. She knew the president and helped P3 improve his GPA so he could get accepted into the graduate program. P3 reflected on how this made him feel:

… that impacted me emotionally because I felt what she was saying. I felt affirmed. I felt validated. It felt good that someone I respected… somebody I admired would approach me in that way without me having to say my fears. That felt good.

P8 also had a someone recognize his potential; so much so that they pushed P8 outside of their comfort zone to further develop skills and strengthen his confidence:

I'm even thinking about my… the one that I met, my primary mentor. Um, she's the reason why I did my first presentation. She was like, “Yo, we need to present this,” and I'm like, “This ain’t presentable.” And she goes, “Yes, it is. We’re going to present this at (Place) in (Month). We’re going to go submit the application.” She probably dragged me kicking and screaming through the application process, through the acceptance process, through the creation of it. I’m like… she… she believed in me and I owe, I owe so much of who I am today to her because she's the reason why… she’s the primary reason why I am who I am as a professor in terms of my authenticity, in terms of my, um… yeah. I can't attribute more… I can't attribute enough to her and how she’s trained me.

P4 offered a similar example in his narrative:

My advisor, she's absolutely incredible. Um… Dr… Dr. (Name), absolutely incredible. And she was looking to guide me, but I was not necessarily open to being guided because I didn't know what I wanted to do. I didn't plan on teaching at this level. So, she would
present opportunities for me and she asked me to present with her and… and write, um…
get published and things like that. And I'm like, “Uh… yeah, alright. Maybe… maybe…”
I mean, I would present with her because she was very persuasive. Like, she was pushing
me when I didn't want to be pushed.

P7 referenced a conversation with his mother and her telling him that he was already a doctor,
with or without a piece of paper to declare so:

Let me just say this… I'll stop and pause. Before my mother died, she said to me one
day… I hadn't done my dissertation. I was right where you were. I hadn't passed comps. I
hadn’t done my dissertation and I was working really hard to become a doctor. I was
probably working too hard. Of course, I had four jobs at the same time. So, she said to
me, ‘Son, I need to tell you something…’ I said, ‘What’s that, mom?’ She goes, ‘You are
already a doctor now and I’m so very proud of you, and that little piece of paper is not
going to make any difference.’

P7 connected how his childhood nickname supported his mother’s statement and him being
destined to become a doctor:

Now we got to go all back to the 3rd grade because in the 3rd grade, my nickname was
professor. That was the nickname that they gave me way back in the day. And so, I think
that… that stuck and that may have informed the career trajectory tremendously, because
that really was my identity.

Theme 4: Outsider Within

Several participants discussed that while educational and doctoral degree attainment
afforded them the opportunity to be in a position of power to evoke transformative change, they
remain minorities within a majority culture. The underrepresentation of African American male
faculty in the academy lends itself to the racialized, alienating experiences described by participants. P5 illustrated:

I think one of the biggest challenges is this feeling of loneliness that you feel. There are times where you're in a presentation at ACA, and you look around and you're like, “Damn, I'm the only person of color in here…” It's like this all the time. So, I'm like, “I'm the only black person in this entire building... damn.” You just get that feeling of, “I'm the only one,” which is isolating, and it makes you feel like you're on an island and people may not really understand.

As he talked about the challenge of supporting students of color while also feeling the need to protect himself from any backlash, P8 described feeling a lack of power:

I think another challenge is supporting students of color. It’s… it's, you know… some s*** goes down and it was hard for me feeling like I don't have power to then support students who have less power. So that was a challenge for me because there's this push where I… I feel it's my duty to support these students. And it's hard sometimes when I don't feel like I have the power to do so. So, that's always been a challenge. I always erred on the side of supporting the student, but there was some serious internal negotiation about how I do this. How do I protect myself while I'm trying to protect these students?

**Scrutinized But Not Recognized**

Participants’ personal accounts of experiencing hypervisibility, scrutiny, and tokenism emerged as a subtheme. In their narratives, participants described ways in which they felt pressed to assimilate to dominate group norms. P5 described this particular challenge as an “insidious” one:
It's a quiet one, right? It’s that the field tends to send this insidious message of be more like us and less like you. So sometimes you can feel like you can't hold on to your identity as an African American person or male, because you don't see yourself reflected in the writings and in the research, and then the theories. And so, to be able to hold on to your identity in the field that unconsciously communicates that is a challenge. It's some of the stuff that white counselor educators and white doc students don't face. They don't hear that undertone.

P2 provided an illustration of when he felt pressured to assimilate:

There are expectations that our scholarship, what we produce when we're doing research, needs to be… compartmentalized. Here’s an example... My chair asked me, after looking at my publication record at a particular time… she basically said, ‘(participant’s name), I think you need to start publishing your work in counseling journals versus some of the more interdisciplinary journals where you've been published in the past.

Expressing his confusion and frustration, P2 stated:

My institution literally, like, they tried to throw elegant shade like, ‘hey, maybe this is…’

And I'm like, are you joking? Like, I literally just published a grounded theory study about how men make sense of their kids’ diagnosis and you're mad that it's not in a counseling journal when it's in another field’s journal. I'm not even a member of that field. What I'm learning ain’t just for counselors. So, I understand the value of publishing in our journal because I identify as a counselor and a counselor educator, but if I'm… if I'm writing about black men and their mental health and wellbeing and I've submitted to counseling journals and I've been rejected, and I find a journal who's open to it… Maybe counselors ain’t the audience right now.
P8 shared a similar experience where he was called out for putting emphasizes on his passion for supporting students of color:

I remember… I think… probably the most salient example I could think of was when I made my academic profile for the institution and I said explicitly, “I am passionate about…” something, not verbatim, “I'm passionate about supporting students of color,” or something like that. And I remember a white woman who had power over me came back and was like, “I'm wondering about your word choice and whether you're worried about discouraging white students from reaching out to you?” I said, “I'm okay with that.” That I’m okay with that. They have enough people to reach out to. If they're discouraged about me saying that I'm passionate about supporting students of color, they can go get one of these other 90 something white folks to talk to. Let the students of color see me. I’m okay if I discourage that. I don't think I did it. But I'm okay if that's the consequence. Like, and that’s… things like that are… those are the types of challenges that I had and to some degree continue to still have.

In addition to being scrutinized about their work, participants expressed concerns over tokenism in regard to collegial expectations. P8 stated:

I was still scared of saying no. But everybody was like, “Yo, let’s get (Participant’s Name) here. Let’s get (Participant’s Name) here.” And… it wasn’t… I know I've got the skills to do it, but that's not why they were recruiting me. I know that, you know. I recently said no to the (Name of Committee) because we're going to get… we're already accredited. They have to do their little site visit and stuff and I was like, “No, I'm not doing that.” And I was literally told, or asked, if I would reconsider because they really want some diversity on this committee, to which I replied, “I'm definitely not doing that.”
Mainly because of my service, but also, now, I'm definitely not doing it. And the person knows that I'm good. We've served on other committees together and they know that I'm about it, especially when it comes to assessment and things like that. Like, they know I can handle that stuff, but... you put that out there. Like, it’s done now. I don't care if you meant the other thing, it doesn't matter. You put it out there. I already know how you really feel. It ain’t happening. I'm not going on that committee.

For P7, suspicions of tokenism heightened his feelings of distrust toward his white counterparts:

Well because I came from my family that actively distrusted white systems and white...

These ways of being come primarily from my father... um... I didn't want to be used as a token or... I want to be just as qualified as everyone else. I think I was... I always felt... I would almost try to read their minds... in terms of whether or not... what assumptions are they bringing to this interaction with myself? Do they see me as qualified? And even after having them say that, there was still an active mistrust on my part. And I don't know if that was developmental or the impostor phenomenon maintaining that, or what have you... but, yeah. And when people say, you know, “We're so glad you're here. We need you...” Whereas I appreciate you saying that, do you realize... why aren't there more or why are you glad I'm here? I don't want to ease anyone’s guilt or awareness... that’s not why I'm here.

P5 spoke about being careful not to become “the cultural voice in the program.” He asserted:

You don’t want to become that multicultural researcher who teaches the multicultural class and get all of the troubled black kids as a supervisee. You don't want to become that because you can start to become the programs mammy or pappy. They don't intentionally do that, but you maneuver yourself into that position because you feel like, “Well, if I
don't, then who will?” And that's giving white faculty members such an easy path. No, man. Grow up and gain some multicultural education and help me support these students of color. It’s not just my responsibility.

**Existing in Two Worlds**

This subtheme captures the challenges participants face as they navigate between two worlds as African American men; specifically, the psychological, emotional, and physical strain they experience. P6 expounded:

… when I’m in the streets people don’t say, “Oh, that’s Dr. (Participant’s Name).” I’m not Dr. (Participant’s Name), I’m just another… just another Black male… out in the streets being harassed or questioned or looked at with the side eye or… you know? I walk into the store and people watch me and, you know, I’m no different than any other African American male. So, that stress, it became… it’s something that we live with. And I think a lot of times people don’t understand it because we're living in this… dealing with this dichotomy where… Okay, I have this professional role, I have all of this, but at the same time, I’ve got to deal with this other side too… the stereotyping, the violence, the mistreatment. And so, psychologically and personally, it was… it was hard. It was… it created my own… It created my own stressors and emotional stress and is tiring.

