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Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

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Examining the Perceived Benefits of a Career Course for
English-Speaking First-Generation Hispanic and Latino Students

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

David Benjamin Mason

November 2022

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, who has continually supported my educational endeavors, encouraged me to persevere, praised me for my endurance, and urged me to set an intellectual example and expectation for our children, which I never fathomed was possible. My children have been a source of strength in finishing my degree, provoking relentless fortitude, elevating my tenacity, courage, determination, and grit to forge future opportunities for their success, and establishing an eagerness in achieving such a milestone.

I also dedicate this study to all first-generation students who struggle to attain academic excellence, lack occupational discernment, or have not identified their unique vocational calling. Through firm commitment, assiduousness, unremitting diligence, and a strong desire to discover a distinctive calling, it remains feasible to experience vocational breakthrough and achieve higher levels of educational enthusiasm and occupational prosperity.

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Foremost, I want to thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who for all time is my refuge and strength in every aspect of my life forever and ever. Amen. My spiritual identity represents the most significant component of my being, and I am beyond grateful that He humbly surrendered His throne to repurchase what already belonged to Him, for pursuing me, demonstrating true servanthood, taking my place, fighting all my battles, fixing my brokenness, receiving unmerited favor, conquering fear and death, cleansing my iniquities, and granting grace, mercy, unfailing love, and eternal life. Amen.

I thank my wife, children, and family for supporting me throughout this compelling, life-altering, and transformative journey. These individuals represent the backbone in keeping me grounded and engaged, have energized, inspired, and assisted me in transforming challenges into opportunities, compelled me to persist during difficult circumstances, and granted me more profound levels of self-improvement, love, faith, and hope. These influential members have motivated me to enhance personal integrity, accountability, productivity, and performance, causing a more steady and sustainable experience toward exponential growth, development, advancement, maturity, and degree completion.

I want to express sincere gratitude to my chair Dr. Christopher for her thoughtful and steadfast guidance, vast expertise, profound wisdom, and unwavering support throughout this unforgettable journey.

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Abstract

The problem that provoked this research is the incessant, declining retention, completion, and transfer rates among English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students. Educational institutions continue to increase services, improve academic programs, enhance curriculum design, integrate technology, and consider alternative career paths to success with marginal to no improvement. The purpose of this study was to determine the perceived benefits of English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students who participated in a career course instructed by a career professional compared to a course instructed by an academic adjunct faculty member. Developing one's career remains a vital aspect of the college experience, and occupational success and academic excellence should symbolize a paralleled and interconnected journey. This qualitative case study approach deepened meaning, enhanced insight, and increased awareness and understanding of the phenomenon, and represented the most unbiased approach, limiting assumptions, generalizations, or presuppositions. I investigated this phenomenon by interviewing academic adjunct faculty members and career professionals with experience instructing English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic or Latino students attending a community college in Northcentral Arkansas. The study revealed that participants held no preferences with who leads career courses. Both groups acknowledged having favorable career conversations with students and expressed the positive impact Holland's theory of personality types bears on students seeking career identity. Academic adjunct faculty tend to have goal-oriented conversations with their students, while career professionals have a propensity for career exploration discussions. Significant barriers included family dynamics, culture, language, citizenship status, access to technology, and gender.

Keywords: first-generation, career development, career professional, academic adjunct faculty, career course

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Community colleges enroll more than 17.8 million students across the United States and remain a vital institution of higher education, promoting several successful career pathways through accessible, affordable, and high-quality postsecondary education (United States Census Bureau, 2018). The significant pathways offered at community colleges include traditional education, workforce development preparation, reskill and upskill industry training, a range of noncredit courses for self-improvement, and transfer opportunities (Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative, 2022; Arkansas Department of Higher Education, 2022). Those students who choose to attend community college can obtain high-quality education at an affordable cost, streamline their academic and vocational interests, engage in various support services, and receive high-quality academic instruction that propels them toward success. For many students, college remains an obfuscated experience, and as students seek to navigate through the barrage of educational options, they become disconnected from support services, their commitment level weakens, their motivation diminishes, and their passions fade, further perplexing their experience and decreasing their desire to persevere (Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Murphy & Murphy, 2018; Romo et al., 2020; Soriaa & Stebleton, 2012). Despite the various academic and vocational pathways offered at community colleges, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students continue to underperform academically when compared to their non-first-generation counterparts and remain the most vulnerable population while simultaneously possessing the largest achievement gap in completing their postsecondary education (Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Murphy & Murphy, 2018; Romo et al., 2020; Soria & Stebleton, 2012).

Generalized Problem

First-generation Hispanic and Latino students represent the fastest growing minority population nationally, and the Arkansas community college system continues to experience

increased enrollment of first-generation Hispanic and Latino students (Arkansas Department of Higher Education; Karkouti, 2016). Arkansas community colleges remain a practical choice for Hispanic and Latino students in their pursuit of success; however, often, these colleges provide ambiguous career pathways and offer limited vocational assistance as they deliver educational services. College exemplifies an exciting time of independence, exploration, self-development, and transition from adolescence to adulthood. College students are expected to make a smooth and effortless transition from college to career, despite having limited knowledge of how to effectively navigate the college experience, including maintaining high academic performance and effective career decision making (Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Engle & Tinto, 2008; Murphy & Murphy, 2018; Romo et al., 2020; Soria & Stebleton, 2012).

The Arkansas community college system represents 22 colleges with approximately 60,000 students statewide. These community colleges value leadership, support, service, and employ innovative methods to increase retention and completion rates so students can attain academic excellence, growth, personal competencies, and achieve vocational success (Arkansas Department of Higher Education, 2022). Despite these promising assertions, the community colleges have experienced declining retention and unhealthy completion rates of Hispanic and Latinos. College demographics continue to change rapidly and projected to do so over the next 40 years, with a significant surge in historically underrepresented populations (Vincent, 2020). As of 2021, the regional demographics of the Northcentral Arkansas community college system consisted of 82.5% White, 8.29% Hispanic, 1.84% African American, 2.06% Asian, 0.39% Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 0.28% American Indian, 3.2% two or more races and roughly 4% identifying as first-generation (Arkansas Department of Higher Education, 2019). With first-generation Hispanic and Latino student demographics continuously increasing, significant concerns continue to mount as this population remains less aware of support services, unfamiliar

with overcoming educational challenges and barriers, and more vulnerable to higher dropout rates (Contreras; 2017; Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Murphy & Murphy, 2018; Romo et al., 2020; Vincent, 2020).

As community colleges across Arkansas continue to support first-generation Hispanic and Latino students who seek degree completion, graduation rates have remained below average for this population over the past 25 years (Contreras & Contreras, 2015). Past empirical predictions indicated that European Americans no longer represent the majority of community college and university students in the United States (Engle & Tinto, 2008). Career centers must adapt and alter their techniques to service underrepresented first-generation populations that have become the majority (Engle & Tinto, 2008). Since most students identify as low-income first-generation, many of the services and resources available to students may not be utilized simply because the students remain unaware of the services available to them (Engle & Tinto, 2008). Many students associated with this minority group also remain unaware of their vocational strengths; therefore, they lack career choice, hold limited occupational maturity, possess higher levels of dysfunctional career thought, and have deficiencies related to career interests, purpose, focus, and commitment (Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Folsom & Reardon, 2003; Osborn et al., 2019; Soriaa & Stebleton, 2012). Additional research overwhelmingly demonstrates that the current educational challenges for first-generation Hispanic and Latino students remain a multidecade concern and emphasizes that, although enrollment for Hispanic and Latino minorities continues to increase, outcomes indicate this population consistently experiences lower retention and completion rates, as well as increasingly declining transfer rates than their nonminority counterparts, establishing the significance of this research (Contreras, 2017; Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Engle & Tinto, 2008; Soria & Stebleton, 2012).

