Running head: CAREER COUNSELING LATINAS

Career Counseling Latinas: Enhancing Career Services for Latinas on Campus

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Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures

Abstract

Latinas on campus have a very distinct need when it comes to career decision-making processes. The present study examines the ways in which Latinas make career decisions and attempts to enhance their career self-efficacy through peer group career counseling. The existing literature about Latinas and careers was discussed and their values, cultural beliefs, and traditions were analyzed. Results of a psychoeducational intervention using non-directive counseling were included. The limitations and implications for further studies were discussed.

Career Counseling Latinas: Enhancing Career Services for Latinas on Campus

Introduction

For centuries, women have been seen as second-class citizens (Portales, 2000). This reality is even more salient among women of color, including Latinas (Garza, 2001). Latinas have been present in the United States from the beginning of US history. They were the Mexicans, and indigenous people settled in the western parts of the US. History depicts Latinas as docile, complacent, and weak creatures, dependent on her *macho* (man) to take care of her (Garza, 2001; Zambrana, 1982). Latinas have been more recently characterized as a resilient, hard-working, strong-willed, and determined group (French & James, 1997). They are the head of households, and most recently, the sole caretakers of the family. Moreover, Latinas have contributed a great deal to the building of this nation and the reclaiming of women's rights (Garza, 2001; Gil & Vazquez, 1997; Suarez-Orozco & Páez, 2002).

Nonetheless, Latinas have long suffered the effects of sexism, classism, and racism due to their double status in this White male-dominated society: that of being a woman and being of color (Garza, 2001). Women tend to be the recipients of left-over success that insinuates their inferiority. Over the years, women have had to fight two or three times as hard to get ahead in this society (Browne, 1999). For Latinas, reality sets in when the desire to challenge preconceived notions of gender and social roles is contrary to their cultural and familial values.

From the onset of history women have been raped, ostracized, dominated, and isolated from the world outside by the Anglo *conquistadores* (conquerors) (Gil & Vazquez, 1997). Historically, women have gone from being daughters to being wives and mothers. There was no space for education and having a career, especially for the Latina. In recent decades, however,

the role of Latinas have evolved as more women go out into the workforce, graduate college, become heads of household and have less children (Gil & Vazquez, 1997).

As mentioned previously, Latinas have suffered a great plight since the conquest of Mexican land by Americans. This plight began with the treatment of Mexican women as property. Unlike the women in the East, in the early 1800's Latinas in the then Mexican territory had the same rights as men to own and/or inherit property (Garza, 2001). For many Anglo men, this was an opportunity, as they were to benefit if they married the wealthy daughters of Latino landowners. For years, Latinas tried in vain to seek help from churches and the more elite Latinos (Garza, 2001); however, these elites usually supported the white conquerors in a quest to protect themselves. This history is one that is not mentioned in history books, because most Latinas then were illiterate and could not write their account of the events during the American conquest of Mexico. During this time, that trend of untold history and inequality was evolving and is still persistent in today's society including Latinos from all over Latin America, Mexico and the Caribbean.

In 1998, Latinas comprised 49 percent of the Latino population and 10.6 percent of the US females (Salgado de Snyder, 1999). These numbers have had a slight increase in 2004 with the total percentage of women in the US staying high above men at 51.1 percent (US Census, 2004). There are over 20 million Latinas in the United States (Elliot, 2005). With these figures, the government is hard-pressed to continue ignoring the needs of Latinas as a strong contributing group to US economy.

Many variables have contributed to the role of Latinas in the United States not only as consumers, but as providers of services and perspectives that have shaped the United States as an industrialized society. Some of these variables include culture, family, education, gender roles,

and socio-economic status of Latinas. These variables can assist sociologists, social analysts, and psychotherapists as imperative tools for further study on the resiliency and self-efficacy of Latinas.

Review of the Literature

The present study focuses on the experience of the Latina in the United States as it relates to career self-efficacy and decision-making. In the following sections, critical definitions will be provided. Also, studies and literature focusing on the Latino experience in the United States will be discussed in detail. This review of literature will begin with demographic information about Latinos and their growing numbers in the United States. It will also look at the different variables that have contributed to the culture of Latinas in the US and how these variables have shaped their career decision-making processes as well as self-efficacy, career counseling and group work with Latinas will be examined from a literary perspective. Finally, implications for further studies affecting the career progress of Latinas in the United States will be provided.

Definitions

Throughout this study the words Latinos, Latino and Latina, will be used extensively in reference to the specific population being observed. For the purpose study, the word Latinos refers to the entire ethnic population, whether female or male. The word Latino will refer to the males and the word Latina/s will refer to the females.

Ethnic Demographics

Latinos in the United States have seen a slow increase in educational attainment and career related success since the late 1970s (Del Pinal & Singer, 1997; Poblete, 2003). In order to understand how Latinos make decisions about career, an understanding of the social, political, economic, and cultural context from which Latinos have emerged is necessary. The Latino in the

United States has a unique set of characteristics that is not easily understood by simply reading books, but by immersing oneself into this rich soirée of cultures and ethnic backgrounds. For career counselors, it is extremely important to understand the context of Latinos in order to help them make efficient decisions about careers (Peterson & Cortéz González, 2000).

In recent years, studies have been done striving to understand and enlightened the mass culture about Latinos (Davis, 2000; Poblete, 2003; Shorris, 1992; Suárez-Orozco & Páez, 2002). Many colleges and universities in the United States have developed and implemented programs specifically for the study of Latinos, Hispanics, or Latino Americans (Poblete, 2003). These programs were implemented as a result of the growing demands from Latinos to be taken into account and have their histories and cultural perspectives reflected in academia (Poblete, 2003). Some of the first programs to emerge out of this movement for civil liberty and social justice were the Program for Chicano Studies, founded by Rodolfo Acuña at California State University, Northridge, and the Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College, CUNY (Poblete, 2003). As the years have passed, demographics have changed and a diversification of social ethnic groups has evolved to include Central Americans and Caribbean islanders in the pool of Latino immigrants (Suárez-Orozco & Páez, 2002). This has created a greater demand for more cultural inclusion of groups other than Mexicans or Puerto Ricans in the study of Latinos. Torres (2003), points out that there has continuously been a "lumping" of individuals into a generalized definition of Latinos, without taking into account that there is a vast difference between a Mexican migrant worker and an Argentinean elite. Social inequalities can and most often have a differential outcome for different groups of a racial minority.

The changing trend of Latinos has a direct effect on career decision making processes, as every culture within the Latino population may have different values, beliefs, and traditions.

Unequivocally, one of the only characteristics that Latinos have in common across the board is their use of language: Spanish. However, generalizing the ability of Latinos to communicate linguistically can be dangerous due in part to the many dialects each country/region may use. In essence, the experience of Latinos in the United States is one of diversity in every aspect of their lives. In order to increase the career self-efficacy of Latinos, career counselors must have an open mind and work with every aspect of their experience in the United States.

In the year 2000, there were over 35 million Latinos in the United States (Davis, 2000; Marotta & Garcia, 2003). Until that time, African Americans were the majority among minority groups. But it was estimated that Latinos were going to become the majority minority group shortly thereafter (Suarez-Orozco and Paéz, 2002). In New York City, Latinos are the second largest ethno-racial group and in many cities of the state of California, Latinos are the majority (Davis, 2000). Today, Latinos are the fastest growing minority group in the United States (Marotta & Garcia, 2003) with an estimated 43.1 million Latinos (US Census, 2005); however, literature about this population has is scarce, especially in the area of career development. There is plenty of literature and studies on topics affecting Mexican-Americans, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans (Marotta & Garcia, 2003; Paulin, 2001); however, the phenomenon of the Latino encompasses many more cultures and countries. There are very few studies that include the perspective and experiences of these different cultures as separate and unique experiences in and of themselves.

Education

Latinos have been an increasingly important part of the economic and industrial development of the United States, but the statistics show that Latinos have one of the lowest attendance and graduation rates in higher education. According to Valdivieso and Davis (1988),

Latinos have been disadvantaged and handicapped by low levels of education and ethnic discrimination. Furthermore, they stated that the growing increase of the Latino population in the United States presents many challenges to US policy makers, mostly in education, job training, and welfare. Valdivieso and Davis (1988) pointed out that unless Latinos increase their education and job skills, the quality and future of the U.S. labor market will be in great danger. This report was written over ten years ago, and today, this demographic seems more real than ever. With Latinos comprising the largest minority group in the United States, analysts are seeing the impact that Latinos have on the job market and the economy (Paulin, 2001).

School age Latinos comprise the majority of enrolled students in elementary and middle schools; however, the percentage of Latinos graduating high school and/or college is the lowest of all racial ethnicities (Poblete, 2003; Suarez-Orozco & Paéz, 2002; del Pinal & Singer, 1997; Valdivieso & Davis, 1988; Ceballo, 2004). For immigrant children, the pressure to acculturate quickly to Americanism has contributed to the low success rates of Latinos in education. According to Moll and Ruiz (2002), there is a sense of appreciation for their host country and a need to acculturate among immigrant Latinos that demands a great deal of adjustment on their part (Suarez-Orozco and Paéz, 2002). More recently, the push to eliminate bilingual education from schools is evidence that those in power want to push an academic agenda that is detrimental to the educational success of Latinos in this country (Cashman, 2006). Moreover, this push for a monolingual education distinctively advertises the English language as superior than others and serves as a catalyst for the shedding of the Latino identity, securing an intense failure rate among Latinos in education (Cashman, 2006).

Contrary to the statistics regarding their representation in K-12 schools, Latinos are underrepresented in institutions of higher education (Garcia, 2004). In 2000, only 11 percent of

the college population was of Latino descent (Chapa, 2002). This number was expected to

increase to 15 percent in the next 15 years; however, with the end of affirmative action in many

states, which allowed students to get admitted into selected public institutions, there is decreased

hope in reaching this number (Chapa, 2002). As reported on the US Census Report, only 12%

percent of Latinos have a bachelor's degree or higher (US Census 2004). Latinos are among the

most segregated in schools, making their educational attainment a farfetched dream (Orfield &

Lee, 2006). Language and cultural differences make for an undesirable situation among school

administrators and causes college-bound Latinos to be shortchanged (Orfield & Lee, 2006).