The tragic deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd exposed the prevalence of racism and racialized police brutality in America, sparking an international outcry and protests around the world (Banerjee et al., 2020). Heightened racial tension amid ongoing civil unrest triggered outrage, fear, and conversations about the dehumanization of Black Americans (Banerjee et al., 2020). Participants were asked to reflect on how they have been impacted both professionally and personally. P1 stated that, “As a Black man, I'm all the way f*cked up, you
know… I am (shakes head). And…and… America keeps turning the knife. They’ve stabbed us and turned the knife.” Other participants, like P5, elaborated on the feeling of fear:

Personally, I’m just scared. I think some people have the privilege of being angry, and some people have the privilege of being upset and reacting. I don't have that privilege. It just makes me more scared; walking around in my neighborhood makes me more scared. Going to campus makes me more scared. Driving makes me more scared. It's like... just heightened the level of fear that I have. It also increases the vulnerability I have in session and the vulnerability that I have in class because students want to talk, and they also want to hear the perspective of a person of color, especially a male person of color.

P3, who is a certified range officer, expressed how he now takes a firearm with him when he runs:

P3: “It has changed what kind of things I carry with me when I'm running… over the last three months. No. It started probably back about seven months ago. Now, I carry something when I run. Before I never used to. Usually when I’m running with somebody else, they’re White. So, I’m… I’m good. I’m with the White folks (laughs). But if I’m running by myself or if I’m walking by myself… that’s a different story.”

P8 discussed how he has been impacted both personally and professionally:

I mean, personally, it hurts. It hurts to see yourself in these people who are being hurt or killed. Um, and it always makes you feel more vulnerable. It always makes me think about the people I love and their vulnerability. So, personally, there's no escaping that… that… that's a weight that you carry with you; that I carry with me. Um, that, you know… it's taking away the resources of how you function and what you're able to do and chips away at your mental health to some degree. So, that's a constant. Professionally, I think because I'm doing… because I’m operating below my baseline while this is going on and
my students of color need more from me, which is my job to give, and because I'm giving more to the people that I love and my community more, I know professionally it sucked. I… I'm not writing the way I want to. I'm not able to attend to the work that I want to attend to. I'm not able to give as much to the job as I want to because I'm being pulled in multiple directions both directly and indirectly.

**Black Male Privilege**

This subtheme further sheds light on the unique space of both oppression and privilege that participants occupy as African American men, particularly in academia. This subtheme does not imply that participants or other African American male faculty possess the same privilege as their White counterparts, but instead examines differences between the experiences of African American male and African American female faculty. In his reflection, P1 commented on how poorly African American women are treated in the field:

I will say this much… Black women in our profession catch Holy hell… And they get it from white men, white women, and black men. And sometimes other Black women.

P2 shared the sentiment of his counterpart:

I think women, Black women in particular, just catch way more hell than men… just in life. I mean, that's not super sophisticated, but I think women are subject to… black women are subject to so much more marginalizing experiences. So, the demand for them to comport and make white folks, and folks in positions of influence feel comfortable and feel safe… that burden is arguably so much heavier at times than it is for Black men. Like, I think… I think black tax is real. And black women's tax is… is taxed at a higher rate.
Describing his perspective on how the experiences of African American men faculty differs from the experiences of African American female faculty, P4 acknowledged the presence of male privilege:

Here at (Name of University), I mean, it's… we… we are the majority. Honestly, I think that… males… it blows my mind. Everybody there is so intelligent. But… the… the… the males are… they get more of a pass. A lot of these dudes aren’t… aren’t putting in the work, aren’t putting in the time. Whereas a lot of my female counterparts are carrying the weight and they don't get the love and appreciation that the men do… who… who ain’t really doing all that much. It is just… it is mind boggling that we still perpetuate this in society and in higher education as well. So, I… I think I have that privilege. I recognize that privilege.

In his observations, P8 describes how African American men faculty may be seen more as a commodity, garnering more respect than African American female faculty:

My hunch is that because there's less Black men I'm probably… I probably get a bit more of that commodity stuff. And perhaps I'm… I'm hyper focused on my own institution too much. You know, there… there's threefold as many black women in my institution than there are men. So, my hunch is that there's less of that commodification of the Black women there than there are men. I'm probably going to get more respect than my Black female peers. I'm probably going to get less pushback than my Black female peers. I know that to be true.

Recalling an incident where an African American female faculty member was treated poorly at his institution, P7 shared:

Unfortunately, we had an experience with, uh, with a colleague that came in recently who was African American. Fully qualified, fully vetted, but didn't last too long. And even
some of my colleagues were aware… the younger colleagues were aware that for her… perhaps some of her evaluations, the way she was interacted with… people were not accustomed, necessarily, to having a person of color who has gender, and who also has a strong voice or disposition. And so, unfortunately, she's no longer with the institution.

While other participants spoke more about their male privilege, P3 and P6 highlighted challenges that are unique to African American male faculty and noted that African American men have few opportunities to form collegial relationships:

P3: Black females are going to take care of Black females. There’s a sisterhood. And so, there’s more support for Black females than there is for Black males.”

P6: First of all, one of the things I didn’t say, one of the other challenges is that there are no… there are fewer people… who I can form collegial relationships with… as an African American male, because there are just a few of us. Like I said, I'm the only one in my department. And so, in my department, I'm the only African American male counselor educator. I have no one else to affiliate with or sit down and talk to. So, if I want to discuss something from an African American male perspective… where… In my program there are… four African American females. So, they can get together, have lunch, text, group text, do all that.

P6 went on to talk about how African American male faculty are perceived compared to African American female faculty based on the differences in negative stereotypes that precede them:

They get the angry black woman thing, but typically African American females are seen as less threatening than African American males. And I think that's why, when I say the softening down part is that African American males have… have been stained with the image of being threatening. So, um… that’s… that fear factor. I mean, you can look at some of the police imaging. And one of the things that historically has been done is that,
and this is a fact, you can do research on it… when African American males have a photo or criminal type photos, police photos, photos are darkened to make them look more threatening. And… and I think just being an African American male, that… that sense of threat, you know… the gangster, the killer, the person who rapes and abuses, you know, white women and mistreats Black women… all of that negativity, I represent that. It doesn’t make any difference whether I have a PhD. If I raise my voice or show passion about something, then everybody’s, you know, on edge.

**Theme 5: “I Got Your Back”**

All the participants were asked if they had a mentor who helped orient them to the role and responsibilities of a tenure-track counselor education faculty member. Seven of the eight participants reported that they did have a mentor during their doctoral program and educational career. Participants illustrated how their relationship with their mentors went beyond a traditional student-advisor dynamic and explained how mentors served as visible role models who provided professional guidance important for career advancement, as well as personal and emotional support needed to overcome potential barriers to success. For instance, P8 talked about how he looked to his advisor for guidance on what it meant to be a tenure-track counselor education faculty member:

So, I hit up (Name) because I trusted her, and she was my advisor throughout my master's program, so… and she was dope. She was the one who I asked about what it meant to be a professor and where I should go. And she gave me the lay of land and really talked to me about it. Um, (Advisor’s Name) is ‘white white’ and she… she did not prepare me, I guess, for how ‘white white’ counselor ed is, in that regard. But she gave me solid information about what it meant to be a professor and what the journey to counselor ed would be.
P1 described how his mentors prepared him for a faculty position application process:

… they always wrote my letters of recommendation for faculty positions. You know, they always provide us a lot of advice on the faculty search, like real advice that some people don't get in doc programs. You know, negotiation tactics, what to look for in a faculty position. You know, how to interview, how to do your application, how to put together your CV, personal statement, cover letter, all that stuff.

P6 recalled receiving guidance about how to select universities to apply to:

They just… they would give me real talk. The pros and cons of tenure track, the pros and cons of PWIs and HBCUs, because they both have pros and cons. And how to… they taught me the importance of matching who I am with the university that I'm with. A lot of times people pick universities based on the name of the university and not based on their personal match. And that's why a lot of people of color don't survive in different settings because they don't know how to select, or what’s important about selecting the university to go to. They also taught me what to look for in regard to being a person of color going somewhere.

In addition to the mentorship received from faculty in his doctoral program, P2 acknowledged the mentorship and support he received outside of his doctoral program:

Yeah, I mean, I would just generally say mentorship helped me. I had a… I was fortunate to have mentors at the institution where I was a doctoral student. Um… faculty who were super supportive. Our cohort was really dope. And even though they didn't know much about being a full-time faculty member, we just had a really supportive community. All of us were… of the 7 of us, 4 of us were in committed relationships. We had prior work experience for up to 10 years. And so, there was a focus and a clarity that I think we had that really aided. And so, if you combine that with the influence of faculty and giving us
and offering professional development opportunities. So, mentoring in my academic community, my home academic community was dope. But then getting connected to a broader network of Black counselor educators, um, was especially valuable and helped orient me to the demands of being a tenure track faculty member in a counseling program, in a counselor preparation program.

**Beyond Mentorship**

Some of the participants viewed their mentors as family as they described how their mentors offered sentiments and gestures that conveyed closeness and emotional connection. The support garnered seemed to foster a sense of responsibility within the participants, resulting in participants not wanting to let down those who invested in them. P1 gave an example as he recounted a conversation with one of his mentors:

I just got… I just left his office and… Dr. (name) is his name. And I just left his office, and he called me son. And so, you know, I really appreciated that about him. He called me son. That meant a lot. He still calls me son, you know. And so, um… I really appreciate his mentorship.

In another example, P1 shared:

I remember one conversation I was having with (name of mentor), and I told her about my first, you know, where I first got hired at… And the way she looked at me is the way that a mama looks at the child when the child just messes up royally.

P2 talked about how mentorship was modeled for him:

What was modeled for me professionally as a counselor educator, my mentor calls me literally, at least twice a week. So, he's the kind of person who just was, like, ‘Yo, what’s happening with you? What's going on with your family?’ And it's… it's… it's… it can be about work, but it doesn't have to be about work. And it's, it's really about trying to find
out and learn and… become intimately familiar, to the extent it's appropriate, about who I am beyond, you know, being a counselor or a counselor educator. When you get text messages, and when you send text messages, like, ‘hey brother man, I was thinking about you and I didn't want to ignore it…’ you know, and that's it, ‘I don’t want nothing else, and I hope you and your team are well.’ Like, those are the things that really help. For me, those are the things that have helped me and then, likewise, those are the things I hope are helpful to the, to the guys that I think I will call myself at least one of their mentors.