Problem Statement

Arkansas community colleges continue to experience increased enrollment for first-generation Hispanic and Latino students; however, retention, completion, and transfer rates remain persistently lower for this population than their non-first-generation, nonminority counterparts (Romo et al., 2020; Vincent, 2020). Research reveals that this population perpetually encounters more divergent obstacles, barriers, and uncertainties than their non-first-generation peers, further contributing to the adverse effects of rising withdrawal and dropout rates (Diehl et al., 2019; Gelbgiser, 2018; Kelsey et al., 2018). As a result, academic underachievement for first-generation Hispanic and Latino students persists as a critical concern for educational institutions (Contreras, 2017; Romo et al., 2020; Vincent, 2020).

Community colleges in Arkansas offer and promote various career paths encouraging academic success and vocational prosperity (Vincent, 2020). Students can choose a traditional educational pathway or select a career technical education pathway (Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative, 2022; Arkansas Department of Higher Education, 2022). Despite these favorable assertions, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students remain the most vulnerable, possess the largest achievement gap among underrepresented groups, maintain unhealthy levels of career readiness, and have an insufficient understanding of their career interests and vocational strengths (Martinez et al., 2016; Vincent, 2020).

Occupational choice, purpose, commitment, dedication, and perseverance remain flat (Chavira et al., 2016; Murphy & Murphy, 2018; Romo et al., 2020). After a series of challenging life experiences, first-generation Hispanic and Latino individuals, who choose to return to pursue a degree, often do so without knowing their calling and lack a distinct intellectual and occupational roadmap, leading to diminishing retention and graduation rates (Chavira et al., 2016; Espinoza-Parra & Collins, 2020; Martinez et al., 2016).

Significance Statement

Community colleges continue to experience increased enrollment of first-generation Hispanic and Latino students; however, retention and completion for this population continue to decline and remain lower than their non-first-generation peers (Choi et al., 2019; Diehl et al., 2019; Soria & Stebleton, 2012). Intense efforts of reimagining the college experience, reducing tuition, increasing access to quality services, hiring a diverse faculty composition, and improving academic programs and curriculum design have slightly impacted these rates, yet retention and completion among this population remain flat (Contreras, 2017; Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Joslyn, 2015). Limited research exists on the impact and influence of vocational calling in an academic setting, and community colleges have remained less concerned with occupational strengths, career decision making, and career choice and attempts to assist students in discovering their calling often become an afterthought hindering career preparedness and negatively affecting retention and completion (Jolyn, 2015; Mokher & Leeds, 2019; Rosemond & Owens, 2018). Academic programs should provide adequate training to prepare students for a profession, increase vocational maturity, and improve career readiness rather than just pressing students to complete coursework. A need persists to remain targeted toward customizable occupational strengths, career choice, and career preparedness, which can offer students a more explicit path to attaining academic excellence and vocational prosperity.

Research reveals that students who possess a better awareness of their vocational strengths or actively engage in the career development process increase occupational preparedness, remain more goal-oriented, experience elevated levels of adaptability, resilience, dedication, perseverance, and attain higher degree completion (Choi et al., 2019; Creed & Hennessy, 2016; Lent et al., 2019). Vocational discovery, career choice and maturity, and career self-efficacy represent critical aspects of the college experience, and these positive results may

increase retention and completion rates, producing more successful systematic transformation (Chen, 2015; Fouad et al., 2016; Joslyn, 2015; Lowman; 2005). Rather than students pursuing obfuscated opportunities and uncertain prospects, the intended research can highlight ways educators and counselors can potentially prolong student commitment, increase their passion, and elevate determination by discovering individualized career strengths. Those who hold a better understanding of their vocational blueprint can remain better equipped to make appropriate and auspicious academic choices (Murphy & Murphy, 2018). As students develop a clearer understanding of their vocational identity, increased levels of cognitive growth, development, and maturity transpire (Patton et al., 2016; Spokane & Cruza-Guet, 2005). Cultivating deeper levels of competence and boosting cognitive development of one's vocational calling can enhance character and autonomy, foster more profound relationships, yield a more apparent path toward intellectual eagerness. It can enable the student to stay better equipped in managing behavior and emotions, establishing clearer identity and meaning, producing a unique and complete individual (Chickering & Reisser, 2003; Dunn & Forney, 2004; Patton et al., 2016). A dearth development of these fundamental aspects may prevail as contributing factors that lead to lower retention and higher withdrawal. Shifting to enhanced cognitive development and vocational awareness rather than only focusing on improving academic programs and services may yield more promising outcomes.

Research also demonstrates that students who proactively seek their purpose and possess a better understanding of their calling experience life fulfillment through the radical transformation of self-actualization, vocational maturity, and academic diligence, as one eagerly pursues their intended calling (Choi et al., 2019; Creed & Hennessy, 2016; Lent et al., 2019). As individuals attain a more explicit meaningful pathway to success, they stay empowered through their established purpose and, therefore, more effectively discern an appropriate major.

Commitment, dedication, and perseverance transpire, academic improvement emerges, and intellectual and vocational satisfaction ensues, causing a positive transformation in retention and completion rates.

Exploring the benefits of assisting students in discovering their vocational strengths, removing occupational and intellectual barriers, and helping them refine their calling signifies the transformational impact of this study. Vocational calling and maturity represent a pivotal point in one's life, and advanced awareness may positively contribute to higher levels of retention and completion as students obtain a clearer understanding of their unique calling, and a more prevalent academic pathway, resulting in more propitious results. Habitually, individuals who do not possess a profound sense of their occupational strengths make several academic and career transitions, seeking deeper levels of contentment (Creed & Hennessy; 2016; Lent et al., 2019). Those who do not remain career ready can lack meaning, remain unfulfilled, frequently make unhealthy academic choices, and stay less aware of how they contribute to society, a team, or work environment, which may negatively impact retention and completion (Galles et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2014; Spokane & Cruza-Guet, 2005). Emphasizing vocational maturity and development, preserving intellectual development, defending educational resoluteness, and remaining steadfast in comprehensively educating, serving, and transforming the lives of students remains compulsory to assist them in discovering their vocational strengths, establishing a sharper degree path, and setting attainable academic and career goals, which may assist in attaining higher levels of retention, completion, and economic independence.

Integrating a vocational aspect, which offers insight into the significance of academic discernment, elevates career maturity, stimulates shared learning, triggers curriculum superiority, as well as growth, development, and improvement (Creed & Hennessy; 2016; Galles et al., 2019; Lent et al., 2019). These transformative results can dynamically change pivotal structural

approaches. They can alter organizational perspectives, encourage deeper levels of systematic course correction, and emphatically convince internal constituents that critical operational components must shift to meet external stakeholder needs (Chen, 2015; Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013; Lowman, 2005). These actions compellingly improve external stakeholder engagement and satisfaction, resulting in enhanced outcomes and comprehensive systematic change (Chen, 2015; Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013; Lowman; 2005; Stoch, 2015). The positive institutional benefits of exploring the outcomes related to increased vocational awareness may improve retention and completion for Hispanic and Latino students as they obtain a clearer academic pathway and enrich their college experience, adding extra levels of value and worth to the institution and beyond (Chen, 2015; Kaufman & Guerra-López, 2013). As students obtain clarity concerning their vocational strengths, they enhance their human capital by developing their mental, physical, and emotional fortitude. Other critical benefits include expanding upon specific skills, competencies, and abilities necessary for career and personal change. Concurrently, individuals improve upon their weaknesses, blind spots, and limitations, creating a more self-aware, proficient, capable, and competitive individual and employee, boosting performance and increasing retention and completion. After achieving occupational perspicuity and with newly discovered purpose and aspirations, students make better academic choices throughout their college experience, deeper meaning manifests, intentionality endures, passion, commitment, dedication, satisfaction, and perseverance intensify, and intellectual and occupational greatness becomes visible and achievable.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to determine the perceived benefits of English-speaking first-generation Hispanic and Latino students attending community college in Northcentral Arkansas who participate in a career course instructed by career professionals