Likewise, the poorer the school district, the less likely students are to receive college preparatory

courses and other aides (Chapa, 2002).

In this day and age, education is the door to higher income and success in corporate America.

Years ago, it was possible to obtain a good paying job with just a high school education;

however, as time elapses, postsecondary education has gained increased validity and is preferred

in most blue-collar jobs of today's industrialized and technological society (Salter, 1995;

Cunningham, 2004). With Latinos' educational attainment postsecondary on the decline, this

population is seemingly marginalized in the Anglo-dominated America.

Across the board, women outnumber men in college. As of 1998, Latinas have a two percent

advantage over Latinos in regards to the number that have completed a four-year college

education or higher (Marotta & Garcia, 2003; Gloria, Castellanos & Orozco, 2005). This,

however, is not consistent with the earning and employment ratio of men over women.

According to Marotta and Garcia (2003), there continues to be a difference between the earning

power of men and women despite the higher number of women completing a college education.

Similarly, although Latinas have a higher percentage of college graduation than Latinos, there is

still a lower percentage of Latinas completing college than their African American and White counterparts (Gloria et al, 2005).

Earning a higher education degree can increase the earning potential of Latinas by up to 82% according to Gloria et al. (2005), making the attainment of a college degree a very important goal for Latinas. In their research, however, Gloria et al. (2005) found that there are numerous variables affecting the educational success of Latinas in college. Namely, some of these variables are lack of finances, inhospitable college campuses, lack of role models and mentors, lower familial support and higher demands from family, and cultural stereotypes.

Often times, Latinas attending college are first generation students dealing with the demands of a culturally different environment, making their adaptation harder and more stressful. Without the support of family members who understand the perils and anguish unique to Latina students, staying focus becomes a battle between good and evil. Similarly, Latinas may encounter other stressors such as familial demands and lack of support, especially for students who leave the home to go away to college (Gloria et al., 2005). Added to this, are the issues of alienation, discrimination, sexism, and classism encountered by Latinas in predominantly white college campuses (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001). Studies have found that Latinas who have a positive sense of self, resiliency, and self-efficacy, had a greater chance of succeeding and completing college (Gloria, Castellanos, Lopez & Rosales, 2005). With this in mind, it is important to help Latinas deal with the variables affecting their career self-efficacy in order to ensure successful and effective career choices.

Culture

Gil and Vazquez (1997) contended that Latinas face a "profound clash between women's expectations here (US) and in their country" (p. 2). These expectations come mainly from family

and cultural values which differentiate from the more independent and less family oriented values of the United States (Gloria et al., 2005). For the most part, it is hard to differentiate culture from family values, as often they are the same. It is doubly hard for Latinas to make their own decisions and strive to be their own person without going against their cultural heritage and offending cultural and familial traditions (Gil & Vazquez, 1997).

The cultural tradition of women staying in the home while the men earn money has a long standing in Latino culture that just now is being challenged by new generations of Latinas going out into the workforce and making it in traditionally male-dominated careers (Phyllis & Stephen, 2004).

The idea of *machismo* (manliness) is still pervasive in today's society, although many do not see it as negatively as mainstream society makes it seem (Gil & Vazquez, 1997). Although detrimental to the development of Latinas as independent, self-assertive, and successful women in the workforce, machismo in a parent's eye is a way of protecting the child from the harms of the world and the disillusionment they fear the child may encounter (Taylor, 2005).

Marianismo similarly is defined as the ideal role of a woman: submissive, self-sacrificing, caring for others without caring for the self (Gil & Vazquez, 1997). It is to be in the likeness of the Virgin Mary and serve without ever thinking of the self. This is in essence, putting the men always first and silencing one's own desires and needs. *Marianismo* is the reciprocating half of machismo, in which women perpetrate and define the role of their sex in the ideals of men.

Gil and Vazquez (1997) consequently came up with the Ten Commandments of *Marianismo*, which delineate all of the things that Latinas should not do in order to stay within the respectable status of their cultural and familial tenets. These are:

1- Do not forget a woman's place.

2- Do not forsake tradition.

3- Do not be single, self-supporting, or independent-minded.

4- Do not put your own needs first.

5- Do not wish for more in life than being a housewife.

6- Do not forget that sex is for making babies- not for pleasure.

7- Do not be unhappy with your man or criticize him for infidelity, gambling, verbal and physical abuse, alcohol or drug abuse.

8- Do not ask for help.

9- Do not discuss personal problems outside the home.

10- Do not change those things which make you unhappy that you can realistically change.

Today, the world where men protected women in exchange for total loyalty and submission, no longer exists. The tenets of *marianismo* still exist (Cofresi, 1999; Frebert & Miranda, 1998), without the afforded protection of always having someone to take care of the female and provide the basic necessities as a human being.

Intermingling two seemingly different cultures can be a difficult task for Latinas. In the quest to succeed in the Anglo-dominated society of the United States, Latinas have to struggle with their own cultural identity and that of the dominant culture (Cofresi, 1999; Frebert & Miranda, 1998; Gil & Vazquez, 1997). Staying loyal to their family's culture is an ever present principle affecting their own perception of success (Niemann, Romero, & Arbona, 2000). Latinas may perceive their going to college as a threat to their involvement within their community and family. Niemann, Romero, and Arbona's (2000) research, however, found that although Latinas experience a hard time balancing a bicultural identity, they seem to have a continue desire to be part of their ethnic community and have a social network consisting of their peers.

Family

    Traditionally, Latinos tend to be very family-oriented, opting to keep close ties with family

members outside the nuclear family (Prosser & Mejia, 2001). There is a collective identity

among Latino families in which everyone has responsibility for the well being of the family and

community (Battle, 2002; Gomez, Cooke, Fassinger, Prosser & Mejia, 2001). In recent years,

however, there has been a growing trend of one-parent homes, divorced families, and an even

greater number who opt to marry later (Del Pinal & Singer, 1997). Del Pinal and Singer (1997),

point out that some of the reasons for this change in trend are due in part to shifts in social

norms, and changes in the economy. In order to understand this growing change it is imperative

to discuss the family dynamics of Latinos and the changes that have affected these dynamics.

    According to Marotta and Garcia's research (2003), Latinos as a group tend to be married,

comprising the largest group among married minorities. The US Census 2005 report found that

out of 13, 007 Latino men surveyed, 51.6 percent were married once, and of that percentage 43.2

percent remained married. Similarly, out of 12,545 Latina women surveyed, 61 percent were

married once, and 44 percent were still married. It is estimated that as of 2004, 67 percent of

Latino families in the US consist of married couples (US Census, 2005).

    Conversely, divorce among Latinos is less frequent than in Anglo and other ethnic groups

(except Asians), due in part to deep religious beliefs of Latinos (US Census Bureau, 2005). The

US Census 2001 report found that of those men surveyed, 12.7 percent were divorced and only 6

percent remained divorced. As far as women, of the number surveyed, 15.9 percent were

divorced, and 8.9 percent remained divorced. The percentages for women are slightly higher than

those of men. This may be due to the increase number of women going out into the workforce

and being able to provide for their families without depending on the man being the breadwinner (Cinamon, 2006).

The idealism of family is greatly valued among Latinos. Family is the first line of support, as Gomez et al (2001) suggest in their research. It is common for children to think of their parents before making any decisions. Emotional support and encouragement from family members is an integral part of raising children in a Latino family (Gloria, Castellanos, Lopez & Rosales, 2005). Many first generation Latinos come from families with limited or no educational background; however (Mina, Cabrales, Juarez, & Rodriguez-Vasquez, 2004), the resiliency and hard-working characteristics of Latino families help inculcate a desire to succeed and do better among Latino children (Martinez, 2003).

Nonetheless, as Cabrera and Padilla (2004) pointed out, familial aspirations for the success of students is not enough to secure that success. Other social demands and obstacles influence the success rate of Latinos both in education and in the employment field. Ceballo (2004) pointed out that although Latino parents tend to be more supportive and rate education and academic achievement higher than their European American counterparts, Latino parents are often ill equipped to help their children succeed in schools. This is mainly due to the lack of formal education, language barriers, and long work hours that hinder their ability to help their children with academic work (Taylor, 2005).

La familia (the family) is the most important part of Latinos; therefore, *familismo* (familism) is one of the most important values among Latino cultures (Santiago-Rivera, 2003). As mentioned earlier, Latinos tend to grow up with a sense of collectivism. Individual matters are treated as family matters. According to Santiago-Rivera (2003), loyalty, reciprocity, and solidarity among family members take center stage for Latinos. These values have been passed

down from generation to generation and despite the changing times and/or geographical

placement, they are very much a part of life today (Gil & Vasquez, 1997; Gomez et al, 2001).

For women, being part of a family, means being obedient, respecting authority, and putting the

well being of everyone in the family before their own (Gomez et al., 2001). It is almost

impossible to explore any topic relevant to Latinas without exploring the institution of family.

　　In traditional Latino families, the father is the breadwinner and the mother the homemaker.

The father is the one *con los pantalones* (wearing the pants), which means that he makes all

decisions in the house and everyone is to adhere to these (Taylor, 2005). Conversely, when there

is no male figure in the home, the mother becomes the father, and is pushed into a patriarchal

role, where her demeanor and childrearing model is much like the male parent (Taylor, 2005).

Due to the structure and traditions of Latino families, women tend to be strong and resilient

individuals, despite their meekness and lack of assertiveness when it comes to family. Although

the father is the enforcer of cultural and family traditions/values, the mother is the transmitter,

making sure that children are always conformant and follow the rules (Gomez et al., 2001).