When asked what or who prepared him for the role and responsibility of being a tenure-track counselor education faculty member, P5 stated:

There were three kinds of three influences, right? One was my faculty at (Name of University). In a lot of ways, they showed me what not to do. They were one of those lessons. The second thing was my relationship with some African American male counselor educators. Meeting them at conferences and then them taking me out to dinner. I would meet with 10 of them at a time and just kind of process and talk through things. They definitely helped shape what it meant to be a counselor educator, right? And a good one. Like a good, healthy one, you know? And then the third influencer was (name of mentor). He's like my grandpa. He kind of gave me that lifespan perspective on counselor education and my career as a counselor educator. He just cared. He probably called me every day as a doc student.

P5 went on to explain how his mentor was invested in his well-being:

…It was more than mentorship. It was more than like, ‘Hey, let me help you write an article…’ or ‘Hey, let me help you with tenure…’ It was like, ‘How's your family doing?
How's your son doing? Are you getting any sleep? Did you eat today? Are you sure you're drinking enough water?’ Or just sit and moan about our programs, you know?

For P7, mentorship in the doctoral program was lacking. P7 explains:

I was fortunate that, when I was doing my dissertation, I chose to interview African American men that were counselor educators. That’s probably where I got my role modeling from and… and understanding of what it means to be a counselor educator came probably more from those interactions than it did within my institution. Or even within my doc program.

P7 described his experience interviewing the African American male counselor educators who served as participants in his dissertation study:

… I did a focus group. And on the day of the focus group, I was so very afraid that somehow, I missed the mark. I walked into that room, (Researcher’s Name), and there was such a welcome. The warmth and hospitality, at least in my experience, was overwhelming because I felt like I was known. As I listened to their stories, I was known. I could locate myself in their stories in a way that, um… I was not lost or unanchored.

Theme 6: Taking a Stand

Several participants discussed ways in which they utilize their voice, power, and privilege to challenge institutional racism and the status quo that exists in academia. Participants noted that their commitment to stay true to themselves, promote diversity in the field, and impact positive change in the communities they serve were reasons they remain in academia despite the challenges they face. Moreover, these reasons are a driving force behind participants’ actions, research, and service. For P6, wanting to “change the narrative” influenced his decision to pursue his PhD and a career as a tenure-track counselor education faculty member:
And then when I got into the field, the field was so prominently white; I mean, it still. And so, I thought, you know, I wanted to make some changes. I did not like the way that things were being said about African American males by non-African American males as if they were law, and if they knew more than the African American males who... the community that I was a part of. And so, I said, okay, they're not going to listen to me until I get a seat at the table. So, my goal then was to not... was to go get a PhD because they're not going to listen to you if you don't have a PhD. You got to be a doctor somebody before people listen. You know, you got to be a doctor somebody, publish a couple of articles, do a couple of book chapters, do a couple of seminars and presentations, and then people start to listen. And so, my goal was, okay, I'm going to do that and I'm going to get involved in the national organizations and I'm going to start spreading my wings because I want to voice at the table so I can correct what I consider nonsense.

An example provided by P8 echoed a similar experience as he talked about wanting to diversify the field:

So, I worked in juvenile detention... I'm working with these young brothers and sisters, and I remember one of them said something like, ‘How come you the first counselor who's ever spoken to me this way?’ or something like that. I was just like, ‘How come I’m the first counselor who ever spoke to you this way?’ And that was like the moment where I was like, I need to go teach. I need to go teach some people. I need to make sure that I'm not the only counselor who's speaking to someone in a certain way. Like that really stuck with me.

P2 expressed how mental health professionals, particularly those of color, should be mindful about enacting change:
I think all of us, people of color, black folks in particular, if we are mental health professionals, if we are counselor educators, all of us have to decide, no matter where, no matter what spaces we occupy, we have to decide how we're going to enact change if we're really committed to making our systems more equitable.

P2 provided examples of he tries to enact change:

Some people decide to get involved and kind of become a part of the machine. ‘Yes, I'm an ACA member. Yes, I'm an ACES member. Yes, I'm…’ and all that kind of stuff. And that’s dope and that’s cool. No shade about that. Then there are others of us who are like, ‘I'm not drinking the juice. I'm going to disrupt from the outside. So no, I'm not going to be a member of ACES…’ Those are the decisions that I think I've tried to make. I've been in elected leadership positions in the profession and there are times when I’m falling back. I have tried to remain vigilant in more creative ways then just, oh become a member, become elected, and become a leader… It's that kind of stuff like, those prescribed leadership kind of like… versus… things that may not be as… typical.

Participants offered ways in which they challenge the status quo in academia, including within the classroom. As P1 stated, “African American male voice and representation in the field is absent.” He expressed that students need to know what the real deal is. P7 expounded on this statement as he referenced the multicultural social justice competencies:

We talk about social justice and advocacy as if it just exists between the client and counselor. We’re training people that way, but it also exists in the classroom. Professor awareness, student worldview, the intersection there, and the advocacy piece. Um… just like my student said, “Hey, I had to learn how to learn from you and be dislocated,” in his social location is intersection and so forth. How can we achieve these competencies if we don’t have those same types of interactions in the formative years of the students'
experience with diverse faculty of color, men, and so forth? Without that… the gap is too much. We have these aspirational competencies. The competency begins in the classroom. Diversity begins in the classroom.

P6 talked about how he enacts change through service:

I’m making a difference in the field. You know, I’m on the (Name of governing body) for the (Name of Board). You know, I do a lot of stuff for the (Name of Board). I’m the fitness for practice evaluator. There’s only (number) of us in the state of (State). When counselors have an issue and have to be evaluated, I’m one of the people in (State) that does that. Um, I’m active on the addiction board in (State). Those… those things are meaningful to me, and it provides an example, a positive example for people of color and for African American males as well.

In line with “taking a stand,” participants shared how they stay true to themselves by using their voice, power, and privilege. For example, P1 asserted:

They know that I'm Black as f**k all day, every day. And I make no apologies about that.

I bring that into the classroom, I bring that into our meetings, I bring that to the university. So, if they want me, you know, they have to take all of me.

P1 also share how he calls out tenants of white supremacy:

If I see white fragility, I’m gonna call it out. I don’t care who it is. If I see tenants of white supremacy, I’m gonna say ‘hey, that was f**ked up.

After witnessing a former African American female colleague be mistreated by students and faculty and resigning, P7 shared how he discovered his sense of voice and began to “push back”:

After the situation occurred with the colleague I referred to earlier, I found a sense of voice, (Researcher’s Name). I found a sense of voice and began to push back and just say, “Hey, these things are not right.” And so, that was just a wonderful process for me to
find a sense of voice, a sense of influence, a sense of… and actually see the institution respond favorably to it. Uh… let me just say it this way… I was already suppressed by not finding my voice from my identity or taking a sense of ownership. Once I did that, I'm here (raises right hand above left hand). And the institution to still be here (referring to left hand below right hand), but I'm good. I'm good. So, I stayed out of this sense … out of the sense of self-efficacy, the sense of personhood, the sense of rightness or wrongness, the sense of voice.

P5 talked about staying true to himself by walking away from an institution that was not congruent with his personality or how he saw himself as a husband and a father:

And so, when I was probably a semester in, I was like, ‘Okay, this just doesn't fit my personality. This doesn't fit my identity.’ It wasn't like a high emotional reactivity like, ‘I got to get the hell out of here.’ It was more like a genuine just kind of, ‘Okay, this really doesn't fit. I could get tenure here. I could totally get tenure here, but what kind of person would I be? What type of husband would I be? What type of dad would I be? What type of brother would I be if I got tenure here?’ I was not willing to sacrifice that for $5,000 extra. And so, being able to genuinely and kind of calmly react to things, knowing that my potential gives me the privilege to say, ‘I'm good’ and walk away and people understand is huge.

**Summary of Themes**

The goal of this research study was to explore the lived experiences of African American male faculty in counselor education and factors that influenced their career development. Based on their narratives, the career development of the African American males in this study began with the expectation that they were capable of excellence. At an early age, participants’ potential for excellence was communicated through the words and actions of significant others (e.g.,
parents, siblings, teachers, peers, church members, coaches). The value of education is an example of an expectation that was communicated to participants. More than just doing well in school, it was conveyed that education was a means of knowledge, empowerment, and betterment. Some participants described how their exposure to African American teachers, principals, and guidance counselors in elementary, middle, and high school helped cultivate their beliefs in their abilities while also reinforcing that excellence and success is attainable. Other participants spoke about experiencing an increased awareness of race and structural/institutional racism in education as they reflected on the lack of diversity among school personnel, being given schoolbooks that were old and in poor conditions, the lack of advocacy for students of color to attend college after high school graduation, witnessing the belittlement of other students of color, and having a teacher intentionally inflict pain as a form punishment to correct behavior. In all, participants’ accounts of their K-12 school experiences described their early experiences of racial socialization, and the implicit and explicit messages received about what it means to be African American.