compared to a course offering instructed by academic adjunct faculty members. Academic adjunct faculty who teach career courses hold a bent toward academic outcomes or connecting students to academic and career resources rather than providing adequate guidance concerning vocational and occupational preparedness (Allen & Smith, 2008; Carson, 2011). Content routinely adjusts based on the instructor's personal interest and remains limited to subject matter knowledge, restricted by abilities and competency levels (Allen & Smith, 2008; Carson, 2011; Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Wiseman & Messitt, 2010). Determining informant perceptions may positively impact success rates, retention, and graduation as students establish a better alignment of academic and vocational goals through obtaining higher levels of career preparedness by career professionals.

Theoretical Framework

The current study examined vocational calling, occupational maturity, and career choice through the lens of Holland's theory of personality type. Holland's theory remains one of the most credible, reliable, and trusted models in career counseling and vocational exploration across many cultural groups and time (Morgan, 2017; Nistal et al., 2019; Sverko & Babarovic, 2006; Yang et al., 2005). Holland's theory established four formidable fundamentals of career choice. The fundamental principal proposes that each individual can be categorized into one of six types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional (RIASEC) and suggested that one's career personality type rarely changes.

Through administering and interpreting a 291-item career assessment instrument, individuals gain more profound insight into their personalized occupational three-letter-code general occupational themes, basic interest scale, occupational scale, and personal style scale (Donnay et al., 2005; Herk & Thompson, 2012). An individual's unique code or three-letter combination determines potential occupational choices, the application of that code concerning

real-world vocational careers and practice, how critical career concepts connect to their individualized type, and links the participants to vocational resources to better align academic degree selection. The first letter in the code represents the most dominant type, followed by the second and third. Types of most similarity are placed side by side in a hexagonal diagram, while contrasting types remain on the opposing side. Every type stays equally distanced from the last. Holland uses the term congruence and consistency to better define his theory. Congruence signifies the amount of closeness concerning the individual's code type and work setting, while consistency indicates coherence, which measures the relationship of the first two letters. According to Spokane & Cruza-Guet (2005), "Individuals with consistency interest types within their personality three-letter codes feel more at ease with their personality" (p. 28).

Assessing and Discovering Work Environments

Holland affirms that individuals search for organizational environments that utilize their skills, abilities, competencies, proficiencies, and work settings that complement their interests. He asserts that individuals seek work ecosystems and cultures that articulate their morals, values, and attitudes (Capuzzi, & Stauffer, 2006; Donnay et al., 2005; Grutter & Hammer, 2012; Herk & Thompson, 2012). Holland also proposed that those who decide to pursue a career in an environment parallel to their personality type are more prone to be more content with their job and more successful. Individuals working in professions congruent to their unique work personality remain more prosperous, committed, and fulfilled, discover elevated satisfaction levels, find more stability in work, and are more content with their profession (Donnay et al., 2005; Grutter & Hammer, 2012; Herk & Thompson, 2012; Inkson, 2007).

Utilizing Holland's theoretical structure for the current study added valuable insight concerning vocational preparedness. It produced an extra layer of worth, dependability, usefulness, validity, and understanding for me as the participants engaged in career exploration

(Donnay et al., 2005; Grutter & Hammer, 2012; Herk & Thompson, 2012). Engaging in this process further aligns academic and vocational discernment and empowers individuals to achieve higher levels of career readiness and confidence. It also supports healthier levels of occupational identity, assists them in discovering vocational purpose and meaning, and helps them uncover their personalized career strengths, potentially leading to increased intellectual decision making, enhanced self-efficacy, self-determination, and vocational prosperity. Individuals who identify their individualized occupational calling and discover their vocational strengths become more aware of their purpose and more equipped to make better academic choices, resulting in a more desirable educational journey, which may positively improve retention and completion rates among first-generation Hispanic and Latino students.

Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative case study sought to determine the perceived benefits of first-generation Hispanic and Latino students participating in a career course instructed by a career expert compared to an academic adjunct faculty member. Three purposely designed research questions engaged the target population and guided the study.

RQ1. From an academic adjunct faculty and career professional perspective, how do English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students benefit from participating in a career development course led by a career professional as opposed to an academic adjunct faculty member?

RQ2. From an academic adjunct faculty and career professional perspective, how do English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students interact with academic adjunct faculty members compared to career professionals concerning their career goals?

RQ3. What do academic adjunct faculty members perceive as the most significant barriers for English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students that could affect their career growth, maturity, self-efficacy, and career identity compared to career professionals?

Definition of Terms

For the present research, this study defines and uses the following terms:

Career readiness. Career readiness includes the possession of theoretical knowledge coupled with the ability to apply and utilize practical skills needed to compete in a competitive workforce economy and industry (Martinez et al., 2016).

Cultural barriers. Cultural barriers denote as anything outside of the cultural norm/s of language, religion, behavioral communication, social influencers, and emotional communication (Skrefsrud, 2018).

Employability skills. Employability skills exemplify the fundamental expectations and competencies essential for obtaining an entry-, mid-, or high-level position within an industry and fulfilling market demands (Osmani et al., 2019).

First-generation student. A first-generation student signifies a student whose parent/s or guardian/s did not attend college or complete a degree from a four-year institution (Joslyn, 2015).

Hispanic student. A Hispanic student represents an individual whose national origins are of a Spanish-speaking country (Salinas, 2020).

Latino student. A Latina/o student represents an individual who identifies as a person from Central or South America who may or may not speak Spanish (Salinas, 2020).

Occupational/career development. Occupational and career development functions as the process through which one's work profession continuously shapes, forms, evolves, and

remains a journey that spans an individual's entire life with a consistent progression or regression (Zunker, 2011).

Perceived barriers. Perceived barriers symbolize conditions, circumstances, and environments that affect or impede a student from learning, progression, development, and attaining academic achievement or vocational discernment (Joslyn, 2015).

Vocational success. Vocational success reflects a personalized mindset of an individual who commits to short or long-term specific academic and career preferences or goals and accomplishes or achieves those objectives (Bandura, 1977; Lent, 2013). Viewpoints of vocational success represent anything that triggers personal fulfillment of a desired outcome of academic and occupational satisfaction caused by internal driving factors or beliefs (Bandura, 1977; Lent, 2013).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review seeks to expose and determine the contributing factors that hinder first-generation Hispanic and Latino students from experiencing similar outcomes as their non-first-generation, traditional peers. Therefore, an intense exploration of relevant literature reveals the significance of this study and demonstrates the meaningful impact the newly acquired knowledge presents and the application, implication, and exhortation it offers in elevating the outcomes for this population, further enabling educational and vocational attainment for first-generation Hispanic and Latino students.