　　Latinas are responsible for maintaining the unity of the family and putting out fires (Salgado

de Snyder, 1999). If there is a disagreement in the family, the mother or female caretaker has to

be the mediator while always being on the male's side. They are not allowed to be prideful, as

this is the men's job. If there is strife in the family, it is their responsibility to fix it. This might

explain why mothers in Latino families tend to be the first sources of support for Latina college

students, as Gloria et al (2005) found in their research on the well-being of Latinas.

　　Although the nuclear family consists of father, mother, and children, there is a strong

emphasis on extended family (Torres, 2004). More often than not, Latino family members tend

to live in close proximity to one another. The family extends to not only grandparents, aunt,

uncles, and cousins, but also neighbors, adoptive aunts/uncles (close family friends with no relation), and most importantly, godparents (Gil and Vasquez, 1997; Gloria et al., 2005; Torres, 2004). The idea of *padrinos* (godparents) has been around for centuries. Traditionally, the godparents share the childrearing responsibilities with parents, and usually take the place of the parents should something happen to them (Torres, 2004). Each child could have different sets of godparents, making the extended family larger. It is common for a non-Latino to attend a small family gathering in a Latino household, and more than thirty close family members in attendance. The following story, taken from the book, *The Maria Paradox: How Latinas can merge old world traditions with new world self-esteem*, illustrates this point:

"I'm so embarrassed, I'm mortified!" exclaimed Rosario, a twenty-five-year-old second-generation Dominican living in New York. "I wish I could ship my entire family back to Santo Domingo right now! Today! How could they do this to me? How could they put me in this position?"

Through her job with a Wall Street firm, Rosario had met a young American investment banker named Jeff and they'd been dating for six months. Her family, who were extremely traditional, especially where *gringos* (Anglos) were concerned, had been demanding to meet Jeff. Finally, feeling the relationship was going well and had a future, Rosario consented.

When Rosario and Jeff arrived at her parents' house the night of the visit, they were greeted by a crowd consisting of not only her mother, father, brother, and sisters, but also countless aunts, uncles, cousins, and family friends who may or may not have been distant relatives. Jeff shook the hand of Rosario's father and brother and nodded politely to the rest of the crew- correct social behavior to him. How was he supposed to know that everyone in the room expected a hand-shake and/or a personal greeting? (p. 20)

This is a prime example of various family values within the Latino culture. First, children, especially daughters, are expected to introduce the people they date to the family. Parents feel the duty to protect their children at all times, even after the child has reached adulthood. Second, Latinos, much like other ethnic groups, are skeptical about the phenomenon of dating outside one's race. Being a second generation Latina in the US, Rosario was caught in the middle of two worlds, that of her parents and family, and that of the more liberal and independent mainstream society. Yet a third value evident here is that of moral and traditional upbringing. In most Latino cultures, the people greet each other with kisses and hugs, even when meeting for the first time. Jeff's and the family's ignorance about each other's culture put the two at odds, leaving Rosario in the middle. Still, more importantly here is that Rosario bringing a man home was a family event. Everyone had to be there and give their opinion about her date. This is very common among Latinos (Gil and Vasquez, 1977; Torres, 2004).

Often times, second generation children have to learn to be bicultural in order to succeed in a country dominated by a mainstream Anglo-Saxon society (Torres, 2003). This is especially true of Latinas because they have to live in two worlds that demand a great deal from them (Romero, Hondagneu-Sotelo & Ortiz, 1997; Torres, 2003). Daughters have the responsibility of helping the mother with household chores, be responsive to the needs of the family, including extended family, and help the family financially as well (Romero, Hondagneu-Sotelo & Ortiz, 1997; Torres, 2003). All this is added to the stress of doing better, being better, and providing a better future for generations to come.

Gender roles

Latina women in the U.S. receive mixed messages about the role of females in this society (Cinamon, 2006; Hernandez & Morales, 1999; Weiler, 1997). Many of these messages stem

from family and cultural traditions. According to Gomez et al. (2001), in Latino families, women are supposed to look after the family, respect authority, and be obedient. Traditionally, the goal of women in Latino culture was to marry and have children (Gil and Vasquez, 1997). Nowadays, women are getting educated, going out into the workforce, marrying at a much later age, and even choosing not to have children. In the Latino culture this is a sign of not being complete as Gomez et al. (2001) suggested in their research.

Santiago-Rivera (2003), pointed out that traditional gender role socialization is deep rooted in the concepts of *machismo* and *marianismo*, which were previously described. For newly migrated Latino families, traditional gender roles are perpetuated within the stereotypical definitions of what a male and female should be, however, the more assimilated and acculturated a person is, the more these gender roles change (Quimby, 2004). For Latinos born outside of the United States, traditional gender roles are more salient than for Latinos born in the United States or second generation Latinos (Santiago-Rivera, 2003). Likewise, the more educated Latinas were, the less they endorsed stereotypical gender roles (Salgado de Snyder, 1999). For Latinas who experience equal male-female role attitudes, there is a positive effect on self-esteem, self-image, academic achievement, and career aspirations (Romo, 1998). This attitude may be a result of higher acculturation among Latinas in the U.S.

Studies have shown that Latinas in families that support traditional gender roles and resist acculturation tend to be steered towards less competitive and traditionally female occupied careers (Romo, 1998; Gomez et al, 2001; Santiago-Rivera, 2003). According to Romo (1998), a large percentage of Latinas dropped out of high school citing pregnancy and/or marriage as the reason for leaving school in a study done by the Academy for Educational Development. Familial and cultural values are still significant among Latinos today, making success efforts by

educated and acculturated Latinas harder to accomplish (Romo, 1998; Gomez et al, 2001; Santiago-Rivera, 2003).

Language

A high percentage of Latinos come from monolingual (Spanish-speaking) homes (Cabrera & Padilla, 2004). As a result, most children learn English in school and by listening to English television or radio (Cabrera & Padilla, 2004). There is an increased percentage of the total population speaking Spanish in the home. According to Marotta and Garcia (2003), there was a 3.2 percent increase from 1990 to 2000. Among the states with the largest percentages of Spanish speaking homes are California, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Florida, and New York (Marotta & Garcia, 2003). Not surprisingly, theses states have the largest numbers of Latinos residing in the US (US Census, 2005).

With this increase, the question of bilingualism in education and the workforce is more relevant than ever. The push to officially declare English as the only language used in education will greatly affect the outcome of educational and career success attainment for Latinos in the US. In recent years, the US has seen a greater demand for bilingual employees, due mainly in part to the changing demographics of consumers, who are largely of Latino descent (Ardila, 2005). Nevertheless, even when Latinos fluently communicate in both languages, there is a preference for the mainstream language, English (McCollum, 1999). A result of this preference and a direct effect on Latinos, is the growing trend of Latinos speaking Spanglish (a coding and/or transformation of the English and Spanish languages commonly used among US Latinos), which enables Latinos from different countries to communicate in a common form (Ardila, 2005; Cabrera & Padilla, 2004).

Being able to communicate in two languages is something of an advantage for generations of Latinos here in the United States (Cabrera & Padilla, 2004); however, it can also be seen as added pressure for children of non-English speaking parents. In many instances, children of non-English speaking parents have to serve as translators for their parents in everyday life situations. This in turn can create a situation in which the child is forced to grow quicker than his/her age merits because of the responsibility to learn adult communication. This is a double-edge sword. On the one hand, children learn to be self-sufficient and responsible (Cabrera & Padilla, 2004), preparing them for the obstacles to come later on in life, but on the other hand, they lose out on the simplicity of being a child.

In their study of two Mexican-American students, Cabrera and Padilla (2004) cited both the negative and positive effects that growing in a non-English speaking family can have on bilingual children. They wrote that, while many children are still preoccupied with toys and play, many Latino children have to learn about "contract negotiation and medicine while concurrently enriching their abilities in two languages" (p. 158). These children learned to stand on their own and learned both "social and cognitive" (p.158) understanding of the world around them.

Career

Latinas are one of the fastest growing groups of women working outside the home in the United States (Gomez et al, 2001). Research shows that career development of Latinas is influenced by variables that include "sociopolitical, cultural, contextual, and personal variables" (Gomez et al, p. 286). Women have gone from being housewives dedicated to their family and household responsibilities, to being entrepreneurs and successful career women (Gomez et al, 2001; Quimby, 2004). Through movements such as the civil rights and women's movement,

traditional gender roles were challenged, and women began to work outside the home (Barnett, 2005).

In recent decades, women have started to challenge the idea that they should not pursue male-dominated careers (Barnett, 2005); however, there is still a disproportionate distribution of jobs between males and females, especially among minority groups (Reyes, Kobus, and Gillock, 1999). Obstacles faced by Latinas can have a direct effect on career aspirations and goal-setting. According to Weiler (1997), unemployment rates are higher for African American women and Latinas than for White females and men of all ethnic/racial backgrounds. This is so despite the higher number of Latinas graduating with a college degree.

According to Browne (1999), the majority of studies investigating the relationship between race and employment trends focus on the disadvantages for males, specifically the black male. Usually, the growing issues concerning the career development of women of color, or lack thereof, centers around the absence of a male wage earner and welfare reforms (Browne, 1999). The focus on men and their career aspirations accounts for the lack of studies about the career development of women. Regardless of race or ethnic background, women typically earn fewer wages than men, making the gap a gender issue, rather than a race issue (Reyes, Kobus, and Gillock, 1999).