All the participants decided to pursue terminal degrees either at the end of or well after completing their master’s programs. Several participants shared that they were already working in areas such as student affairs, school counseling, diversion counseling, juvenile detention, military, and church ministry. When asked what led them to want to pursue a PhD, one participant explained how much he enjoyed teaching adjunct but was limited in how much he could teach without having a doctoral degree. Three participants shared how they reached a point in their former careers where they needed more education to obtain the proper licensure or credentials to better serve the populations they were working with. Additionally, earning a PhD meant “having a seat at the table” and being able to infiltrate conversations, research, and practices that impact the lives of African Americans and other people of color. Moreover,
holding a terminal degree legitimized their thoughts and opinions. The expression of faith from trusted and respected individuals regarding their abilities to effectively perform the role and functions of a faculty member in counselor education, as well as positive physiological and affective experiences had when performing such roles and functions, affirmed for participants that counselor education was the right fit. Some participants emphasized their enjoyment and confidence in teaching while others expressed finding pleasure in writing and conducting meaningful research that reflect their interests. Likewise, referencing prior performance accomplishments and skills from previous experiences outside of counselor education contributed to participants' level of confidence in becoming a faculty member in counselor education. Formal and informal support and mentoring was also critical to participants’ career development process. Participants discussed the importance of being mentored and shared how being invited to publish, present, or teach with faculty further contributed to their beliefs in their capability to achieve their career goals. Mentoring also provided firsthand insight on what could be expected regarding the job search process, faculty responsibilities, and how to balance work demands. Most noted by participants were the mentoring relationships that acknowledged and addressed their doubts, fears, concerns, and overall well-being. Several participants described the sincerity of their mentors and their mentors’ efforts toward helping them be successful. A couple of participants discussed being confronted with lack of or inadequate mentoring in their doctoral programs or current departments, which they had to seek from outside sources such as conferences where they were introduced to other African American male counselor educations. One participant explained how he found support from the African American males who participated in his dissertation research study.

The culmination of challenges participants’ face as African American male faculty reflects their visible yet marginal position in society. Some participants described occupying an
“outsider-within” status wherein they hold positions of influence but feel restricted in how and when they use it. For example, they commented on having to be cognizant of approaches to advocacy for students of color and being hyper-aware of tone of voice, body language, and trying not to come off as “aggressive”. Participants also expressed anger and weariness about ongoing tragic killings of African Americans, as well as fear for their own lives outside of campus and the lives of their loved ones. One participant explained how their level of education and status does not protect them against systemic racism or police brutality. Concerns about being used as a “token,” because of gender and racial distinctiveness, to demonstrate diversity was also mentioned. Five participants described having successes related to teaching, scholarship, or service be ignored, downplayed, or scrutinized. Additionally, participants experience alienation, isolation, and loneliness because of insufficient representation of African American male counselor education faculty members with whom they can relate. In many ways, the factors that were identified as influencing participants' decision to pursue the professoriate in counselor education were also identified as being instrumental in helping them navigate challenges along the way. Leveraging the support and encouragement of family, social networks, and mentors helped sustain participants’ self-efficacy, commitment to mentoring and empowering future African American male counselor educators, and sense of agency.

Chapter IV Summary

Through discussion and illustrative quotes, the collective voices of participants within this study shed light on the lived experiences of African American male faculty in counselor education. Their shared perspectives provided insight into factors that influenced their career development. Through their narratives, a greater understanding of challenges African American male faculty in counselor education face and how they navigate those challenges was provided. The six overarching themes captured the lived experiences of participants in this study include:
1) Education: The Pathway to Opportunity, (2) “One Thing Led to Another . . . ,” (3) “I Believe in You,” (4) Outsider Within, (5) “I Got Your Back,” and (6) Taking a Stand. Participants’ story detailed the development of their self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals that carried them through their journey to the professoriate, their experiences as minorities within a majority culture, their experiences with the intersection of race and gender, and how they discovered their sense of voice and utilize their positions of power. Overall, participants desired to evoke transformative change in the field and in the communities they serve.

The next chapter will provide detailed descriptions of emergent themes and will connect research findings to current literature. Implications of findings on the lived experiences of African American male faculty in counselor education will be discussed. Study limitations will be reviewed and recommendations for African American male students, higher education institutions, counselor educators, and future research will be offered.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

Chapter I contextualized the need to identify personal, contextual, and cognitive factors that shaped African American males’ ability to overcome racial and discriminatory barriers in pursuit of the professoriate. Chapter II synthesized relevant theoretical and empirical research on the career development of African American males, challenges that confront African American male faculty in counselor education, and the application of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). Chapter III described the phenomenological design and methodological procedures for this study. Data analysis and emergent themes derived from interviews with 8 African American male counselor education faculty were presented in Chapter IV. This final chapter provides a summary of the overall study and conclusions formulated based on the data analysis and research findings. The limitations and implications of this study are identified. Lastly, recommendations for future research are offered.

Summary of the Study

Much of the existing literature on African American faculty in counselor education and supervision programs focus on the challenges that confront them as racial minorities (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Holcomb-McCoy & Addison-Bradley, 2005; Thompson, 2008; Turner & Myers, 2000). Findings from previous research studies have offered ways to support and guide African American faculty in combating racial discrimination and oppression within the academy (Jones-Boyd, 2016; Robinson, 2018). However, there are gaps in the literature about the personal and environmental factors that shape African Americans’ decisions to pursue the professoriate in counselor education and supervision, and factors that contribute to their persistence. Furthermore, African American male representation and voice is notably absent in the existing literature (Branch, 2018; Brooks & Steen, 2010; Dollarhide, Mayes, Dogan, Aras, Edwards,
Expanding the literature on the experiences of African American male counselor education faculty and factors that influenced their career development may garner greater understanding and knowledge of how to assist current and prospective African American male counselor education faculty.

**Overview of the Problem**

Ongoing police violence and fatal shootings of unarmed African American men and women have exacerbated mental health concerns in the African American community (Laurencin & Walker, 2020). Additionally, the covid-19 pandemic has stripped many African Americans of financial security, limited access to resources and medical care, and increased maladaptive coping such as alcohol and substance use (Laurencin & Walker, 2020). Though the African American community could benefit from receiving mental health services (Watkins, Walker, & Griffith, 2010), the mistrust of authority figures (Laurencin & Walker, 2020) and the underrepresentation of African American men in the counseling profession may deter African American men from utilizing mental health services (Chandler, 2010). The underrepresentation of African American men in the counseling profession may also dissuade African American men from pursuing a career in the counseling profession (Lease, 2006). Consequently, the mental health concerns of African Americans, particularly African American males, will go unaddressed, leading to detrimental outcomes (Watkins, Walker, & Griffith, 2010). By bringing attention to the career development of African American male counselor education faculty members, other African American males may be encouraged to pursue the professoriate and serve as change agents by educating the next generation of professional counselors, counselor educators, supervisors, and leaders who can address the needs of African American communities (Branch 2018; Brooks & Steen, 2010; Dollarhide et al., 2018; Hannon et al., 2019; Okech &
Rubel, 2018). Furthermore, increasing the number of African American male counselor educators may challenge the deficit notions of African American men.

**Purpose Statement and Research Questions**

Given the number of African American men are plagued by high levels of sociocultural and environmental stressors that contribute to anxiety, depression, substance use/abuse, and other poor health outcomes (Parham, Ajamu, & White, 2010; Watkins, Walker, & Griffith, 2010), the underrepresentation of African American male at each level of the pipeline in counselor education, and the absence of the African American male experience and voice in counselor education and career development, the purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of African American male faculty in counselor education and factors that influenced their career development. Three research questions guided this study: 1) How do facets of social cognitive career theory (SCCT) (i.e. self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals) influence African American males’ decision to pursue a tenure-track faculty position in counselor education?; 2) How do African American males describe their experience as faculty members in counselor education programs?; and 3) What experiences prepare African American males to navigate barriers/challenges in pursuit of a tenure-track faculty position in counselor education?

**Review of Methodology**

For this qualitative research study, a hermeneutic phenomenological approach was utilized to explore participants’ interpretations of their lived experiences and illuminate the meaning of their lived experiences. Eight African American male counselor education faculty members served as participants for this study. Each participant participated in a 45–60-minute audio-recorded interview and shared their experience as African American male faculty in counselor education, as well as factors that influenced their career development. Data collection
began in November 2020 and concluded in January 2021. Seven of the eight participants chose to be interviewed via WebEx. One participant chose to be interviewed via telephone. NoNotes call recording and transcription service was used to record and transcribe the interview conducted via-telephone. WebEx was used to record and transcribe interviews conducted virtually. To verify the accuracy of transcripts, the researcher proofread individual interview transcripts while simultaneously listening to the audio recordings of each interview. Each participant was given the opportunity to review their interview transcripts and ensure that their experience was accurately captured. Six of the eight participants chose to have their interview transcripts emailed to them for their review. All six participants approved their interview transcripts with no corrections or additions. Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-step approach for thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data collected from participant interviews. Six emerging themes and four subthemes were identified.