The Birth of Vocational Calling and Occupational Identity

Long before modern-day scholars researched and studied career development, the Bible taught that vocation represented God's Holy calling. Christians believe that God created every individual with a purpose. To Christians, calling remains much more than a job, career, or occupation. Defined as a lifelong commitment, calling signifies using one's God-given talents and abilities to improve society while giving honor and praise to God so that He receives the glory (Duffy & Dik, 2013; Posadas, 2017; Schuurman, 2004). The Bible declares, "For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well" (New King James Version, 1769/2017, Psalms 139:13-14). In other words, one's calling represents a divine nature bequeathed to each individual for a specific intent, and one possesses a responsibility to actively serve the transformative purposes of God, ultimately bringing honor, glory, and praise to Him. To further clarify, God intentionally formed and created each man and woman for a purpose and unique calling. Spiritual calling represents a lifelong commitment to maturing in Christ and developing one's vocational strengths to fulfill one's deliberate purpose for Him. Likewise, in the quiet moments in life, free of distraction, chaos, and confusion, one

hears the loudest calling from God (Thompson & Miller-Perrin, 2003; Vos, 2017). As one cultivates a mature intimate relationship, one yields deeper meaning, a more profound character, a richer identity, and a more explicit vocational calling (Fowler, 2000; Thompson & Miller-Perrin, 2003). To elaborate, while listening to the intent instruction of God, in silence, one discovers their calling.

In contrast, secular career development primarily began in the 1890s (McDaniels, 1994). Patriarchs of secular career development include Holland's theory of vocational types, Super's career construction theory, also known as the theory of circumscription, compromise, and self-creation, and Bandura's social cognitive theory (Capuzzi & Stauffer, 2006; Lent et al., 1996; Spokane & Cruza-Guet, 2005). Subsequently, career development rapidly made its way into elementary and secondary schools as occupational support and, ultimately, established a lasting foothold in institutions of higher education. More recently, career development continues to increase as a topic of discussion for postsecondary institutions of higher education, and substantially more students have elected to visit their university's career center for career guidance (Helens-Hart, 2019).

The significance of career development stems from its ability to offer an individual an enhanced level of understanding through the self-identification process of strengths, skills, abilities, interests, and talents, ultimately discovering more profound levels of vocational purpose (Samuel, 2014). Zunker (2011) identified a career as the "time extended working out of a purposeful life pattern through work undertaken by the person" (p. 9). One does not merely achieve or accomplish a career in a day or a week, but an occupation signifies a lifelong journey that develops over time. Career exploration, outside of an individual visiting a career services center, traditionally occurs in a career course where students have the opportunity to investigate

their career strengths in hopes of gaining a more profound understanding of their professional selves (Joslyn, 2015; Morris, 2017; Samuel, 2014).

Previous Academic Strategies for Student Achievement

Previous strategies in the Arkansas community college system stress the significance of curriculum enhancement, higher levels of academic support services, and connecting students to career services and resources; however, student success rates for first-generation Hispanic and Latino students continue to remain flat (Choi et al., 2019; Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Soria & Stebleton, 2012). Research reveals that these institutions continuously experience challenges with students' obtaining clear career identity, which affects retention and completion rates among first-generation Hispanic and Latino students, and various multifaceted factors contribute to dropout and withdrawal (Choi et al., 2019; Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Diehl et al., 2019). Retention and graduation rates for this population have improved slightly over the past two decades, but those who attend college remain less likely to complete a degree and are 1.3–2 times more prone to withdraw from college as a freshman than their non-first-generation peers (Choy, 2001; Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Engle & Tinto, 2008; Ishitani, 2006). After a series of challenging life experiences, first-generation individuals who choose to return do so without knowing their calling or purpose, possessing a limited understanding of the support service available to assist them on their college journey, and lacking a clear academic and career blueprint for success, contributing to lower retention and graduation rates (Choi et al., 2019; Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Engle and Tinto, 2008; Soria & Stebleton, 2012). Research also indicates that retention and completion rates for underrepresented first-generation Hispanic and Latino students remain a concern for institutions of higher education (Contreras & Contreras, 2015).

Other institutional approaches accentuate the importance of students enrolling in a comprehensive, structured, or nonstructured career development course (Joslyn, 2015; Morris, 2017; Samuel, 2014). Academic adjunct faculty members typically teach these courses rather than career professionals, and content routinely adjusts based on personal interest (Carson, 2011). Traditionally, academic adjunct faculty members may not possess the competency or capacity to interpret vocational assessment tools that provide the vocational clarity, occupational strengths, or the alignment of resources needed for students to make sound academic and career choices, which can further diminish a student's commitment, passion, motivation, persistence, and resilience toward degree completion (Carson, 2011; Joslyn, 2015; Morris, 2017; Samuel, 2014). These factors also lead to inadequate goal orientation; therefore, when students face intellectual challenges, declaration of a major, or critical career decision making, their contribution and performance decrease, engagement declines, and determination, fortitude, and adaptability lessen, ultimately affecting academic achievement, degree completion, and vocational choice (Galles et al., 2019; Gelbgiser, 2018; Mitchell & Coyle, 2019). As a result, less than 12% of first-generation Hispanic and Latino students leave college with a degree (Engle & Tinto, 2008).

The Powerful Role of Faculty Members

Faculty members represent the enablers of student development, the influencers who foster healthy academic learning environments, and the mobilizers who stimulate intellectual growth. These change agents remain the most valuable asset of institutions of higher education (Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Parker & Trolan, 2020; Trolan & Parker, 2017; Wiseman & Messitt, 2010). Research demonstrates that students who cultivate a long-term, robust personal relationship with a faculty member remain more likely to persevere through their college experience, producing higher retention, completion, and academic outcomes (Hart-Baldrige,

2020; Parker & Trolan, 2020; Trolan & Parker, 2017; Wiseman & Messitt, 2010). These unique student-faculty interactions aid in creating experiences that yield sharper academic goal-orientation, persistence, commitment, and resilience (Parker & Trolan, 2020; Trolan & Parker, 2017; Wiseman & Messitt, 2010).

Conversely, faculty members who remain devoid of building robust faculty-student partnerships become ineffective, and students demonstrate less commitment, experience lower levels of motivation, persistence, and determination, lack a sense of belonging, and often lose meaning and context in their pursuit of academic and vocational fulfillment (Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Parker & Trolan, 2020; Trolan & Parker, 2017). Therefore, vibrant, unique, and intentional relationships must manifest as these critical constituents represent the gatekeepers who contribute to higher retention and completion. These exchanges can benefit or discourage students throughout their college experience (Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Trolan & Parker, 2017; Wiseman & Messitt, 2010). Institutions with a diverse faculty composition stay better equipped to establish richer connections, improve engagement, increase a sense of belonging, and provoke deeper purpose (Meeuwisse et al., 2010; Parker & Trolan, 2020; Stebleton et al., 2014; Trolan & Parker, 2017).

As faculty-student exchanges intensify, other significant results experienced include improved academic success, accountability, decision-making, and more profound cognitive and intellectual skill development, manifesting more favorable educational outcomes (Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Parker & Trolan, 2020; Trolan & Parker, 2017; Wiseman & Messitt, 2010). However, faculty habitually associate educational outcomes as precedence and view academic results as their most critical responsibility rather than connecting students to occupational goals and linking them to other nonacademic resources (Allen & Smith, 2008; Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Trolan & Parker, 2017). As a result, students experience higher levels of unfulfillment, stay less

empowered to make confident and clear vocational decisions, possess ambiguous career self-awareness, and acquire a less explicit path toward satisfaction and degree attainment (Allen & Smith, 2008; Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Trolan et al., 2016; Wu, 2019). One study led by Wiseman and Messitt (2010) concentrated on a faculty-advisor success model and its usefulness. The findings concluded that the most effective and influential faculty members represent those whose proficiencies, competencies, inputs, and strengths can be designed into the curriculum (Wiseman & Messitt, 2010). Considering this evidence, modifying career curriculum to one's interests does not create the most conducive environment for occupational advancement. Likewise, an institution that recognizes the implications of featuring a career professional-led as opposed to an academic adjunct faculty-led course may potentially increase student commitment, boost confidence, enhance occupational readiness, and enable students to make better academic choices, ultimately improving their success rates.