There is an obvious lack of research in the area of career concerning women, especially Latinas (Salgado de Snyder, 1999). For centuries, Latinas stayed home and took care of the family. However, with increased immigration, Latino family found both parents going out into the workforce, forcing Latinas to leave the home and help the family financially (Browne, 1999; Garza, 2001; Suarez-Orozco and Paéz, 2002) while at the same time juggling family. This leads to an interesting idea. Gomez et al. found that Latinas tended to fall into their career paths by

chance, rather than design. Many of them created opportunities in order to survive in a male dominated society (Gomez et al., 2001). Self-efficacy then takes on a new meaning for Latinas. It means survival and it is not easily recognizable for what it is, women having the strength to be successful despite the odds.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is the focus of this research study. According to Brown (1999), self-efficacy beliefs are an important focus of intervention for counselors in the helping professions to assist those who are disadvantaged due to poverty, cultural obstacles, or linguistic barriers succeed. Quimby (2004) suggested that traditionally, women have lacked the confidence "in their ability to succeed academically and to pursue career-related tasks." (p. 34). Women entering college at a later age might be at a particular risk for low levels of confidence (Quimby, 2004). Quimby (2004) stated that it is important to note, however, that the lack of career self-efficacy in Latinas is due in part to the cultural biases and traditions of the Latino experience throughout the centuries. Here again, the idea of machismo and marianismo take hold of what is to become a lifelong struggle for Latinas in the U.S., that of liberating themselves and asserting their right to be value as great contributors to today's technologically advanced society (Cofresi, 1999).

In a society where men are valued as the sole contributors to our educational, political, social, and economic systems, women are marginalized and made lesser beings (Gomez et al., 2001; Weiler, 1997). Arredondo (2002) points out that in schools, children are always asked about their heroes, not heroines, making a salient statement that women do not contribute to our society and are not considered role models to be emulated (p. 315). It is not surprising then that Latinas lack a sense of self-efficacy when it comes to career exploration and later success.

Surprisingly enough, and as mentioned earlier, Latinas have a resiliency that merits further discussion. They are the mothers, daughters, aunts, grandmothers who thrive despite deplorable economic and patriarchal conditions. Latinas are the driving force behind families (Gil and Vasquez, 1997; Salgado de Snyder, 1999). There have always been great Latina figures in history making strides for the liberation and empowerment of women, however, rarely are these women written about or talked about in literature (Salgado de Snyder, 1999). One such personality, as Arredondo mentions in her article is Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz. Sor Juana was a nun in early 1600 Mexico who dedicated her life to challenging social norms and traditional gender roles. She was a controversial personality and received much chastisement for her actions (Kennet, 2000), yet she never let that stop her from seeking justice and equality.

Likewise, the Mirabal Sisters in the Dominican Republic paved the way for women's inclusion in the political and educational spheres (Hanrahan, 2005). Minerva Mirabal, the second oldest of four sisters, was the first woman to attend law school in the Dominican Republic at a time where women were not allowed to attend college (Wikipedia Encyclopedia). The Mirabal Sisters opposed the dictatorship of Leonidas Trujillo during the mid-1900 (Hanrahan, 2005). They were known as "*Las Mariposas*" (the butterflies) and were highly respected for the fight against the tyrannical dictatorship of Trujillo (Hanrahan, 2005). Las Mariposas were often incarcerated and tortured, however, they never gave up their incessant struggle. The sisters were killed in their fight for a democratic Dominican Republic, beaten and strangled on November 26, 1960 (Hanrahan, 2005).

Just like Sor Juana Inez and the Mirabal Sisters, millions of Latinas worldwide struggle to survive and challenge social norms every day, however, factors such as sexism, racial discrimination, and economic hardships contribute to diminishing the self-efficacy of Latinas

(Sullivan & Mahalik, 2000). According to Kerka (2003), individual, cultural, and work-related values influence career choices, decisions, and development. These values are likely to be defined by self-efficacy, which in Latinas is defined by family traditions and support.

For many Latinas, it is not a question of self-efficacy. It is simply getting by, making it, through any means necessary. Gomez et al (2001) and Hernandez and Morales (1999) researched the career development process of Latinas in the political, social, and educational setting and found that for Latinas, there is no time to ponder fear. It is like jumping into an abyss, either you make it, or you make it. Latinas have no choice but to face the difficulties set in their way, and for many, overcoming these obstacles create opportunities to succeed (Gomez et al, 2001).

Career Counseling and Latinas

According to Gomez et al (2001), models of career development that explicitly address the Latina experience are almost nonexistent. Weiler (1997) challenged the notion that career development models take into account the complex realities of women's life experience and choices about career. Likewise, Kerka (2003) wrote that career development theories have been heavily criticized for their lack of applicability to diverse populations, and contends that research on the career development of these cultural minorities is limited.

Hernandez and Morales (1999), and Kerka (2003) found that among Latinas, the belief is that career is considered to be a nonlinear process in which individuals' worldview and context have to be taken into account by counselors in order to increase career self-efficacy. Researchers and professionals define career according to their theoretical approach. Most career counselors, however, would agree that when looking at career and life planning there needs to be an understanding that individuals differ in their interests, values, attitudes, aptitudes, and abilities (Crites, 1981). In today's advance and technologically inclined world, there are other factors to

take into account. Career development theories seldom focus on culture, class, race, or ethnic origin (Leibowitz & Lea, 1986). An individual's culture, race or ethnic backgrounds are important factors that effect career choice and development. The social background from which this individual comes from is another important factor. In all, the individual's context is important. It encompasses the wholeness of the individual instead of bits and pieces.

Counseling Latinas about career development has to include a psychoeducational approach in order to not only teach Latinas ways in which they can be successful and make effective career choices, but also to create a circular knowledge base for both the counselor and the client (Dagley, 1999). In this manner, both counselor and client are learning about each other and for the client specifically there is a focus on resource attainment and self awareness within her self-concept. In essence, the counselor must be able to allow and provide the client the space for self exploration and open doors for unloading a lifetime of traditional and cultural values that might be holding back the client's career development. At the same time, taking into account the context and experience of the Latina student in college, group career counseling techniques have great merit in helping increase the career self-efficacy of this group.

Group Counseling

Crites (1981) wrote that although much has been written about group career counseling, this approach has not been widely used, of course given the time in which he wrote "Career Counseling: models, methods, and materials", it is easy to deduct that this trend has changed in the last twenty-four years. Richard Pyle (2000), who has written a more recent account of the use of group counseling, contends that groups have been used for a long time to promote career development. Pyle (2000), stated that career groups can be directive (information/didactic-oriented) or nondirective (feeling/affective-oriented). There is, however, a benefit in using both.

This is mainly due to the fact that individuals can learn a lot from getting in touch with their feelings and issues affecting their identity while at the same time getting information that will help them choose a career (Peterson & Cortez Gonzalez, 2000, 121). Similarly, Dagley (1999) stated that career interventions, whether they take the form of classes, workshops, individual counseling, or psychoeducational groups, work. He stated that these interventions make a difference in participant's career maturity and decidedness.

Many career counselors that practice group career counseling agree that counseling clients is more effective when there is concurrent individual and group career counseling (Crites, 1981; Giddan & Austin, 1982; Healy, 1974, 1975). Some reasons for this conclusion might include the need for individual processing of information and knowledge about self gained through the group interaction, processing of content, and goal achievement of individual clients. Dagley (1999) noted that individual career counseling and workshops are more effective structured groups, however, the latter is also effective and beneficial.

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of group career counseling is the interaction and support that takes place between the members of the group (Sullivan & Mahalik, 2000). In the case of Latina college students, many of them feel alone, isolated, and forgotten in such an independent-oriented atmosphere. They might also feel that because they are suppose to be mature, independent adults now, their goals for education have to be well defined and that deviating from that goal is seen as unpreparedness in an institution of higher education. Being able to share these concerns in a group of peers will allow these individuals to realize that they are not the only ones and that there is hope. Gordon (1984) suggests that the use of the group approach to career counseling "provides structured experiences and involves students in specific

tasks." (p. 13). This gives students involved in the group a sense of belonging and collaborative

work, while at the same time providing the knowledge about self and career choices.

Some of the groups in the area of counseling interventions are task and work groups,

guidance and psychoeducational groups, counseling and interpersonal problem-solving groups,

and psychotherapy and personality reconstruction groups (Dagley, 1999). The most common

group used in the area of career intervention is the psychoeducational or guidance group

(Dagley, 1999; Sullivan & Mahalik, 2000).

<div align="center">Method</div>

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to enhance student career services offices' understanding of the

career decision-making process of undergraduate Latinas in college campuses. This study is a

two-phased research project on the self-efficacy of Latinas in a predominantly white university

campus. The first phase involves a survey of the general college student population, while the

second phase involves a psychoeducational intervention with undergraduate Latinas.

Phase I- Survey

Participants

250 undergraduate and graduate students were surveyed about their career decision-making

processes at a Western New York public college. All participants were enrolled students ranging

in age, race, academic standing, and majors.

Data Collection Process

In this initial phase of the study, the investigator collected data from 250 students using a

survey sampling method developed by the author asking the participants to answer a 16-item

instrument about career decision-making. The survey was administered by faculty and staff who

interacted with a large number of students on a daily basis. Faculty and staff members who

agreed to participate in the administration of the survey were given a letter explaining the study

and survey as well as instructions on how to administer the instrument to students. The survey

asked participants questions about demographics (e.g., race, gender, academic standing), school

participation (e.g., part-time or full-time, involvement in extracurricular activities), and finally

environmental and social influences on career decisions.

Every student participating in the survey received a copy of the consent form explaining the

study and how the information provided would be used. Completing the survey was optional and

participants were ensured anonymity. Participants were provided with a list of counseling

referrals in the event that participation in the survey cased them any kind of distress. All

completed and collected surveys were entered into a secured database for data analysis.

Instrument

Survey developed by the author. See Appendix A.

Data Analysis

Surveys were carefully reviewed by the author to identify similar trends and differences

among participants based on race, gender, and academic standing. Interpretation of the data was

used to corroborate previous research about the differences in career development and self-

efficacy of Latinas as compared to other ethnic groups.