**Findings Related to the Literature**

Several findings from this study paralleled the results of similar research studies that examined the career development of African American males and the experiences of African American faculty in counselor education. The career development of the African American male counselor educators in this study began with the expectation that they were capable of success (Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003). Established and nurtured by parents, family, teachers, church members, and other significant adults, the positive expectations placed on participants was reinforced and supplemented by ongoing encouragement and foundational values such as education and good academic performance (McMahon, Felix, & Nagarajan, 2011; Whiston & Keller, 2004). Early in their career development, participants were able to internalize, accept, and demonstrate what was expected of them as they became vested in fulfilling their potential (Bell, 2015; Daniel, 2001; Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003). Congruent with findings from other studies
that examined African American males’ interest in a faculty career (Brooks & Steen, 2010; Dollarhide et al., 2018; Hannon et al., 2019), participants in this study indicated that pursuing the professoriate in counselor education placed them in a position of power where they could address the challenges that confront the communities they serve through teaching, scholarship, research, and service. Missing from the existing literature is how African American males learn about the field of counselor education (Brooks & Steen, 2010; Dollarhide et al., 2018; Hannon et al., 2019). In explaining their career journeys, participants in this study shared that they had no idea what counselor education was until the end of their master’s program or well after. Having someone they knew who was already in the field helped participants shape their outcome expectations and perceptions of faculty life (Hackett & Byars, 1996; Durodoye & Bodley, 1997). Though most participants had individuals such as advisors or faculty in their graduate programs who served as career models for them and oriented them to the demands of faculty life, some participants had little to no access to career models who could prepare them for the challenges they would face as African American males in academia (Smith, Smith, & Markham, 2000; Tillman 2001). For example, participants discussed ways in which their intersecting racial and gender identities subjected them to racial microaggressions, marginalization, isolation, and loneliness. Participants illustrated encounters with gendered racism and described being depicted as militant, threatening, and hostile despite their degree, status, or intellect (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2008; Lang & Lehmann, 2012). These experiences parallel those noted by some of the African American male professionals in Wingfield’s (2007) study. Establishing collegiality as the only, or one of few, faculty of color was also noted as a challenge.
Discussion

Extended from Bandura’s (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) is a comprehensive career development model that delineates the career development process and the formation of career interest, choices, and outcomes (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). According to Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994), the career development process is heavily influenced by one’s self-efficacy beliefs (i.e., judgements held by individuals regarding their ability to execute a specific task or perform a specific behavior), outcome expectations (i.e., perceptions of possible outcomes or consequences for executing a specific task or performing a specific behavior), and personal goals (i.e., intentions to engage in a specific behavior or execute a specific task to achieve desired outcomes). SCCT proposes that self-efficacy is derived from four leading sources including enactive mastery experiences (i.e., past successes and letdowns used to assess one’s ability to execute a specific task or perform a specific behavior), vicarious learning (i.e., observing another person execute a specific task or perform a specific behavior to determine one’s ability to do the same), social persuasion (i.e., external messages received regarding one’s potential), and physiological and affective states (i.e., resulting emotions or physical responses after executing a specific task or performing a specific behavior) (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). SCCT served as an appropriate theoretical framework for understanding the career development of African American male counselor education faculty members. The qualitative data collected from participants’ narratives complemented the existing SCCT literature which has primarily consisted of quantitative research. Moreover, this study further examines SCCT’s applicability to understanding the career development of African Americans, particularly African American males. Findings from this
study revealed how SCCT constructs (i.e., self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals) influenced participants’ decision to pursue a tenure-track faculty position in counselor education.

Social persuasion appeared to be a powerful source of self-efficacy for participants. Each participant noted external messages they received from respected individuals regarding their potential and ability to perform tasks and achieve goals that led them to becoming a tenure-track faculty member in counselor education. Most notable about the external messages participants described was the perceived sincerity that underlined the external messages, the perceived credibility of the individuals who provided the external messages, and the frequency and consistency of which external messages were provided. One common external message that was received by all participants was the importance of education. It was embedded that education would equip participants with confidence, knowledge, and the opportunity to break down barriers. Furthermore, participants explained how the encouragement, affirmation, and validation presented in the external messages helped sustain them in the face of challenges and doubt.

Vicarious learning was also a significant influence on participants’ self-efficacy beliefs. A couple of participants explained how observing the career pathways of close friends and peers is how they were introduced to the field of counselor education. For other participants, vicarious learning helped them better understand the role and responsibilities of a tenure-track faculty member, as well as shape the kind of the counselor educator they wanted to be. For example, how they support students, how they advocate for the communities they serve, the research they conduct, how they manage work/life balance, and how they set boundaries to ensure that they are staying true to themselves. Having African American teachers, faculty, advisors, and mentors
further strengthened the influence of vicarious learning on participants’ self-efficacy beliefs because it affirmed that participants’ academic and career goals were realistic and attainable.

Participants’ physiological and affective states also informed their self-efficacy beliefs. All participants described experiencing positive feelings when performing faculty related tasks such as conducting meaningful research or teaching. Participants interpreted feelings of satisfaction, fulfillment, and excitement as an indication that they were pursuing the right career. Feelings such as anger, fear, and self-doubt were also expressed by participants, particularly when discussing the challenges they face as African American males in academia. Though these unfavorable feelings cause participants discomfort, they did not have sustaining effects on participants’ performance as counselor educators or self-efficacy beliefs.

Several participants in this study possessed a wide range of learning experiences prior to their doctoral studies in counselor education that promoted the acquisition of skills necessary to successfully perform tasks in pursuit of the professoriate. For example, the participants who had experience working in student affairs, juvenile centers, and missionaries described how they drew on their past accomplishments and successes in these areas to assess their ability to be effective counselor educators.

Due to the limited access to African American male counselor educators during their graduate studies, some participants did not have African American male career role models to educate them on the challenges and barriers they may encounter as African American males in academia. However, some participants were able to draw on their experiences as one of a few, or the only, African American male in their graduate programs to form outcome expectations regarding possible discrimination, microaggressions, and gendered racism. Still, outcome expectations such as scholarly contributions, preparing the next generation of counselor educators, job security, job flexibility, and being in a position of power increased participants’
level of motivation and played a significant role in the formation of their career goals. Participants’ goal to become tenure-track faculty members in counselor education and the anticipated outcome expectations guided their behavior and enabled them to withstand inevitable setbacks or delayed gratification.

Conclusions

In sum, results for this study provide findings regarding the lived experiences of African American male faculty in counselor education and their career development. As African American males in academia, participants described experiences of gendered racism informed by negative stereotypes about African American men. Participants discussed experiences being the one of few, or the only, African American male at their respective university/institution. Participants described this experience as isolating and lonely. Participants also discussed, despite being in a position of power, sometimes feeling a lack of power to impact change due to being a minority within a majority culture. Bandura’s (1986) Social Cognitive Theory proved to be a useful lens through which to explore African American male counselor education faculty members’ career development, reasons for pursuing the professoriate, and how they navigate barriers and challenges with the help of self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals.

Limitations

Although this study adds to the paucity of literature on the experiences of African American male faculty in counselor education and factors that influenced their career development, a few limitations were encountered that should be taken into consideration in future research. First, findings gathered in this qualitative research study were generated from a
small number of participants and should not be deemed transferable to all African American male faculty in counselor education. Second, the researcher utilized the Counselor Education and Supervision Network Listserv (CESNET) and the faculty directory of counselor education programs from a list provided on the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs website to recruit participants. Individuals who were eligible to participate in this study but were not members of the Counselor Education and Supervision Network Listserv (CESNET), faculty in a CACREP-accredited counselor education program, or have a profile and picture on their department faculty directory may not have received a formal invitation to participate in the study. The scarce number of African American male faculty in counselor education challenged the researcher’s recruitment efforts. Additionally, the demanding schedules of faculty members, particularly during the time when recruitment took place, prevented some eligible faculty members from participating in the study. Third, due to the varying geographical location of participants, interviews were conducted virtually and via-telephone. The one interview conducted via-telephone prevented visual interaction and eliminated access to nonverbal cues conveyed through body language and facial expression. A couple of interviews conducted via-WebEx were impeded with poor connection and low-quality audio which made transcribing a couple of the interviews challenging. Lastly, some of the interview questions required participants to recall past events and memories such as their experiences from K-12 and graduate school. Participants’ recollections of past events may have been blurred or difficult to recall due the amount of time that has passed since a certain event occurred. Providing participants with interview questions prior to interviews may have given participants more time to gather their thoughts and provide more detailed recollections for richer data.
Implications for Counselor Education and Doctoral Training

Findings from this study offer noteworthy implications for the career development of African American males in pursuit of the professoriate in counselor education. This study indicates that support from parents and families play an instrumental role in the development of African American males’ self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals. Support included encouragement, belief in participants’ potential and capabilities, upholding positive expectations, praise, and constructive feedback. Such support strengthened participants' ability to persist towards achieving their goals and overcoming barriers along the way.

Additionally, parents and families made sure participants were engaged in activities and surrounded by individuals who reinforced set expectations and foundational values to further shape participants ‘self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals. For example, participants were exposed to successful African American professionals or involved in sports or clubs that required GPA eligibility. Several participants within this study emphasized the importance of building community and finding mentors to not only assist with addressing questions or concerns related to the demands and responsibilities of being a tenure-track faculty member, but also to provide support and guidance on work-life balance, navigating underrepresentation, and confronting gendered racism. Establishing a community and mentor relationships may also present opportunities to collaborate on scholarly publications and presentations. A couple of participants expressed not having the same access to opportunities for research or collaborative work as their white peers. Participants who did have access described how their mentors initiated such collaborations, which affirmed and strengthened their self-efficacy beliefs and helped shape their outcome expectations and personal goals.
To attract more African American males to the profession, counselor education programs should be more responsive to the needs of this population. For some participants in this study, intentional responsiveness started with provision of financial support. One participant talked about how financial straits influenced the graduate programs he applied to. Being ensured and provided financial support through a graduate assistantship that covered doctoral tuition is what ultimately led to his decision to pursue the counselor education PhD program. Another participant shared how he had to work several jobs while pursuing doctoral studies to support himself and fund his education. He stated how having to work several jobs may have inhibited opportunities to engage and collaborate with faculty in ways that could have contributed to his career development. There are many students, particularly African American students, who are not aware of the existing financial resources available to them (Castelló et al., 2017; Grinstein-Weiss et al., 2016). It should not be assumed that students know where and how to seek financial support (Castelló et al., 2017; Grinstein-Weiss et al., 2016). Faculty should make themselves knowledgeable about available financial resources (i.e., departmental, institutional, and external) and readily provide this information to all students, especially the African American males (Brooms & Davis, 2017). Another way faculty can provide more proactive, intentional support for African American males is to establish regular check-ins to discuss what they are not getting from their graduate experience and explore what is missing as these aspects influence sense of belonging, persistence, and career intentions (Brooms & Davis, 2017).