The research demonstrates that faculty members possess a disposition toward upholding academic rigor, preserving knowledge, supporting intellectual progression, fostering dynamic interactions, promoting conducive learning environments, and retaining student educational outcomes (Parker & Trolan, 2020; Trolan et al., 2016; Trolan & Parker, 2017). Research also suggests that faculty members remain bent toward academic excellence and less inclined toward vocational prosperity (Allen & Smith, 2008; Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Trolan et al., 2016; Trolan & Parker, 2017). Therefore, career courses instructed by career professionals may generate more favorable outcomes for vocational and occupational success, and examining the advantages, disadvantages, and outcomes of previous career development courses prevails as essential.

Defining a Career Development Course

Research reveals that college students possess differentiated career development levels, goal orientation, and vocational identity (Creed & Hennessy, 2016; Johnson et al., 2014). The

higher the level of differentiation one possesses, the healthier one's vocational identity, which produces improved career thought and career decision making (Johnson et al., 2014).

Mindfulness also significantly impacts career decision making, and healthy levels of awareness can potentially improve the career decision-making process, reduce negative career thought, and enhance vocational identity (Galles et al., 2019). College-level career development courses seek to improve one's understanding of strengths, skills, abilities, interests, and talents to better align with degree declaration (Joslyn, 2015; Morris, 2017; Samuel, 2014). The value of offering intentionally designed career development courses and interventions continues to increase in discussions at postsecondary institutions (Joslyn, 2015; McDow & Zabucky, 2015; Whiston & Blustein, 2013). Career development courses exist to help students cultivate vocational discernment that stimulates deeper levels of career maturity (Ledwith, 2014). Simultaneously, a career course aims to reduce dysfunctional career thought, increase personal responsibility, improve self-sufficiency and self-actualization, and boost career confidence, compelling students to develop a more robust skill level, aptitude, competency, ability, and capacity toward their chosen industry (Joslyn, 2015; Murphy & Murphy, 2018; Whiston & Blustein, 2013).

After achieving more robust levels of occupational perspicuity and with newly discovered purpose and aspirations, students remain more empowered to make better academic choices throughout their college experience (Ledwith, 2014; Murphy & Murphy, 2018; Whiston & Blustein, 2013). Consequently, more profound meaning manifests, intentionality endures, passion, commitment, dedication, and perseverance intensify, course satisfaction improves, and job crafting emerges, producing higher retention levels (Ledwith, 2014; Murphy & Murphy, 2018). As job crafting transpires, and students obtain a more explicit path toward degree achievement, higher levels of autonomy develop and morale improves because students can visualize a desirable educational result; therefore, student engagement and participation amplify,

and intellectual enthusiasm ensues, yielding higher retention and timely completion (Ledwith, 2014; Murphy & Murphy, 2018; Petrou et al., 2016; Tims et al., 2015). Students who experience vocational breakthrough can participate in critical occupational identity dialog, which further develops deeper meaning concerning their career maturity, aids in identifying the dysfunctional symptoms that cause inadequate productivity, and transforms low levels of satisfaction and performance into academic excellence and vocational success, which also positively impacts external stakeholders as students enter the labor force (Joslyn, 2015; Ledwith, 2014; McDow & Zabucky, 2015; Whiston & Blustein, 2013). Despite the beneficial assertions of career courses, research reveals that not all career courses yield positive results (Hansen et al., 2017; Mokher & Leeds, 2019; Grier-Reed & Chahla, 2015). Examining ineffective career courses and the existing concerns of their usefulness and value remains essential.

Exploring the Existing Concerns With Career Development

Ineffective Career Courses and Their Implications

The significance of career development courses and their potential to positively affect retention and completion habitually provokes scholars to study their implications. The aim of a career course helps students discover more profound levels of self-actualization, aids in developing their career aspirations, and helps them enhance their career readiness for improved career opportunities (Joslyn, 2015; Morris, 2017; Samuel, 2014). The most critical element that impacts students' college experiences may rest in their vocational discernment and their ability to make vital academic decisions as they become aware of their occupational strengths (Morris, 2017). As students obtain a more explicit understanding of their unique calling and their distinct vocational strengths, they become more equipped to make better academic choices, and a more prevalent academic pathway appears, resulting in more propitious results (Joslyn, 2015; Whiston & Blustein, 2013).

Despite these positive claims, recent studies indicate that not all outcomes remain encouraging. Findings indicate that although career courses have the potential to enhance career decision-making, the evidence does not show that academic outcomes would potentially improve for students enrolled in a career course (Grier-Reed & Chahla, 2015; Hansen et al., 2017; Mokher & Leeds, 2019). Grier-Reed and Chahla (2015) concluded that career courses generate no significant improvement in years to graduation, cumulative GPA, or credit completion for students who enroll in a career course regardless of race or ethnicity. Another study explored if undergraduate students taking a career course would positively impact retention, graduation rates, and academic performance (Hansen et al., 2017). The course allowed teachers to adjust the content to their interests. The findings indicated no significant difference in retention and graduation rates for students who participated in the career development course compared to those who did not.

For first-generation Hispanic and Latino students, these outcomes appear disheartening as enrollment increases for this population across the community college system in Arkansas. Countless remain unaware of their vocational strengths, lack efficacious career choice, occupational maturity, possess higher levels of dysfunctional career thought, and have a deficiency with career interests, purpose, focus, and commitment (Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Joslyn, 2015; Osborn et al., 2019; Soriaa & Stebleton, 2012). Without possessing the capacity or aptitude to make mature, confident, and personalized decisions concerning one's career, dysfunctional thought amplifies, student readiness declines, and students become less likely to seek out academic and career advising, leading to higher levels of withdrawal and lower levels of retention (Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Joslyn, 2015; Ledwith, 2014; Osborn et al., 2019; Soria & Stebleton, 2012). Although some studies suggest no significant difference in retention or graduation rates for students who participate in a career course, other evidence points to more

favorable outcomes. Exploring the positive impact career courses have on career decision-making, self-efficacy, and vocational identity for increasing student success prevails as paramount and covered in the next section.

Examining the Positive Outcomes of Career Development Courses

Successful Career Courses That Produce Positive Results

Career development courses represent one method in which an individual can obtain a deeper understanding of one's vocational calling. These course offerings serve as an elective for college students in a postsecondary institutional setting. Students engage in career exploration, vocational strengths identification, and occupational choice. These courses assist students in discovering more profound levels of career self-efficacy, and individuals improve upon their weaknesses, blind spots, and limitations, which creates a more self-aware, proficient, capable, and competitive individual and employee, boosting performance and potentially increasing retention and completion (Gaertner et al., 2014; Joslyn, 2015; Kim & Shin, 2020; Ledwith, 2014).