Phase II- Career Group and Control Group

Participants

Sixteen self-identified Latinas participated in the second phase of this study. Seven were part

of a control group and nine were part of a career counseling group. All participants were enrolled

college students completing their first undergraduate degree. The participants ranged in age from

18-22 years. They came from a wide variety of countries, including Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Panama, Argentina, and Mexico. Three of the participants were mixed with other ethnic races, including Italian, Black and Irish. Both groups of participants completed a pre-test and post-test as part of the participation requirements. All of the women had been raised in the United States and only two were born outside the US. Twelve of the women considered English their first language, and four considered Spanish their first language. All of the women understood Spanish; however, only five spoke it fluently.

In the control group, one of the women was a freshman, one was a sophomore, two were juniors, and three were seniors. Two of the women were majoring in Spanish, one with an emphasis in education. Three were majoring in communications, one with a double major in history. One was a social work major and another was undeclared.

In the career counseling group, one of the women was a freshman, two were sophomores, three were juniors and three were seniors. Two of the women were health science majors (one with an emphasis in education), and one each with majors in international business, psychology, English, Spanish, criminal justice, nursing, and communications.

One female facilitator (principal investigator) conducted the six-session treatment group. The facilitator was an MSed candidate in a counselor education program with prior work in group psychotherapy and conducting this research as part of her thesis requirement in the program.

The women in phase two of the study were all promised anonymity (all participant names are pseudonyms). The following section presents a brief description of each participant in the career group.

Lucy is a freshman student intending to major in Nursing. Lucy is of Puerto Rican descent in her late teens. Lucy plans to become a nurse practitioner. She is very active in a student

organization. She is the youngest of three children and has always depended on her older sister to guide her through life.

Juana is a junior majoring in health science education. She is of Puerto Rican and Irish descent in her early twenties. Juana plans to become a health educator. She is very active in a student organization and other programs in the college. Juana struggles with the gender inequality between herself and her brother and is constantly faced with having to fulfill the high expectations her family has for her.

Teresa is a sophomore majoring in communications. She is of Puerto Rican descent in her late teens. Teresa is undecided about her future career plans. Teresa feels the burden of being the oldest of three children and having to take look after her younger siblings.

Cris is a junior majoring in health science with a minor in Spanish. She is of Puerto Rican and African American descent in her early twenties. Cris plans to become a health educator and has an active role in leadership positions on campus. She comes from a single parent home and is expected to help the family economically once she enters the professional sphere.

Celia is a senior majoring in psychology. She is of Puerto Rican and Dominican descent in her early twenties. Celia plans to become a forensic psychologist and has an active role in a student organization on campus. She has always been taken care of by her family and is afraid of being independent from them.

Ramona is a senior majoring in English. She is of Panamanian and Argentinean descent in her early twenties. Ramona plans to have a career in education and will be enrolling in graduate school after graduation. Ramona is an active student in various student organizations. She grew up in a two-parent home in which all siblings, male and female alike, were treated equally and expected to succeed.

Lorena is a senior majoring in international business. She is of Dominican descent in her early twenties. Lorena is undecided about her future career plans. She comes from a single parent home and has been working since a very young age.

Sory is a junior majoring in Spanish. She is of Dominican descent in her early twenties. Sori plans to become a bilingual translator. She comes from a single parent home, considers herself to be a highly independent and hard-working individual.

Magdalena is a sophomore majoring in criminal justice. She is of Dominican descent in her late teens. Magdalena is undecided about her future career plans. She reported being from a very supportive family who encouraged her to choose a career she enjoyed.

All of the participants were unmarried and seven were first-generation college students. All of the participants were full-time students in academic assistance programs.

Data Collection Process

Participants were recruited through mass emails, personal Webpage postings, class announcements and personal contact. Students interested in joining the career counseling group were asked to email or call the principal investigator's office. Once students expressed interest in the group the investigator matched their schedule with that of the group schedule and determined whether they would be in the control group or career counseling group. All participants were required to read and sign a consent form explaining the study and how information collected would be use. In addition, participants assigned to the career counseling group were required to sign a permission to tape statement, due to the fact that all sessions during the intervention would be audiotaped.

Instrument

Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale (CDMSES). Participants completed the

CDMSES (Betz, Klein, & Taylor, 1996) to evaluate their CDMSES (i.e., confidence in their

ability to successfully make career decisions). The CDMSES includes 50 items (e.g., "How

much confidence do you have that you can make a plan of your goals for the next five years?")

for which respondents indicate their level of confidence on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = no

confidence, 5 = complete confidence) [ranking scale modified by principal investigator with

permission from instrument author]. Responses to each item are summed for a composite score,

with higher scores reflecting higher levels of CDMSES. The responses provide information on a

five-factor structure (subscales) of career self-efficacy: self appraisal, occupational information,

goal selection, planning, and problems-solving as created by Crites' model of career maturity

(Betz & Taylor, 2001).The maximum score participants can receive is 50 in any one subscale for

a total of 250 on the instrument [as adapted by author]. [See Appendix B for scoring key].

Administration of Instrument

All participants were administered the CDMSES twice during the duration of the study, one

at the beginning of the study and another one seven weeks later. Participants in the control group

were asked to meet with the principal investigator for a short counseling session in which the

study was explained and any questions were answered. After the session, participants were asked

to complete the pre-test online and given instructions as to when the post-test would be

administered.

For the career counseling group, the principal investigator set an agreed upon date and time

for the initial meeting to complete the pre-test. At the initial meeting, participants were asked to

read and sign the consent form explaining the study, their right to withdraw from the study, and

their consent to audiotaped sessions. The principal investigator explained that the career counseling group would consist of six sessions lasting 1.5-2 hours per session. Once all questions were answered, the instrument was administered. The principal investigator set 15 minutes for discussion of the pre-test to ensure participants did not experience any distress as a result participation.

After the sixth career counseling group session all participants were administered the post-test and 15 minutes were set apart to discuss any questions and/or distress caused as a result of participation. Members of the control group were contacted to remind them of the post-test administration, and appointments were set up with each participant. After each participant in the control group was administered the instrument, the investigator and participant discussed any feelings or emotions that might have been caused by completing the pre-test. None of the participants expressed feelings of distress.

Intervention

The group sessions were composed of both didactic and experiential activities and discussions. The intervention consisted of six 90-minute sessions designed to increase the career decision-making self efficacy of the group. At first, participants were keenly aware of the audiotape in the room, however, after a few sessions, they seemed to be comfortable discussing their concerns, feelings, and emotions. There was little to no direction to the group process. Every week there was a topic of discussion, and participants were encourage to speak about whatever came to their mind in relation to family, career, education, and social relations.

The use of humor and Spanish was facilitative in that it allowed participants to relax and create a rapport with each other and the facilitator.

During the course of the group sessions, the investigator provided the group with résumé critiques, course of study plan samples, and gave a presentation on interviewing techniques, as well as other occupational information and job exploration.

Data Analysis

Pre-test data was analyzed to identify salient areas of discussion during group sessions that would help increase the career self-efficacy of group members. Below are the topics discussed as a result of the CDMSES pre-test.

a) choosing a major

b) choosing a career

c) familial/parental involvement in career decision-making

d) making the mark as a Latina (gender and racial role)

e) mentoring and guidance for Latinas in college

From these topics the investigator identified emergent themes within each of the focal domains. Patterns and similarities of responses were examined and participant quotes were examined.
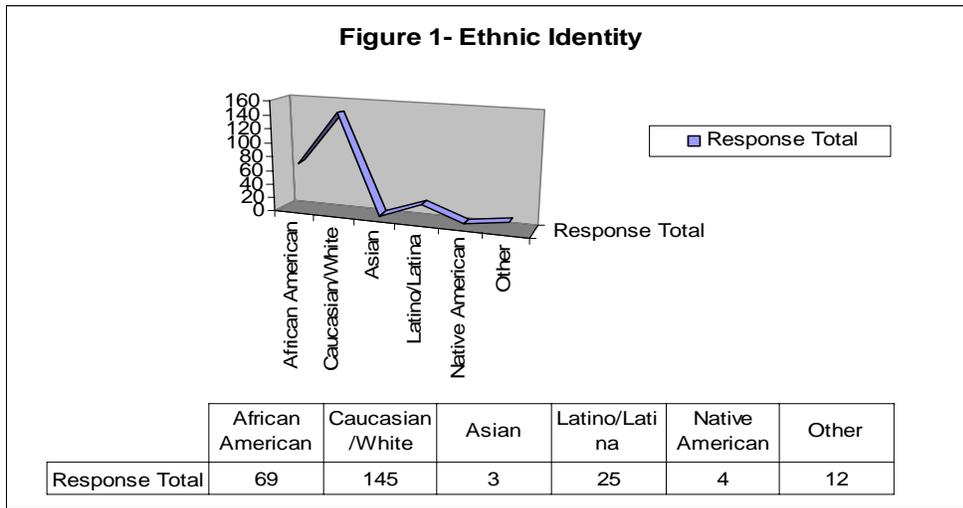
Post-test data was analyzed to identify any changes in the scores of the pre-test, therefore, find out if the career counseling group did in fact increase the career self-efficacy of the group members. The results from both the survey and pre/post-tests are below.

Results

Phase I- Survey

Ethnic identity. The first goal of this survey was to identified and corroborate the disparate representation of Latinos in predominantly white colleges. Of the 249 participants who answered this question only 10% reported being of Latino descent (n= 25), 27% reported being African
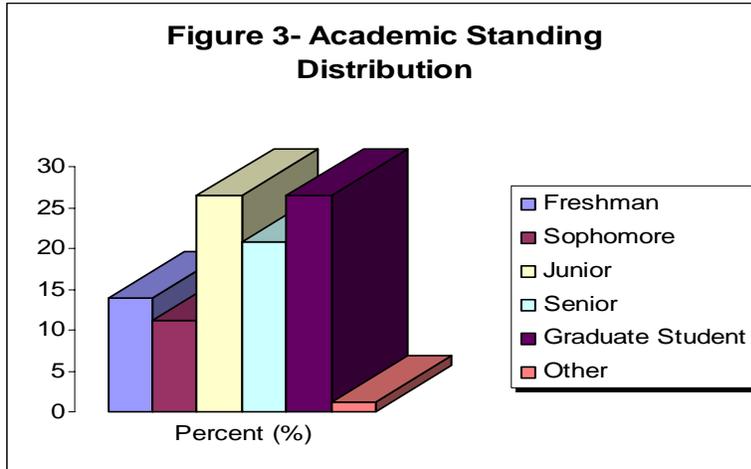
American (n= 69), 58.2% reported being Caucasian (n= 145), 1.2% reported being Asian (n= 3),

1.6% reported being Native American (n= 4), and 4.8% reported Other (n= 12). Those who

specified what "Other" was, range in ethnic identity (e.g., West Indian, Jamaican, Not

Applicable).