The time that must be dedicated to faculty mentorship is a significant barrier for counselor education faculty (Turner et al., 2017). Counselor education faculty, particularly African American male faculty who are sought to serve as mentors for African American male
students, must sacrifice other faculty duties such as conducting research or writing for publication to attend to students’ needs. Consequently, faculty’s level of scholarly productivity and tenure and promotion is compromised (Turner et al., 2017). Counselor education programs should reexamine the criteria for tenure and promotion and develop guidelines that will benefit both African American male students and faculty. Counselor education programs need to ensure that transparent, descriptive, and procedural tenure and promotion guidelines are given to African American male faculty (Turner et al., 2017). Tenure and promotion criteria should be equally weighted and additional demands should be acknowledged and rewarded. In turn, more African American male faculty may have the time to commit to mentoring African American male students. Additionally, African American male faculty may be better able to obtain full tenure at faster rates (Holcomb-McCoy & Adkison-Bradley, 2005).

Counselor education programs should also reexamine their recruitment efforts. Counselor education programs should reach out to other programs that have a diverse student and faculty population and learn about their recruitment strategies (Ju et al., 2020). Building relationships with graduate programs or organizations that serve greater numbers of African American male students, such as those at historically black colleges and universities or African American fraternities, could also help ensure that more African American males are informed about open tenure-track faculty positions in counselor education (Torres, 2019; Ju et al., 2020). Given that most of the participants in the study came from student affairs and other disciplines, counselor education programs should ensure that tenure-track faculty position openings reach African American males in disciplines outside of the counselor education field. Recruitment efforts, including faculty job qualifications, should invite African Americans males with varied
professional backgrounds and experiences to apply to open tenure-track faculty positions in
counselor education (Torres, 2019). This may help attract African American males with less
traditional career paths, expanding the pool of potential candidates.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Though findings from this phenomenological qualitative study offer insight into the lived
experiences of African American male faculty in counselor education and factors that influenced
their career development, more research is warranted to expand the depth and breadth of
knowledge of this population and their career development needs. Replicating this research study
would increase generalizability of findings. Moreover, applying a quantitative approach would
provide statistical data to determine the severity of challenges African American male counselor
education faculty encounter. A quantitative approach could also help measure the effectiveness
of the different sources of self-efficacy beliefs for African American males.

Earlier research studies have explored the experiences of African American faculty as
one monolithic group, overlooking how the intersection of race and gender shape African
American faculty’s experiences. The present study underscores the need to further investigate
differences between the experiences of African American male and female faculty, specifically
regarding their perceptions of institutional climate, collegiality, and challenges in academia.
Exploring differences in American male and female faculty’s response to gendered racism in
academia and the coping strategies they employ to navigate challenges would also be a valuable
contribution to existing literature. Moreover, based on participants’ encounters with gendered
racism in the classroom, it is worth examining faculty and graduate students’ perceptions of
African American male counselor education faculty.
Considering the emphases participants placed on mentorship and establishing a support network, it would be beneficial for future research to employ more focused exploration of how mentorship relationships among African American male students and faculty in counselor education are established, factors that motivate African American male students and faculty to seek mentorship, and factors that keep them from seeking and building mentoring relationships. Such research can help counselor education programs better address the mentoring needs of this population.

**Chapter V Summary**

This chapter reflected on the emerging themes derived from participants' descriptions and interpretations of their experience as African American male faculty in counselor education and factors that influenced their career development. Connections to previous research were made, limitations of the research study were discussed, implications for institutions and counselor education programs were offered, and suggestions for future research were given.

The present study addressed a gap in the literature on the lived experiences of African American male faculty in counselor education. Social Cognitive Career Theory served as a relevant theoretical framework for understanding the impact of contextual and environmental factors on the career development of African American male faculty in counselor education and their ability to balance personal agency while resisting gendered racism and oppression. The influences, needs, and supports participants identified as critical to their success (i.e., mentorship, role models, feedback regarding potential and ability from trusted sources, experiential learning opportunities, a supportive network, collegiality) echoed findings from previous research.
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Appendix A

Email Seeking Permission to Post in the Counselor Education and Supervision Network Listserv (CESNET-L)
Dear Dr. Marty Jencius,

I am writing to seek permission to post an invitation for individuals to take part in a research study titled “Journey to the Professoriate: Exploring the Career Development of African American Male Faculty in Counselor Education.” This study will serve as my dissertation for the requirements of the PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision degree from Western Michigan University.

The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of African American male tenure-track faculty members in counselor education and factors that influenced their career development. Specifically, this study seeks to identify personal, contextual, and cognitive factors that shaped African American male counselor education faculty members’ ability to overcome racial and discriminatory barriers in pursuit of the professoriate. Participants will be asked to complete a 3- to 5-minute demographic questionnaire and provide their age, race, sex, faculty rank, program type, and institution geographic. Participants will also be asked to complete a 3- to 5-minute interview scheduling form and participate in a 45- to 60-minute semi-structured, audio-recorded interview.

The inclusion criteria for this study will require that participants 1) self-identify as male, 2) self-identify as African American, and 3) currently hold a full-time tenure-track faculty position in a counselor education program and have held that position for at least one year.

The research project invitation will explain the purpose of the research project, the procedures to be followed, any foreseeable risks, and precautions that will be taken to ensure confidentiality. There are no direct benefits to participants. Recipients will be informed that their participation is voluntary and that they may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Should you need more information or have any questions or concerns regarding the research study, please contact me at (269) 815-6160 or lacretisha.d.mcdole@wmich.edu, or the principal investigator, Dr. Glinda Rawls, at (269) 387-5108 or glinda.rawls@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Institutional Review Board at (269) 387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at (269) 387-8298.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

LaCretisha McDole, MA, LLPC, NCC
Counselor Education Doctoral Student | Western Michigan University
Department of Counselor Education & Counseling Psychology
lacretisha.d.mcdole@wmich.edu
Appendix B

CESNET-L Recruitment Email
Greetings,

You are invited to participate in a research project titled “Journey to the Professoriate: Exploring the Career Development of African American Male Faculty in Counselor Education.”

**What is the purpose of this study?**
The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of African American male tenure-track faculty members in counselor education and factors that influenced their career development. Specifically, this study seeks to identify personal, contextual, and cognitive factors that shaped African American male counselor education faculty members’ ability to overcome racial and discriminatory barriers in pursuit of the professoriate.

**Who can participate in this study?**
The inclusion criteria for this study will require that participants 1) self-identify as male, 2) self-identify as African American, and 3) currently hold a full-time tenure-track faculty position in a counselor education program and have held that position for at least one year.

**What you will be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?**
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a 3- to 5-minute demographic questionnaire, a 3- to 5-minute interview scheduling form and participate in a 45- to 60-minute semi-structured, audio-recorded interview. Interviews will be conducted either via-telephone or online via WebEx, depending on your preference.

**What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?**
A potential risk of you participating in this study includes you recalling past or present experiences that may cause you to become emotionally upset. This risk will be managed by giving you the opportunity to be momentarily excused from the interview process. You may choose not to respond to a particular question for any reason. You may also choose to discontinue and withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

**What are the benefits of participating in this study?**
There are no direct benefits to participants.

**Is there any compensation for participating in this study?**
There will be no compensation for your participation in this study.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please refer to the hyperlink below to access the e-consent form:

[https://wmich.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8GMfl7y5O32U0VD](https://wmich.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8GMfl7y5O32U0VD)

Should you need more information or have any questions or concerns regarding the research study, please contact me at (269) 815-6160 or lacretisha.d.mcdole@wmich.edu, or the principal
investigator, Dr. Glinda Rawls, at (269) 387-5108 or glinda.rawls@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Institutional Review Board at (269) 387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at (269) 387-8298.

If you know others who might be interested in the study, please share this invitation with them.

Respectfully,

LaCretisha McDole, MA, LLPC, NCC
Counselor Education Doctoral Student | Western Michigan University
Department of Counselor Education & Counseling Psychology
lacretisha.d.mcdole@wmich.edu
Appendix C

Recruitment Email for Individuals Identified on Institution Faculty Directories
Recruitment Email for Individuals Identified on Institution Faculty Directories

Dear [Name of Potential Participant],

I hope this email finds you well. My name is LaCretisha McDole and I am a doctoral student in the Counselor Education and Supervision program at Western Michigan University.

I am writing to ask if you would be willing to participate in my dissertation research study titled “Journey to the Professoriate: Exploring the Career Development of African American Male Faculty in Counselor Education.”

The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of African American male tenure-track faculty members in counselor education and factors that influenced their career development. Specifically, this study seeks to identify personal, contextual, and cognitive factors that shaped African American male counselor education faculty members’ ability to overcome racial and discriminatory barriers in pursuit of the professoriate.

The inclusion criteria for this study will require that participants 1) self-identify as male, 2) self-identify as African American, and 3) currently hold a full-time tenure-track faculty position in a counselor education program and have held that position for at least one year.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a 3- to 5-minute demographic questionnaire, a 3- to 5-minute interview scheduling form and participate in a 45- to 60-minute semi-structured, audio-recorded interview. Interviews will be conducted either via telephone or via WebEx, depending on your preference.

There are no direct benefits to participants. It is hoped that by bringing attention to the career development of African American male faculty in counselor education, this study may motivate and encourage other African American males to consider and pursue the professoriate in counselor education programs.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please refer to the hyperlink below to access the e-consent form:

https://wmich.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8GMf17y5O32U0VD

Should you need more information or have any questions or concerns regarding the research study, please contact me at (269) 815-6160 or lacretisha.d.mcdole@wmich.edu, or the principal investigator, Dr. Glinda Rawls, at (269) 387-5108 or glinda.rawls@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Institutional Review Board at (269) 387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at (269) 387-8298.