Another critical objective of a career development course focuses on identifying one's strengths and abilities and then matching those characteristics with a specific occupation (Joslyn, 2015; Morris, 2017; Samuel, 2014). Previously conducted research demonstrates that those who enrolled in a career course experienced beneficial and positive results (Creed & Hennessy, 2016; Folsom & Reardon, 2003; Galles et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2014; Lent et al., 2019). Research reveals that career courses may positively benefit students and improve educational outcomes. One study conducted by Creed and Hennessy (2016) investigated the impact that goal orientation had on vocational identity. Vocational assessments and goal orientation questionnaires were used to measure student competency. The findings revealed a positive association between goal orientation and vocational identity. Another study examined career exploration and career

decision making through a longitudinal design using the career self-management model (Lent et al., 2019). An assortment of instrumentation were employed to assess career exploration and career-decision making. These assessments measured outcome expectations, social support, career goals and actions, and trait conscientiousness. These assessments were administered at two different durations, approximately four months apart, and revealed a positive cognitive change in career decision-making skills. Favorable changes were found in decisional status and anxiety.

Another study focused on measuring the variance in career development levels in college students (Johnson et al., 2014). The study concluded that students possessing higher levels of differentiation correlated to healthier career development. The study also reported that those students who possessed increased emotional cutoff levels had lower vocation identity levels. While Johnson et al. (2014) emphasized differentiation and emotional cutoff levels, Galles et al. (2019) explored the impact mindfulness had on career decision-making. The study used both mindfulness instruments and career assessments to measure student abilities, and the results indicated that mindfulness produced fewer negative career thoughts and elevated vocational identity. Another study by Folsom and Reardon (2003) possibly represents one of the most influential, persuasive, and meaningful studies demonstrating the significance of career course efficacy. This research examined the development, effectiveness, and impact of career courses taught at various universities dating back to the 1920s. A total of 46 studies were scrutinized, and over 17,600 students engaged throughout the process. Courses varied in an academic capacity. Some consisted of courses for first-year students, others upper-division courses, while others functioned as credit or noncredit courses. Course satisfaction and success were measured via a pre-and postsurvey. The results indicated that, of the 46 studies examined, 38 were found to have favorable changes in the dependent variables. Variables included “career maturity and

development, locus of control, career decision making, and vocational identity and career thoughts” (Folsom & Reardon, 2003, p. 434). An additional finding revealed that 15 of the studies detected a positive impact on retention.

Career exploration, development, self-efficacy, vocational development, and career choice represent critical factors of the college experience. Examining various studies confirm the beneficial aspects of the implementation of career development courses. They emphasize that achievable results remain possible and institutions that further explore the usefulness of these courses may positively impact student achievement. The data covered and synthesized also suggest that students can benefit from enrolling in a career course or participating in career exploration, which remains encouraging for first-generation Hispanic and Latino students in an educational institution. However, an evaluation of career courses produced mixed results and established debatable insight into their effectiveness and usefulness and further justifies continued investigation into these course offerings (Gaertner et al., 2014; Hansen et al., 2017; Kim & Shin, 2020; Mokher & Leeds, 2019). As student success rates continue to decline, a shift in course delivery may produce different and more advantageous results. Therefore, analyzing these outcomes may help institutions of higher education improve these rates.

Discerning the Mixed Results of Career Courses

The research explored accentuates institutions of higher education that continually expand career development course offerings. However, these professional development courses remain broad and fluid in scope, interest, effectiveness, development, impact, and generate mixed outcomes. The benefits, advantages, disadvantages, and outcomes of career courses remain mixed across time and persistently provide ambiguous results on their implementation efficiency. Exploring career development courses and the positive, negative, or neutral benefits and implications they generate for college students remains warranted. Future investigation of

career interventions may potentially benefit and enhance student academic success and should continue to develop. One unifying theme that appeared throughout the review of career courses exemplified the lack of career professionals instructing these critical life-altering courses. The research suggests that students most likely can benefit from enrolling in a career course or participating in career exploration; however, not all findings yielded favorable outcomes, and results changed perpetually. Leveraging these data can prove beneficial in constructing future career courses. Traditionally, a career course remains intended to increase student self-efficacy, improve career maturity and career choice, while it simultaneously decreases dysfunctional career thought, and enhances a student's ability to achieve academic excellence and graduate career-ready (Folsom & Reardon, 2003; Joslyn, 2015; Morris, 2017; Osborn et al., 2019; Samuel, 2014).

Career courses offered at educational institutions predominantly remain assigned to adjunct faculty members who tailor the curriculum to their interests, competency, and abilities in contrast to career professionals; therefore, hopes of gaining a profound understanding of one's strengths, abilities, and skills can become obfuscated due to the limitation of the faculty member's capabilities (Carson, 2011). This inadequate information may profoundly impact retention and completion rates for first-generation Hispanic and Latino students. Pivoting toward creating career courses that can expand on more profound levels of vocational purpose and allow participation in more meaningful content establishes a healthier alignment of academic engagement, enhances intrinsic motivation, and improves character, commitment, dedication, grit, resilience, and a willingness to persevere (Galles et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2014; Lent et al., 2019). Appointing career professionals to instruct career courses may boost vocational clarity, diminish dissolution, and positively transform the distained perspective of academic ineffectiveness, causing favorable results for internal and external constituents. Career courses

do not encapsulate all impediments that first-generation Hispanic and Latino students experience. An investigation into the perceived barriers of this population prevails as paramount.

Identifying Barriers That Exist for First-Generation Hispanic and Latino Students

The Prevailing Impact of Social Class

Six decades have passed since the Supreme Court of the United States declared segregation unlawful (Price, 2019). Equality reverberated across the nation, and a resounding wave of hope established a vibrant tone of impartiality, granting optimism, expectation, anticipation, and confidence to minorities that the United States would remain true to its constitutional commitment “that all men are created equal” (Price, 2019, p. 59). Despite this unprecedented pledge, some argue that considerable injustices prevail. The promise of equal opportunity resembles the chattering noise of a country reputable in serving an elite, privileged population while minorities continue to experience low wages, increased poverty levels, more prominent unemployment than their nonminority counterparts, possess lower levels of secondary education, unsatisfactory access to adequate housing, unacceptable admission to proportionate healthcare, experience higher levels of crime, as well as limited resources and opportunities (Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Popescu et al., 2018).

Some research illustrates the significance of possessing a higher social class ranking and how status affects overall health, success, affluence, fulfillment, and well-being (Kraus et al., 2012; Ridgeway, 2014; Wyatt et al., 2019). Individuals from higher socioeconomic positions attain and enjoy increased wealth, achieve more education, and acquire more career advancement than their lower-ranking peers (Kraus et al., 2012; Wyatt et al., 2019). The advancement of Hispanic and Latino students’ rests in promoting systems that advance the socioeconomic status of those who remain historically underserved and underrepresented (Farias et al., 2019; Kraus et al., 2012; Ridgeway, 2014). Conversely, Hispanics and Latino students who attain degree

completion increase their self-confidence and self-esteem, their self-doubt diminishes, academic and career achievement improves, positive attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward success intensify, and the assumption of personal self-inadequacy decreases (Cokley et al., 2013; Parkman, 2016; Sukhera et al., 2018; Wyatt et al., 2019). Ascertaining a more advanced understanding of students' lived experiences can assist educational institutions in improving the service offered and empowers this population to make better choices. The chronic reality of assuming that this population acts, functions, and possesses the same experiences and needs the same level of service as non-first-generation students indicates another contributing factor to the variables that obstruct Hispanic and Latino students in attaining elevated retention and completion rates.

As institutions of higher education perpetually contend with declining retention and completion, Hispanic and Latino minorities remain the most at risk and possess the largest achievement gap in completing their postsecondary education (Drake et al., 2019; Karkouti, 2016; Mitchell & Coyle, 2019). Exploring factors that hinder Hispanic and Latino minorities' educational success in reaching their academic and vocational goals establishes that further examination remains essential so that minorities can attain academic excellence, economic independence, and vocational prosperity.