Figure 1- Ethnic Identity

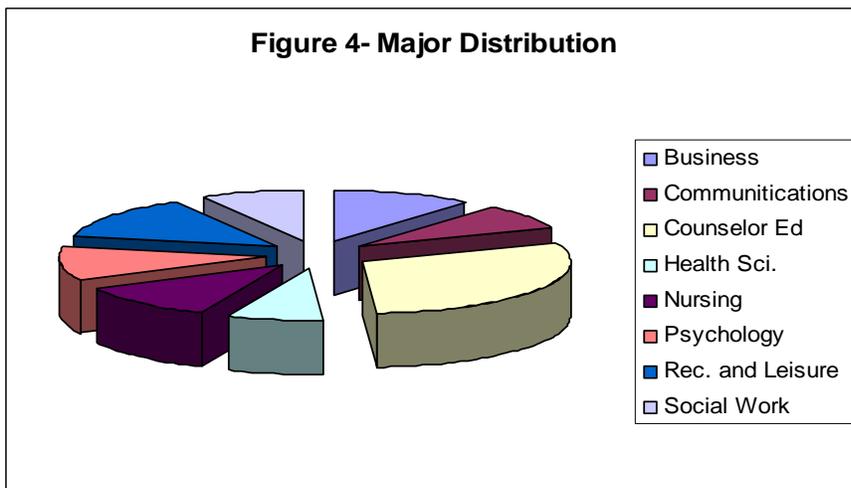|	African American	Caucasian /White	Asian	Latino/Latina	Native American	Other
Response Total	69	145	3	25	4	12

Gender. The results of this question show that there were more female respondents (71.6%)

than males (28.4%). This is correspondent with the college's demographic profile. Of the 179

female respondents, 18 were Latina (10.1%). Likewise, the data showed that there were more

female Latina respondents (72%) than male Latino respondents (28%) when looking at the data

from the total number of Latino participants. This is also correspondent with the total number of

females in the other ethnic groups referred to in the previous sections.

Figure 2- Gender Distribution
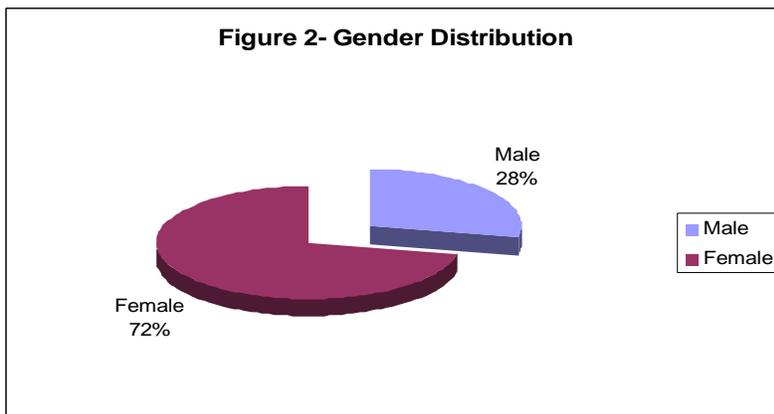
Academic standing. The data showed that the majority of respondents were in their third year of undergraduate work (26.4%) or graduate students (26.4%), followed by seniors (20.8%), freshmen (14%) and sophomores (11.2%) as reported on the survey.

Figure 3- Academic Standing Distribution

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Graduate Student
- Other

Percent (%)

Major. Participants reported majoring in a variety of disciplines. The most popular majors as reported on the survey were counselor education (20.9%), recreation and leisure (9.6%), nursing (8%), business administration (7.6%), and psychology (7.2%). The high results for counselor education and recreation and leisure majors might be due in part to the high response rate of graduate students in these programs.

Figure 4- Major Distribution

- Business
- Communitications
- Counselor Ed
- Health Sci.
- Nursing
- Psychology
- Rec. and Leisure
- Social Work

Academic status and extracurricular involvement. 75.6% of the participants reported being full-time students and 52.4% of this group of respondents reported being involved in extracurricular activities such as student organizations, scholarly organizations, student government, etc. Of the students involved in extracurricular activities, the highest percentage (65.3%) was female and undergraduate. Of the students not involved in extracurricular activities, the highest percentage (65.9%) was female, graduate, and part-time.

Major choices. Participants were asked when they had decided what they wanted to major. The answers were middle school, high school, college, or other. The majority of the participants (50.8%) decided what they wanted to major in after enrolling in college. The second highest response (28.8%) was high school, followed by other (15.2%). When asked to specify about the latter, most respondents reported that they made their choice after working for a while or raising a family.

Influential Factors. Participants were asked to rate their responses based on a Likert Scale ranking about the influence the media, parents, school experience, guidance counselor, and peers had on their decision to major in a particular field. In regards to media influence, most respondents reported that the media had no influence in their decision (54%). In regards to parental influence, most respondents reported that their parents had no influence in their decision (36%). In regards to school experience influence, most respondents reported that their school experience had no influence in their decision (34%). In regards to guidance counselor influence, most respondents reported that their guidance counselor had no influence in their decision (57%). In regards to peer influence, most respondents reported that their peers had no influence in their decision (41%). For a complete description of participants ranking see Figure 5.

Figure 5- Influential Factors
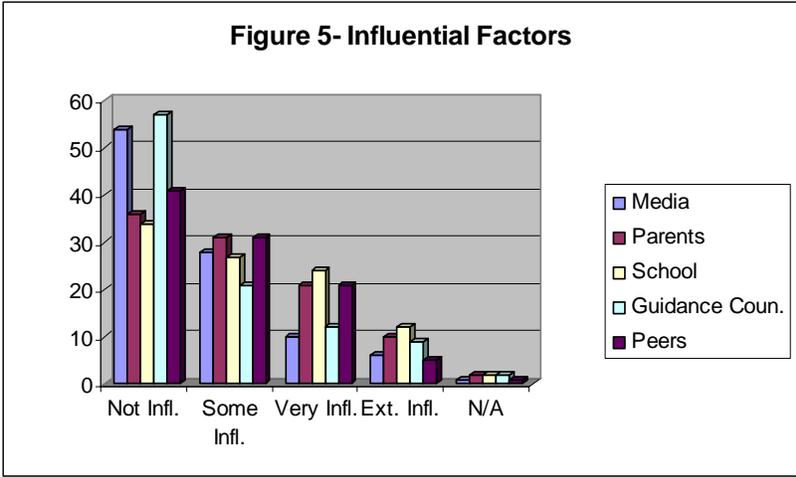
Knowledge and use of career services office. Participants were asked if they knew that the college had a career services office. 93.6% answered "yes" and 6.4% answered "no". Of the participants who answered "yes," 58.8% had visited the career services office on campus. Participants were asked their reasons for visiting the career services office based on a list of services offered in the department. Most participants (22.1%) reported going there for internship/job search or for student employment, 20.9% went there for career advice and 7.2% went there for information on graduate school. Those who chose "other" specified their reasons to be either "class assignment" or "résumé help."

College career assistance. When asked if they had received any guidance from anyone in the college about career choices in their major, 46.8% of participants said "yes", while 53.2% said "no." Those participants who answered "yes" reported that they received guidance from either faculty/staff, counselors in academic assistance programs, or peers.

Parental career communication. When asked if their parents had every spoken to them about higher education or career choices, 76% of the participants responded "yes", while 24% responded "no."

Figure 6- Career Guidance
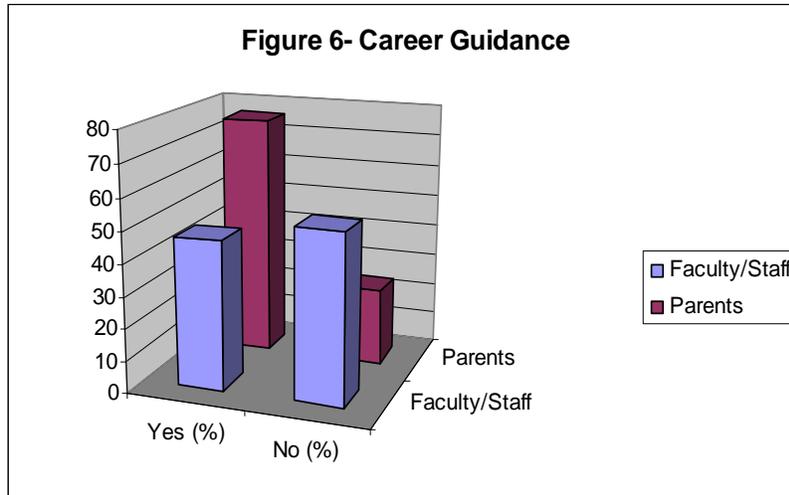
Phase II- Control Group and Career Group

Control Group

Self-appraisal scores. The pre-test analysis showed that the total average response score for self-appraisal items was 39 with most respondents choosing "much confidence" as their answer. The post-test report showed that this statistic did not change much. In the post-test analysis the total average response score for this subscale was 41 with most respondents choosing "much confidence" as their answer.
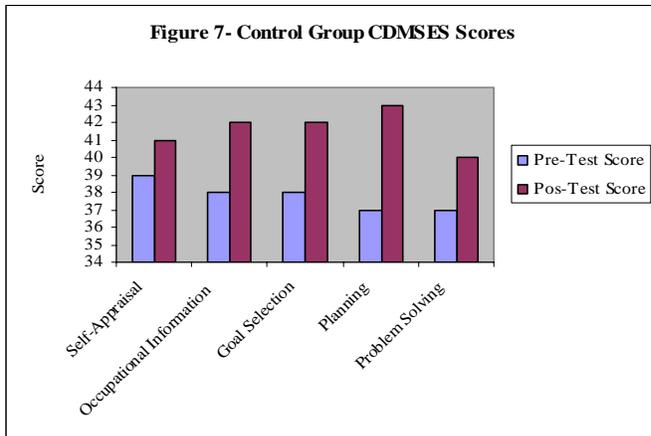
Occupational information scores. For the subscale measuring the amount of knowledge participants had or could gather about occupations, the pre-test analysis showed that the total average response score was 38 with most respondents choosing "much confidence" as their answer. Post-test results showed an increase in scores with most respondents reporting that they felt "complete confidence" in their ability to gather occupational information. The total response average score was 42.