If you know others who might be interested in the study, please share this invitation with them.
Respectfully,

LaCretisha McDole, MA, LLPC, NCC  
Counselor Education Doctoral Candidate | Western Michigan University  
Department of Counselor Education & Counseling Psychology  
lacretisha.d.mcdole@wmich.edu
Appendix D

Informed Consent Form
STUDY SUMMARY: This consent form is part of an informed consent process for a research study, and it will provide information that will help you decide whether you want to take part in this study. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. The purpose of the research is to explore the lived experiences of African American male tenure-track faculty members in counselor education and factors that influenced their career development. This research will serve as LaCretisha McDole’s dissertation for the requirements of the PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision degree. If you take part in this study, you will be asked to complete a 3- to 5-minute demographic questionnaire. You will also be asked to complete a 3- to 5-minute interview scheduling form and participate in a 45- to 60-minute semi-structured, audio-recorded interview. Additional time will be required if you choose to review your interview transcript and emerging themes from the data analysis. You will have 14 days to send the researcher any corrections or additions to your interview transcript or emerging themes. Possible risk and costs to you for taking part in the study may be recalling past or present experiences that may cause you to become emotionally upset. There are no direct benefits to participants. Your alternative to taking part in the research study is not to take part in it.

You are invited to participate in this research project titled “Journey to the Professoriate: Exploring the Career Development of African American Male Faculty in Counselor Education” and following information in this consent form will provide more detail about the research study. Please ask any questions if you need more clarification and to assist you in deciding if you wish to participate in the research study. You are not giving up any of your legal rights by agreeing to take part in this research or by signing this consent form. After all of your questions have been answered and the consent document reviewed, if you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign this consent form.

What are we trying to figure out in this study?
The objective of this study is to explore the lived experiences of African American male tenure-track faculty members in counselor education and factors that shaped their career development. It is hoped that their lived experience and career development process may serve as a salient guide and template of success for other African American males to follow.

Who can participate in this study?
The inclusion criteria for this study will require that participants 1) self-identify as male, 2) self-identify as African American, and 3) currently hold a full-time tenure-track faculty position in a counselor education program and have held that position for at least one year.
Individuals will be excluded from participating in this study if they 1) do not self-identify as African American, 2) do not self-identify as male, 3) do not currently hold a full-time tenure-track faculty position in a counselor education program, or 4) have not held a full-time tenure-track faculty position in a counselor education program for at least one year.

Where will this study take place?
The demographic questionnaire will be administered online using Qualtrics survey software. Interviews will be conducted either via telephone or online via WebEx, depending on preference of the participant. If you choose to have your interview conducted via WebEx, you will not need a WebEx account, but you will need to download the software before the interview.

What is the time commitment for participating in this study?
You will be asked to complete a 3- to 5-minute demographic questionnaire. You will also be asked to complete a 3- to 5-minute interview scheduling form and participate in a 45- to 60-minute semi-structured, audio-recorded interview. The interview scheduling form will be online, administered using Qualtrics survey software. Additional time will be required if you choose to review their interview transcript and emerging themes from the data analysis to confirm an authentic portrayal of your experience. Participants will have 14 days to send the researcher any corrections or additions to your interview transcript or emerging themes.

What will you be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?
After agreeing to the informed consent document, you will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire. If you meet eligibility criteria, you will be asked to schedule a 45- to 60-minute semi-structured, audio-recorded interview by completing an interview scheduling form. If you choose to review your interview transcript or emerging themes from data analysis, you will have 14 days to send the researcher any corrections or additions. If the researcher does not receive feedback regarding the interview transcript or emerging themes after 14 days, the researcher will assume that no corrections or additions need to be made and will move on with the study.

What information is being measured during the study?
The interview protocol will be used to identify influences on participants’ decision to pursue a tenure-track faculty position in counselor education. The interview protocol will also be used to identify experiences that prepared participants to navigate any barriers/challenges encountered in pursuit of a tenure-track faculty position in counselor education.

What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?
A risk of participating in this study may include recalling past or present experiences that cause emotional upset. This risk will be managed by giving you the opportunity to be momentarily excused from the interview process. You may choose not to respond to a particular question for any reason. You may also choose to discontinue and withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?
There are no direct benefits to participants.
Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?
There are no costs to participating in this study, although you will be asked to volunteer your time to complete a 3- to 5-minute demographic questionnaire, a 3- to 5-minute interview scheduling form, and a 45- to 60-minute semi-structured, audio-recorded interview. Additional time will be required if you choose to review your interview transcript and emerging themes from the data analysis to confirm an authentic portrayal of your experience.

Is there any compensation for participating in this study?
There will be no compensation for your participation in this study.

Who will have access to the information collected during this study?
Any information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. The principal investigator, Dr. Glinda Rawls, and the student investigator, LaCretisha McDole, will be the only individuals with access to any of the collected data. Participant anonymity and confidentiality will be safeguarded by assigning participants pseudonyms and removing any other identifiable information. All data will be stored and analyzed on a private computer, securely protected with both a login password to the computer and research files. Interviews conducted and recorded via WebEx will be stored in researcher’s password protected WebEx account. Researchers will maintain research data for a period of at least 3 years after the study has ended. After the 3-year period, all information will be destroyed. Results from this study will be included in a dissertation manuscript and may be shared in the form of scholarly presentations and/or publications in counselor education or counseling related journals. In all cases, participants’ identity will not be revealed.

What will happen to my information or biospecimens collected for this research project after the study is over?
After information that could identify you has been removed, de-identified information collected for this research may be used by or distributed to investigators for other research without obtaining additional informed consent from you.

What if you want to stop participating in this study?
You may stop participating in this study at any time for any reason, even after your interview is complete. You will not be subjected to any prejudice or penalty for your decision to stop your participation. You will experience NO consequences either academically or personally if you choose to withdraw from this study. The investigator can also decide to stop your participation in the study without your consent.

Should you have any questions prior to or during the study, you can contact the principal investigator, Dr. Glinda Rawls, at (269) 387-5108 or glinda.rawls@wmich.edu or the student investigator, LaCretisha McDole, at (269) 815-6160 or lacretisha.d.mcdole@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Institutional Review Board at (269) 387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at (269) 387-8298.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Western Michigan University Institutional Review Board (WMU IRB) as indicated by the stamped date and
signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is older than one year.

I have read this informed consent document. The risks and benefits have been explained to me. I agree to take part in this study.

______________________________________________________________________________

Please Print Your Name

______________________________________________________________________________

Participant’s signature                  Date
Appendix E

Demographic Questionnaire
Demographic Questionnaire

Thank you for your interest in participating in the research study titled “Journey to the Professoriate: Exploring the Career Development of African American Male Faculty in Counselor Education”. This demographic questionnaire should take approximately three to five minutes to complete. Responses will be reviewed by the researcher to determine your eligibility to participate in this study. Your responses will be kept confidential.

Demographic Information

- Please provide your name.

- What is your gender?
  - Male
  - Female
  - Transgender
  - Prefer not to answer

- Do you self-identify as African American?
  - Yes
  - No

- What is your age?
  - 20 – 29 years old
  - 30 – 39 years old
  - 40 – 49 years old
  - 50 – 59 years old
  - 60 – 69 years old
  - 70 years old or older

- Were you born in the United States?
  - Yes
  - No (If no, where were you born?)

- Were you raised in the United States?
  - Yes
  - No (If no, where were you raised?)

Institution Information

- How many years have you been in the professoriate?
  - Less than one year
  - 1-5 years
  - 5-10 years
  - 10 or more years
• How long after graduating with your doctoral degree did you secure a tenure-track faculty position?
  o Less than one year
  o 1-5 years
  o 5-10 years
  o 10 or more years

• Is your current faculty appointment in a counselor education program?
  o Yes
  o No

• Which of the following best describe your current faculty rank, title, or position?
  o Professor
  o Associate Professor
  o Assistant Professor
  o Instructor
  o Lecturer
  o Other (please specify)

• How long have you been in your current tenure-track position?
  o Less than one year
  o 1-5 years
  o 5-10 years
  o 10 or more years

• How long have you been at your respective college/university?
  o Less than one year
  o 1-5 years
  o 5-10 years
  o 10 or more years

• Location of Institution (Select all that apply)
  o West
  o Midwest
  o Northeast
  o Southwest
  o Southeast
  o Urban Setting
  o Rural Setting
  o Suburban Setting
• Type of Institution (Select all that apply)
  o Predominantly White Institution (PWI)
  o Historically Black College or University (HBCU)
  o Research Intensive
  o Public
  o Private

• What courses have you taught as a tenure-track faculty member? (Select all that apply)
  o Research Methods
  o Group Dynamics and Procedures
  o Tests and Measurements
  o Counseling Techniques
  o Professional Issues and Ethics
  o Multicultural Counseling and Psychology
  o Counseling and Lifespan Development
  o Other (please specify)

• Did you have a mentor during your doctoral program/educational career?
  o Yes
  o No

• Do you currently have a mentor?
  o Yes
  o No

Contact Information
  o Please provide a telephone number that can be used to contact you
  o Please provide an email address that can be used to contact you

Thank you for completing the demographic questionnaire. You will be contacted by the researcher within two business days regarding your eligibility to participate in this study. If you are eligible to participate in this study, you will be asked to schedule a 45- to 60-minute semi-structured, audio-recorded interview by completing the interview scheduling form.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may decline to participate or choose to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

Should you need more information or have any questions or concerns regarding the research study, please contact me at (269) 815-6160 or lacretisha.d.mcdole@wmich.edu, or the principal investigator, Dr. Glinda Rawls, at (269) 387-5108 or glinda.rawls@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Institutional Review Board at (269) 387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at (269) 387-8298. Thank you for your time.
Appendix F

Email to Individuals Not Eligible to Participate in the Study
Dear [Name of Individual Not Eligible to Participate in Study],

Thank you for your interest in participating in the research study titled “Journey to the Professoriate: Exploring the Career Development of African American Male Faculty in Counselor Education.” I appreciate your willingness to volunteer as a participant.