Uncovering the Distinct Variables That Impact Academic and Vocational Prosperity

Research emphasizes that, although enrollment for Hispanic minorities continues to increase, outcomes indicate this population consistently experiences lower retention and completion rates and progressively declining transfer rates than their nonminority counterparts (Contreras, 2017; Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Engle & Tinto, 2008; Kouyoumdjian et al., 2017; Soria & Stebleton, 2012). Despite institutional efforts, colleges remain ill equipped to fully discern the factors that cause this population to depart (Choi et al., 2019; Diehl et al., 2019).

Research exposes the significant indicators that meaningfully impact this population's commitment as they attend college and endeavor through their journey. These variables include family background and support, developing various personal attributes, previous academic experience, and colleges remain unprepared to adequately service this population (Choi et al., 2019; Contreras, 2017; Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Diehl et al., 2019; Vincent, 2020).

Research also reveals that numerous first-generation Hispanic and Latino minorities lack clear goal orientation; therefore, academic achievement, degree completion, and vocational choice remain significantly affected as colleges possess various structural barriers, constraints, and lack ample resources to address these concerns (Galles et al., 2019; Gelbgiser, 2018; Kelsey et al., 2018; Mitchell & Coyle, 2019).

Other critical barriers experienced by first-generation Hispanic and Latino students impeding their performance include available resources, monetary hardships, cultural expectations and norms, lower levels of career readiness, and the successful navigation of work-life balance (Joslyn, 2015; Kelsey et al., 2018; Kouyoumdjian et al., 2017). These indicators negatively impact a college student's ability to thrive intellectually, obstruct career advancement, hinder successful upward mobility, potentially causing lower levels of retention and completion rates for Hispanic and Latino minorities in an educational setting (Joslyn, 2015; Kelsey et al., 2018; Kouyoumdjian et al., 2017).

Family dynamics represents the most critical component for student success (Choi et al., 2019; Vincent, 2020). Possessing a better understanding of family norms, identifying those challenges, and discerning family culture can help determine the influential capacity families have on student achievement (Choi et al., 2019; Diehl et al., 2019; Vincent, 2020).

Developing Unique Personal Character

A second crucial element for student success focuses on the variety of different personal attributes one possesses and the purposeful development of those qualities. An exceptional level of character can be defined as an innate quality that propels one to actively engage in good behavior to produce positive results and develops in one through repetition of continually endeavoring in good behavior and denotes as an attribute of ongoing amelioration (George, 2017). An individual with mature character comprehends that they cannot ever fully attain or master its nature; therefore, one possessing an advanced character participates in perpetual development, and incessant growth (George, 2017). To expound further, character represents an inherent trait consistently undergoing refinement. It signifies a quality that persistently endures improvement, an attitude of one who relentlessly pursues and strives toward excellence, and a boldness of one who remains comfortable undergoing endless transformation. One with cultivated character understands that in its highest form, it remains just slightly out of reach. Thus, one with a profound character yearns to consume more of its substance regularly and never stops chasing deeper depths of its essence.

Paramount to the success of first-generation Hispanic and Latino students prevails as identifying and cultivating characteristics that shape aspirations, develop abilities, and foster fortitude, producing positive outcomes (Choi et al., 2019; Diehl et al., 2019). These results can potentially create more profound levels of purpose, establish clearer academic and vocational goals, and grant students the commitment, motivation, and determination needed to attain those objectives (Choi et al., 2019; Diehl et al., 2019). Underdeveloped personal attributes represent a significant factor and may help explain why Hispanics and Latino students possess lower levels of retention and completion rates and why the cultivation of unique personal characteristics

prevails as essential for academic and vocational progression. Additional research may uncover strategies that positively increase Hispanic and Latino retention and degree completion rates.

Exploring Pre-College Academic Experiences

Another component that affects retention and completion for Hispanic and Latino students signifies the lack of understanding of the pre-college academic experiences and the impact of those circumstances (Choi et al., 2019; Vincent, 2020). Countless first-generation Hispanic and Latino students experience living in areas of higher crime and poverty, receive lower-quality and unsatisfactory healthcare, possess lower levels of education, have higher levels of unemployment, obtain lower wages, struggle with access to equal housing opportunity, and encounter major safety concerns within communities (Blendon & Cassey, 2019; Popescu et al., 2018). These conditions impede intellectual and occupational progression for Hispanic and Latino students. Subsequently, organizations lose the capacity to employ diverse constituents, further contributing to community deterioration and degeneration, so essential needs decrease, resources depreciate, and social environments remain unhealthy and immutable. This population incessantly remains vulnerable and continues to underperform compared to their non-first-generation counterparts (Farias et al., 2019; Kraus et al., 2012; Ridgeway, 2014; Rudman, 2015).

Students who overcome these challenging hurdles then face occupational impediments, lack vocational maturity, remain less aware of their career purpose and other available student support services (Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Engle & Tinto, 2008; Osborn et al., 2019; Soriaa & Stebleton, 2012). Students who possess an unclear career path also experience less commitment, focus, dedication, motivation, and lack a hardy and robust social structure (Chavira et al., 2016; Murphy & Murphy, 2018; Romo et al., 2020). Healthy social structures may represent the most impactful and dominant aspect of the college experience (Choi et al., 2019; Diehl et al., 2019; Vincent, 2020). Investigating the positive and negative components of an

educational social structure may clarify how these powerful and dynamic systems affect success rates for first-generation Hispanic and Latino students and explored in the next section.

Identifying Significant Contributors in a Social Structure

According to Choi et al. (2019), social structures exemplify the most influential factors concerning retention and student departure. As a student engages in an indefatigable clash within a social system consisting of peers, peer groups, faculty, administrators, and staff influencers, they access and evaluate the system (Braxton et al., 2000; Choi et al., 2019; Diehl et al., 2019; Vincent, 2020). These persuasive entities produce social interactions, and each constituent participates in determining social system fit and acceptance (Goldberg, 2013). Scholars, practitioners, and professionals concur that race, ethnicity, culture, gender, socioeconomic status, and other factors may contribute to withdrawal (Berger & Braxton, 1998; Choi et al., 2019; Diehl et al., 2019; Goldberg, 2013). These factors must be explored to grasp a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to student departure. First-generation Hispanic and Latino students remain particularly vulnerable because they tend to experience belonging differently than their nonminority counterparts (Choi et al., 2019; Diehl et al., 2019). Each critical element contributes to the student's commitment level. The student regularly discerns the applicability of the appropriateness of the social structure. Positive and negative social environments exist. One evaluates external family lives, campus environments, academic communities and support, organizational fit, and institutional atmospheres (Braxton et al., 2000; Vincent, 2020). Assessing these critical aspects that affect student institutional choice further clarify a student's level of vocational calling, occupational maturity, commitment, enthusiasm, eagerness, and perseverance as they seek degree attainment and may elucidate the dominant factors that cause unhealthy success rates for this population.

Outcomes of a Positive Experience

A social framework at colleges and universities consists of many influencers, including peers, peer groups, faculty, and staff. This system acts as an essential structure that directly influences a student's decision to put forth more effort toward degree attainment (Berger & Braxton, 1998; Diehl et al., 2019). The system also affects a student's desire and commitment level to remain in college or can motivate them to withdraw or transfer to an institution that more closely aligns with their preferred habitation, and the decision to stay or dropout is voluntary (Berger & Braxton, 1998; Diehl et al., 2019). As a student evaluates the collegiate social structure, they concurrently contend with academic performance and intellectual growth (Choi et al., 2019). The student evaluates the characteristics of an academic environment, and consequently, their commitment level manifests. Performance, engagement, intellectual development, career purpose and maturity, coupled with desirable interactions, contribute to the student's perspective on system relevance (Berger & Braxton, 1998; Choi et al., 2019; Diehl et al., 2019; Folsom & Reardon, 2003). Should a student's interactions with the social structure at college and the academic environment maintain congruency and conflate, they remain less likely to drop out of college because their institutional interactions generate positive experiences (Choi et al., 2019). Therefore, a more significant commitment transpires, healthy social integration occurs, and a more profound dedication toward graduation emerges. As a result, educational institutions experience an increase in student retention.