Goal selection scores. In this subscale, the pre-test analysis showed that the total average response score was 38 with most respondents choosing "much confidence" as their answer. Post-test results showed a total average response score of 42, an increase from the pre-test results.

This increase, however, did not show a difference in the most common response, which was "much confidence."

Planning scores. The total average response score for this subscale was 37 with most participants reporting that they felt "much confidence" in their ability to plan for the future. Post-test results showed an increase in this score with total average response score of 43 and high percentage of respondent choosing "complete confidence" in their ability to plan for the future.

Problem solving scores. The pre-test analysis showed that the total average response score for self-appraisal items was 37 with most respondents choosing "much confidence" in their ability to problem solve career related issues. The post-test report showed that this statistic had a slight increase. In the post-test analysis the total average response score for this subscale was 40 with most respondents reporting that they felt "complete confidence" in their ability to problem solve career related issues.

Figure 7- Control Group CDMSES Scores

Career Group

Self-appraisal scores. The pre-test analysis showed that the total average response score for self-appraisal items was 39 with most respondents reporting they felt "much confidence" in their ability to accurately self-appraise. The post-test report showed that this statistic increased once participants completed the career counseling group. In the post-test analysis the total average

response score for this subscale was 44 with most respondents reporting they felt "complete confidence" in their ability to accurately self-appraise.

Occupational information scores. For the subscale measuring the amount of knowledge participants had or could gather about occupations, the pre-test analysis showed that the total average response score was 39 with most respondents choosing "much confidence" as their answer. Post-test results showed an increase in scores with most respondents reporting that they felt "complete confidence" in their ability to gather occupational information. The total response average score was 45.

Goal selection scores. In this subscale, the pre-test analysis showed that the total average response score was 38 with most respondents choosing "much confidence" as their answer. Post-test results showed a total average response score of 44, an increase from the pre-test results. This increase showed that all respondents felt "complete confidence" in their ability to set career goals.

Planning scores. The total average response score for this subscale was 37 with most participants reporting that they felt "much confidence" in their ability to plan for the future. Post-test results showed an increase in this score with total average response score of 44 and high percentage of respondent choosing "complete confidence" in their ability to plan for the future.

Problem solving scores. The pre-test analysis showed that the total average response score for self-appraisal items was 36 with most respondents choosing "much confidence" in their ability to problem solve career related issues. The post-test report showed that this statistic had a slight increase. In the post-test analysis the total average response score for this subscale was 43 with most respondents reporting that they felt "complete confidence" in their ability to problem solve career related issues.

Figure 8- Career Group CDMSES Scores
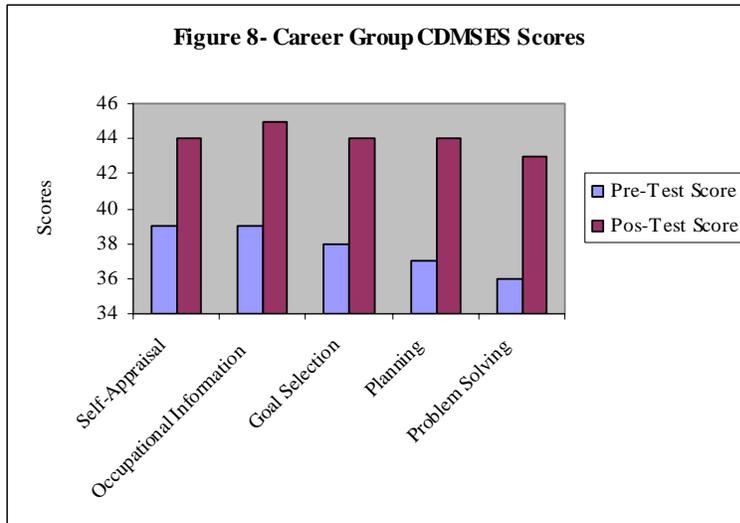
In all of the subscales the career counseling group had a higher score differences between the pre and post-test than the control group. In the self-appraisal, occupational information, and goal setting subscales, the score difference was two points each. In the planning subscale, the score difference was one point and in the problem solving subscale, the score difference was four points. The difference in score demonstrates that participation in the career counseling group was more likely to increase the career decision making self-efficacy of Latinas.

Career counseling group themes

Familial influences. For all of the women in the career counseling group, family was the most important factor in career decision-making. Family influenced every other factor in their life. Their parents inculcated the value of education from a very young age, and in instances where this wasn't the case, the lack of parental education was the basis for wanting to attend college. Juana, the health science junior, described her family's feeling about college: "my parents think I'm an angel because I'm in college…my brother thinks it shouldn't be a big deal because I am expected to go to college." Many of these women were first generation college students. Their parents did not attend college and their daughters were their hope for a better future. Teresa and Lucy's parents believed that without an education, they could not marry: "my

mom's only requirement for us to get married is that we are able to support ourselves…she

wouldn't be in the wedding if she thought this was not the case." It seemed that the most

important reason for going to college was financial freedom.

Socioeconomic status. Education was an opportunity for a better life. All of the women saw

education as a chance for their families to reach financial freedom. Many of them came from

single-parent or single-earner homes with more than one sibling in the family. Cris described her

mother's goal for the future: "my mother tells me, "when you grow older you will make all this

money and take care of me"… I have to make money and be successful…that's what we do, take

care of our family." Similarly, Teresa stated: "it's expected that I will take care of Aaron when I

am settled. My parent's think that majoring in communications will not give me financial

freedom or stability, so how can I take care of my brother." Teresa had changed her major from

criminal justice to communications because she was unhappy with the former, but her family

was not happy with this decision.

Gender socialization. It was common to hear the women talk about gender issues in terms of

their plight as a Latina rather than as a woman. Sory felt that "in Latino culture, it is always

expected of the woman to cater to the family. In my family my sister and I are always called

upon to do things around the house, while my brother just sits on the couch watching TV." The

majority of the women felt that families tend to raise their children in these traditional gender

roles. "We are conditioned to grow up that way and our siblings then grow up to demand the

same of their wives." With their increase knowledge about women's rights and capabilities in the

21st century, these women have started to challenge traditional gender roles. Juana for example

stated: "in my house, my brother is always served first, but when I serve the food, he is the last to

get served." In only two of the women's households, the men were expected to do the same

chores as the women. Ironically, these were two-parent households; however, the mother was the disciplinarian. They all agree that the women in Latino families had the responsibility of taking care of the family, whereas the men were free to do whatever they wanted, including not attending college. For the women who had older brothers, none had attended college and in some cases some did not even graduate high school. Juana had struggled all her life with the incongruent way her parents treated her and her brother: "It's okay for him to be 28 years old, have a baby, and still live at home, but when I had an accident I had to heal quickly and go back to work. They all said, you're old enough and you know how to take care of yourself, he doesn't."

Racial socialization. All of the women viewed themselves as bicultural, although they identified more with their Latino heritage. When asked how they thought they were being perceived in society, they all had similar experiences. Celia shared her experience in her first job: "I had to take voice classes to change my accent and tone in order to sound like a typical white girl. One day an upset customer called cursing and yelling. He called me a Puerto Rican &%$#...I couldn't believe he could tell. I just hung up the phone." Juana shared her experience as a biracial woman:

"there's a difference in the perception of Latinas simply based on their last name. I have an

American last name because of my Irish side, so when I call and introduce myself it's like

"how can I help you?" Then I say I'm calling on behalf of the Association of Latino

American Students, and it's like "oh"…it's very discouraging."

All of the women were resigned to playing the acculturation card in their everyday life. They felt it was a matter of balancing your culture with that of the dominant society. Ramona felt that one had to sacrifice some things in order to gain respect as a Latina. "It's giving away

something, but getting something back for that sacrifice." Lorena felt that when acculturating

was a lose-lose situation because "Latinos are not accepted in American society, yet if you try to

fit in, you won't be accepted by your own people." Language was an important factor in the

perception of Latinos for all of the women as Juana described. "What bothers me the most is this

whole speaking white thing; that bothers me the most. I'm am not from the block anymore and

just because I do not speak Ebonics or Spanglish doesn't I gave up on my roots." Similarly,

Ramona expressed, "I'm not being Hispanic enough or Spanish enough, just because of the way

I express myself."

 Latino representation in college. Most of the women chose to go away to college so that they

could have a better chance at successfully graduating with a college degree, but felt that it was

hard when you could not see yourself represented in the college environment. Celia shared her

feelings on this.

> "We are not represented. There was only one Latina professor in this college outside of the
>
> Foreign Language department and she was let go because students claimed they couldn't
>
> understand her. She spoke perfect English. It makes me wonder if I could ever reach my
>
> goals because I am Latina. It's not visible because we are not represented in the college."