I am writing to inform you that, unfortunately, you do not meet the criteria to participate. Thank you for the time and effort given to complete the questionnaire.

Respectfully,

LaCretisha McDole, MA, LLPC, NCC
Counselor Education Doctoral Student | Western Michigan University
Department of Counselor Education & Counseling Psychology
lacretisha.d.mcdole@wmich.edu
Appendix G

Email to Individuals Eligible to Participate in the Study
Dear [Name of Individual Eligible to Participate in Study],

Thank you for your interest in participating in the research study titled “Journey to the Professoriate: Exploring the Career Development of African American Male Faculty in Counselor Education.”

I am pleased to inform you that you are eligible to participate in this study. Attached to this email is the research study informed consent for your review and retention. Please refer to the hyperlink below to access interview scheduling form:

https://wmich.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_80t9eBh4xfWMWHz

Should you need more information or have any questions or concerns regarding the research study, please contact me at (269) 815-6160 or lacretisha.d.mcdole@wmich.edu, or the principal investigator, Dr. Glinda Rawls, at (269) 387-5108 or glinda.rawls@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Institutional Review Board at (269) 387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at (269) 387-8298.

Respectfully,

LaCretisha McDole, MA, LLPC, NCC
Counselor Education Doctoral Student | Western Michigan University
Department of Counselor Education & Counseling Psychology
lacretisha.d.mcdole@wmich.edu
Appendix H

Interview Scheduling Form
Interview Scheduling Form

Thank you for your interest in participating in the research study titled “Journey to the Professoriate: Exploring the Career Development of African American Male Faculty in Counselor Education”. Please fill out the following form indicating your preferences for the 45- to 60-minutes semi-structured, audio-recorded interview.

- Please indicate your preference for the semi-structured, audio-recorded interview
  - WebEx interview
  - Telephone interview

- Please provide three dates and times you will be available to take part in a semi-structured, audio-recorded interview
  - 
  - 
  - 

- Would you like to review a copy of your interview transcript?
  (Note: If you choose to review your interview transcript, you will have 14 days to send the researcher any corrections or additions. If you do not send any feedback regarding your interview transcript after 14 days, the researcher will assume that no corrections or additions need to be made and will move on with the study)
  - Yes
  - No

- Would you like to review emerging themes from the data analysis?
  (Note: If you choose to review emerging themes from the data analysis, you will have 14 days to send the researcher any corrections or additions. If you do not send any feedback regarding emerging themes from the data analysis after 14 days, the researcher will assume that no corrections or additions need to be made and will move on with the study)
  - Yes
  - No

Thank you for completing the Interview Scheduling form. You will be contacted by the researcher within two business days to confirm your interview date and time.

Should you need more information or have any questions or concerns regarding the research study, please contact me at (269) 815-6160 or lacretisha.d.mcdole@wmich.edu, or the principal investigator, Dr. Glinda Rawls, at (269) 387-5108 or glinda.rawls@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Institutional Review Board at (269) 387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at (269) 387-8298. Thank you for your time.
Appendix I

Interview Protocol
Interview Protocol

1. How did your academic experiences in elementary/middle/high school influence your attitude and beliefs about school and education?
   a. What role did family play in shaping your attitude and beliefs about school and education?
   b. What role did teachers play in shaping your attitude and beliefs about school and education?
   c. What role did peers play in shaping your attitude and beliefs about school and education?

2. What factors and/or life experiences (childhood and/or adulthood) led you to want to pursue a PhD?

3. Please share when and how you learned about the field of counselor education.

4. What factors and/or life experiences (childhood and/or adulthood) do you believe contributed most to you wanting to pursue a tenure-track faculty position in a counselor education program?

5. Prior to becoming a tenure-track faculty member, what (experiences, individuals, information, organizations) shaped your understanding/perception of the role and responsibilities of a tenure-track faculty member in a counselor education program?
   a. Did you have a career role model?
   b. If yes, how did this individual influence your career goals?
   c. If yes, was this individual the same race and/or gender as you?

6. What feedback (negative and/or positive) did you receive from others (i.e., family, peers, mentors, advisors, or educators) regarding your potential and ability to achieve your goal of becoming a tenure-track faculty member in counselor education?
   a. Do you recall experiencing any physical or emotional responses to the feedback you received from others (i.e., joy, numbness, pride, embarrassment, anxiety changes in body temperature or heart rate)?
   b. How did this affect your motivation and career goals?

7. What (experiences, accomplishments/awards, failures/setbacks) reinforced or weakened your confidence in your ability to become a tenure-track faculty member in counselor education?
   a. Do you recall experiencing any physical or emotional responses to the (experience, accomplishments/awards, failures/setbacks) (i.e., joy, numbness, pride, embarrassment, anxiety changes in body temperature or heart rate)?
   b. How did this affect your motivation and career goals?
   c.

8. Are you the only African American male tenure-track faculty member in your program/department?
   a. Are there any other tenure-track faculty members of color in your program/department?
9. Do you have a mentor? If yes, how did you go about establishing a mentor-mentee relationship?

10. What challenges have you encountered as an African American male faculty member in counselor education?

11. What (experiences, people, information) prepared you for the challenges you encounter as an African American male faculty member in counselor education?

12. How do you think your experience as an African American male faculty member differs from the experiences of African American female faculty members?
   a. How does being an African American male impact your relationship with students? Colleagues? The department chair?

13. Describe how recent acts of racism, police brutality, and protests affect you personally and professionally as an African American male?
   a. Please describe any physical or emotional responses to recent acts of racism, police brutality, and protests (anger, increased anxiety, fear, depression, exhaustion, frustration, withdrawal insomnia, or physical health issues such as high blood pressure).
   b. How have the effects of recent acts of racism, police brutality, and protests impacted your interactions with others in and outside of the workplace?

14. Have you ever considered leaving academia? If yes, please state the reasons why you would leave.
   a. What are the reasons you remained in academia?

15. Describe your department’s or program’s strategy for recruiting African American male faculty members.

16. In your opinion, how does the shortage of African American male tenure-track faculty in counselor education impact the field of counseling and counselor education?

17. What advice would you give to African American males interested in pursuing a career as a tenure-track faculty member in counselor education?

18. Is there anything else you feel is important to add about this topic?
Appendix J

Member Check Email
Member Check Email

Dear [Participant Name],

Thank you for participating in a semi-structured interview for the research study titled “Journey to the Professoriate: Exploring the Career Development of African American Male Faculty in Counselor Education.”

I appreciate your willingness to share your experiences as an African American male tenure-track faculty member in counselor education and factors that influenced your career development.

I have attached a copy of your interview transcript. Please review the interview transcript in its entirety to ensure that an authentic portrayal of your experience was captured. Please make any corrections or additions that would further elaborate your experiences. Please do not edit for grammatical corrections. You have 14 days to send any corrections or additions to me. I will be sure to send you a reminder email after seven days. **If you do not send any feedback regarding your interview transcript after 14 days, I will assume that no corrections or additions need to be made and I will move on with the study.**

You may stop participating in this study at any time for any reason, even after your interview is complete. You will not be subjected to any prejudice or penalty for your decision to stop your participation.

Thank you again for your invaluable contributions. It was a pleasure interviewing you.

Should you need more information or have any questions or concerns regarding the research study, please contact me at (269) 815-6160 or lacretisha.d.mcdole@wmich.edu, or the principal investigator, Dr. Glinda Rawls, at (269) 387-5108 or glinda.rawls@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Institutional Review Board at (269) 387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at (269) 387-8298.

Respectfully,

LaCretisha McDole, MA, LLPC, NCC
Counselor Education Doctoral Student | Western Michigan University
Department of Counselor Education & Counseling Psychology
lacretisha.d.mcdole@wmich.edu
Appendix K

Member Check Email Reminder
Member Check Email Reminder

Dear [Participant Name],

Thank you for participating in a semi-structured interview for the research study titled “Journey to the Professoriate: Exploring the Career Development of African American Male Faculty in Counselor Education.”

This is a friendly reminder to please send any corrections or additions to your interview transcript by [deadline]. If you do not send any feedback by [deadline], I will assume that no corrections or additions need to be made and I will move on with the study.

You may stop participating in this study at any time for any reason, even after your interview is complete. You will not be subjected to any prejudice or penalty for your decision to stop your participation.

Thank you again for your invaluable contributions. It was a pleasure interviewing you.

Should you need more information or have any questions or concerns regarding the research study, please contact me at (269) 815-6160 or lacretisha.d.mcdole@wmich.edu, or the principal investigator, Dr. Glinda Rawls, at (269) 387-5108 or glinda.rawls@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Institutional Review Board at (269) 387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at (269) 387-8298.

Respectfully,

LaCretisha McDole, MA, LLPC, NCC
Counselor Education Doctoral Student | Western Michigan University
Department of Counselor Education & Counseling Psychology
lacretisha.d.mcdole@wmich.edu
Appendix L

HSIRB Approval
Date: November 10, 2020

To: Glinda Rawls, Principal Investigator
LaCretisha McDole, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: IRB Project Number 20-10-21

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project titled “Journey to the Professoriate: Exploring the Career Development of African American Male Faculty in Counselor Education” has been approved under the expedited category of review by the Western Michigan University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note: This research may only be conducted exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes to this project (e.g., add an investigator, increase number of subjects beyond the number stated in your application, etc.). Failure to obtain approval for changes will result in a protocol deviation.

In addition, if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the IRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

A status report is required on or prior to (no more than 30 days) November 9, 2021 and each year thereafter until closing of the study.

When this study closes, submit the required Final Report found at [https://wmich.edu/research/forms](https://wmich.edu/research/forms)

Note: All research data must be kept in a secure location on the WMU campus for at least three (3) years after the study closes.