Student representation on the college campus was very low. Juana stated, "Latinos are 3% of

the population at the college." When urged to express their feelings about this, all of the women

stated that it was very discouraging. The author is one of the few Latina counselors in the college

and the women spoke about this. "When the only Latina counselors on campus expressed they

were leaving after completing their master, it was like, where do we go, and who do we go to

now." Magdalena stated, "you think, you can't leave us. I started feeling lost. I didn't want to be

here because you weren't going to be here." The women felt that no one could understand their

struggle better than a Latina counselor, because even if they were part of a minority group facing the same issue, there's always a competition to see who has it worst.

Discussion

The findings of this study add to the body of knowledge available on the career self-efficacy of Latinas in predominantly-white colleges. This is a subject that is rarely studied in career-related counseling. As evidenced in the review of literature in earlier sections of this study, Latinas have a hard time balancing the duality of their culture, especially in relation to career development. Examining the importance that familial influence, socioeconomic status, gender and racial socialization, and Latino representation on college had on Latinas in the career counseling group, the author was able to assist in increasing participants' CDMSE. Overall, these constructs had a significant impact on the career self-efficacy of these Latinas. When added to the overall environment and construct of the college and student population, as shown on Phase I of the study, Latinas have a higher need for career counseling that is congruent with their experiences.

The survey showed that there were more female participants than there were males. The majority of the female participants were Caucasian, a statistic that is consistent with national reports (Garcia, 2004; Green, 2001; Pidcock, 2001). When looking at Latinas on college campus and their numbers, it is hard to pay attention or differentiate their needs from those of the majority population. Predominantly white institutions of higher learning tend to reflect the values and needs of that population, excluding the needs of other minority groups (Green, 2001). Green (2001) went on to assert that these colleges must learn that supportive programs that include academic, social, and financial assistance are needed for these groups.

This study focused on Latinas' experiences throughout their lifespan and how these affected their career decision-making self-efficacy. Group members were active participants in the group process, facilitating their own career self-efficacy development and that of other group members. Non-directive, semi-structured group styles allowed the client to experience a more holistic counseling session (Dagley, 1999; Farmer, 1978; Hazel, 1976; McCluskey, Noller, Lamoureux, & McCluskey, 2004; Mina et al., 2004) giving them the opportunity to express feelings and emotions as they experienced them during the sessions.

The results indicated that incorporating active learning, counseling, and group process into career work and addressing the needs of the clients as they came up in the sessions helped increase their career self-efficacy. These results are comparable to other career group interventions (Dagley, 1999; Gomez et al., 2001; Paulsen & Betz, 2004; Quimby, 2004, Sullivan & Mahalik, 2000).

Furthermore, incorporating social context of clients into career work with women can help with issues of self-esteem, the presence of lack of female role models (specifically Latinas), and social support systems (Sullivan & Mahalik, 2000). The women in the career counseling group had very strong feelings about the lack of Latina female role models on campus, and consequently felt an attachment need to the few Latina employees in the college. The majority of students, who responded to the survey, stated they did not receive any guidance from faculty or staff about career options (see Figure 6). When analyzed further, student of color who did receive guidance from someone in the college pointed out that it was a counselor in an academic support program (i.e. EOP, McNair, or Student Support Services Program). However, students in this program are a small minority of the college population, which means that other students are not receiving any guidance at all.

Studies have shown that students make post-college career decisions with, or much more likely without, the help of career services offices (Brown, 2004). The general implication of this is that these students are not making a sound career decision, and will most likely change careers again in the future. Effective career counseling will not ensure that these students stay in one career their entire life, but rather, it will ensure that students are making career choices that will benefit their lifestyle in a holistic manner.

Paying attention to factors affecting the career decision making of Latinas calls for a stronger emphasis in exploring familial influences, as this factor affects every aspect of the Latina student's life. From choosing a major that will allow financial freedom, to making sure that whatever plans are made for the future include taking care of the family, Latinas are faced with making tough decisions about careers. These decisions sometimes come with a high price tag.

<div align="center">Limitations and Implications of Study</div>

Limitations

There are several limitations to the study. First, the initial phase of the study was limited due to the length of time allowed to gather data. Once the survey was administered, it was obvious that some critical questions could have been asked, such as age and reasons for choosing majors. These could have provided more information about the way students make choices. Second, because the career counseling group was mostly geared toward exploring experiences and feelings as a basis for increasing career decision-making self-efficacy, there were not many activities focused on aiding this goal. Sullivan and Mahalik (2000) studied the use of semi structured career groups using activities and homework assignments to help increase women's CDMSE. Another limitation involves generalization of the findings. There were a limited number of women in the study due to the low representation of Latinas in the college.

Implications for Counseling

As the Latino population in the US increases, and more colleges and universities are seeing the changing demographics of their student population, student services offices have to adjust their services to include these populations (Raffaelli, 2004). It has never been effective to lump these groups, with unique needs, with the rest of the majority population. From diversifying the staff serving these students, to interactive workshops on multicultural needs of diverse groups, colleges have to begin paying attention to the students they serve. Career counseling is an expanding field and studies about techniques and theories are emerging every day (Fouad & Byars-Winston, 2005). These theories have to be carefully analyzed for their applicability to different cultures and ethnic groups in order to ensure that these groups are included (Hershenson, 2005).

One important aspect of counseling Latinas is the use of humor and language, as mentioned earlier in this study. According to Vereen, Butler, Williams, Darg, & Downing (2006), humor is a critical tool to enhance the counseling process and increase self-efficacy. They stated that humor can "reduce stress, build rapport, and aid in the increase of the client's self efficacy." (p. 10). In their study, Vereen et al. (2006) focused on the use of humor with African American college students in the counseling setting. Not unlike African Americans, Latinos use humor to help them adjust to difficult and stressful events in their lives. This was apparent in the counseling sessions with Latina students, where laughter, jokes, and stories (in English, Spanish, or Spanglish) where an important part of the sessions. Humor can also be used as a tool to build trust with the clients. Whether the counselor is Latina or not, earning trust can be easier with the use of humor, however, counselors must be careful of how they use humor in a counseling

situation. Getting to know the client is important to determine how humor can play a role in counseling.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of this study point out important counseling interventions that can be helpful to aiding Latinas' CDMSE. Specifically, career counselors should be well aware of the client's context involving, familial, cultural, and social factors. Counselors can also benefit from helping these clients explore the different aspects of college life and career exploration, such as internships, resume workshops, mock interviews, etc. An important aspect of counseling Latinas is allowing them to express themselves in culturally based ways (i.e. humor and speaking in Spanish) whenever possible. It is understood that the ratio of Latino counselors is low, so that not all needs of the Latina client can be met. Self-disclosure is also a very important aspect of the counseling relationship between Latinas and counselors. In this manner, group counseling has incredible benefits for Latinas, as they might feel that their experiences are not exclusive. Providing support and understanding is a necessary factor in counseling the Latina student.

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Appendix A
Questionnaire

1. What is your ethnic identity?
   ___ African American   ___ Caucasian/White
   ___ Asian   ___ Latino/Latina
   ___ Native American   ___ Other: _____

2. Sex: ___ M   ___ F

3. What is your current academic standing?
   ___ Freshman   ___ Sophomore
   ___ Junior   ___ Senior
   ___ Graduate Student

4. What is (are) your major(s)? _____ Minor? _____ Undecided _____

5. Are you a part-time or full-time student?
   ___ Part-time (3-11 credits)   ___ Full-time (12 or more credits)

6. Are you involved in any extracurricular activities (i.e. student organizations, scholarly
   organizations, student government, community service or outreach program, etc.)?
   ___ YES   ___ NO
      If yes, what?
      _____
      _____
      _____

7. When did you decide what you wanted to major in?
   ___ Middle School   ___ High School   ___ College
   ___ Other: _____

For Questions 7-11 circle the number that best represents your answer:
1-Not Influential   2-Somewhat Influential 3-Very Influential   4-Extremely Influential

8. How influential was the media in your decision to
   major in your particular field?   1   2   3   4

9. How influential were your parents in your decision?   1   2   3   4

10. How influential was your high school experience
    in your decision?   1   2   3   4

11. How influential was your guidance counselor
    in your decision?   1   2   3   4

12. How influential were your peers in your decision?   1   2   3   4

13. Did you know that SUNY College at Brockport has an Office of Career Services?
    ___ YES   ___ NO

14. If yes, have you ever been to the Office of Career Services?
    ___ YES   ___ NO
    Reason (check all that apply):
    ___ Student employment   ____Career advise   ____ Internship/job search
    ___ Graduate school   ____ other: _____

15. Have you received any guidance from anyone in the College about career choices in your major?
    ___ YES   ___ NO
    If so, who? _____

16. Did your parents ever speak to you about higher education or career choices?
    ___ YES   ___ NO

_____

Dear student:

In the event that you should need to speak to a professional staff regarding this questionnaire, the following offices have professional personnel available to all students with concerns and/or questions.

Principal Investigator: Ana Andujar
                          Office of Career Services
                          Rakov Center
                          (585) 395-5421

Career Services: Rakov Center
                          (585) 395-2159

Counseling Center: Hazen Health Center
                          (585) 395-2207

Appendix B
SCORING FOR CDMSE
Scoring Instructions (CDMSE)

The 50 items are distributed among five subscales, as indicated on the attached scoring

key. Each subscale score is the sum of the responses given to the ten items on that subscale.

Thus, total subscale, scores can range from 0 to 90. A total score is the sum of the five subscale

scores or, alternatively stated, the sum. across all 50 items. The maximum is 450.

Scale I - Self-Appraisal
1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 26, 31, 36, 41, 46

Scale 2 - Occupational Information
2, 7, 12, 17, 22, 27, 32, 37, 42, 47

Scale 3 -- Goal Selection
3, 8, 13, 18, 23, 28, 33, 38, 43, 48

Scale 4 - Planning
4, 9, 14, 19, 24, 29, 34, 39, 44, 49

Scale 5 -- Problem Solving
5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50