Consequences of a Negative Exchange

As student populations continually diversify across community colleges in Arkansas, analyzing unique student challenges and viewing these barriers and limitations through a multilayer optic remains vital to produce a positive student experience. This process includes understanding that social integration does not signify a single event (Braxton et al., 2000; Choi et

al., 2019). Social integration occurs over countless interactions and involves internal and external factors, barriers, challenges, and obstacles that happen continuously. Goal commitment or goal abandonment develops through the process of social integration (Braxton et al., 2000; Choi et al., 2019). If a student's interactions with the social structure and the academic environment remain undesirable or contradictory to their aspirations, they remain more likely to withdraw from college because their institutional interactions yield negative exchanges (Braxton et al., 2000; Choi et al., 2019). Therefore, a weaker commitment develops, a lack of social integration creates minimal dedication, poorer engagement ensues, attachment toward the institution decreases, and lower perseverance toward graduation transpires. These negative experiences often result in lower retention and higher transfer rates (Braxton et al., 2000; Choi et al., 2019). As retention and completion rates become a concern in institutions of higher education, these concepts provide a refreshing perspective and discernable awareness of the critical structure needed to create healthier academic environments for students to commit, endure, persevere, and strive toward degree attainment. Expounding on a healthy social structure and the aspects of a positive academic environment, clarification of positive and negative student experiences, and how these interactions affect student choice can help remedy lower retention and completion rates among this population (Choi et al., 2019; Diehl et al., 2019). Therefore, the influential, multifaceted factors that contribute to student withdrawal demonstrate that more research remains compulsory.

As campus populations diversify across Arkansas, a one-size-fits-all approach remains obsolete. Implementing more robust strategies that produce institutional effectiveness while examining the needs, challenges, limitations, and barriers of a diverse population can better equip colleges to help students achieve higher retention rates, increase academic excellence, boost vocational prosperity, enhance occupational clarity, and improve career self-efficacy. The

notion of engagement, involvement, and integration, and then documenting, revising, and continually improving educational best practices for student success remain compulsory.

Institutions that enrich their understanding of the diverse attributes that impact first-generation Hispanic and Latino success rates remain better equipped to support this population's academic and vocational success (Berger & Braxton, 1998; Choi et al., 2019; Diehl et al., 2019). Colleges that foster more profound levels of critical social construct development seek to understand the dynamics of family influence and norms and recognize unique personal identity and individual transformation can experience elevated results (Choi et al., 2019; Diehl et al., 2019; Vincent, 2020). Identifying challenges and barriers, deepening the understanding of the family background, influence, and support, and expanding the capacity to distinguish the meaningful impact these factors represent in establishing goals, fostering commitment, cultivating personal qualities, developing intellectual growth and vocational maturity, and yielding institutional fit may produce higher individualized student achievement (Diehl et al., 2019; Vincent, 2020). Comprehension of these significant concepts may increase retention and completion rates for first-generation Hispanic and Latino students because student potential becomes more apparent, and they develop an awareness of challenges, limitations, and barriers. Therefore, goal commitment, tolerance, resourcefulness, engagement, and involvement intensify toward supporting and assisting students in degree attainment (Choi et al., 2019; Foubert et al., 2005; Liversage et al., 2018; Moseley et al., 2020). Higher levels of organizational effectiveness transpire, and the desire to increase productivity, satisfaction, and performance for students, departments, and the organization manifest (Choi et al., 2019; Foubert et al., 2005; Liversage et al., 2018; Moseley et al., 2020). Positive experiences can provide a meaningful context of intellectual development and maturity, which remains a side effect of a robust academic environment (Choi et al., 2019; Diehl et al., 2019). Contributing factors that influence this

population remain significantly different compared to their non-first-generation peers. As campus populations continue to diversify, it remains paramount to become more culturally competent and increase awareness. An examination of the impact of culture on first-generation Hispanic and Latino students remains necessary to gain deeper insight into how the system works together to increase decision making, which may affect retention and completion for this population.

Exploring the Meaningful Impact of Cultural Awareness

As society continues to progress into the 21st century, institutions of higher education consistently experience an increase in diversity. In Arkansas, the first-generation Hispanic and Latino student population continues to increase (Excelencia in Education, 2018). As community colleges in Arkansas continue to see amplified enrollment among first-generation Hispanic and Latino students, their methods must adapt to meet population demands. Fundamental adjustments must be implemented to support the swelling Hispanic and Latino population more effectively. Additional modifications to student services, career services, and learning models remain paramount for students to experience growth and success as diverse student populations surge.

Counseling techniques must also change to support cultural diversity (Hoogeveen, 2013; Storlie et al., 2014; Storlie et al., 2015; Storlie & Jach, 2014). To create healthy and more robust levels of success, some research indicates that departments consisting of diverse staff members can improve the engagement of ethnic minorities (Flores and Heppner, 2002; Hoogeveen, 2013; Storlie et al., 2014; Storlie et al., 2015; Storlie & Jach, 2014). One prominent challenge signifies the lack of cultural awareness, changing demographics, and cultural landscape of this population (Hoogeveen, 2013; Storlie et al., 2014; Storlie et al., 2015; Storlie & Jach, 2014). Competence, global and cultural intelligence, resourcefulness, and innovative imagination require leaders to

transform the world of work to achieve organizational excellence (Hoogeveen, 2013; Storlie et al., 2014; Storlie et al., 2015; Storlie & Jach, 2014). Counselors lacking cultural competency can produce damaging consequences that prevent student success (Joslyn, 2015; Kelsey, 2018; Murphy & Murphy, 2018). As Arkansas community colleges diversify, cultural competency remains critical for the proper delivery of academic and vocational support. As cultural awareness develops, barriers begin to disappear, and higher levels of achievement may manifest (Joslyn, 2015; Kelsey, 2018; McElroy, 2019; Morris, 2017; Murphy & Murphy, 2018).

Discerning the Significance of Culturally Diverse Teams

Culturally diverse teams represent another indicator when considering success rates for first-generation Hispanic and Latino students (Kelsey, 2018; McElroy, 2019; Morris, 2017; Murphy & Murphy, 2018; Storlie et al., 2015). Institutions of higher education must proactively hire diverse personnel, actively foster cultural awareness, and remain sensitive to the diverse populations that now inhabit Arkansas. Researchers assert that culture influences all aspects of career counseling interactions; therefore, cultural competency remains paramount to effective engagement with students in the process (Joslyn, 2015; Storlie et al., 2015; Storlie & Toomey, 2020). Culturally diverse teams and the transformation of career counselors' approaches to students remain essential.

Culturally diverse teams represent one element of the solution. Some research indicates that service departments consisting of diverse staff members can increase the engagement of ethnic minorities (Kelly & Loew, 2018; Leifels, 2020). Minority populations tend to interact with and remain more receptive to services delivered by staff from diverse backgrounds (Kelly & Loew, 2018; Leifels, 2020). A student who possesses the ability to communicate with a career counselor from the same ethnic background can unlock doors of opportunity and communication

not previously assessable due to the ethnic connection and the understanding of norms, expectations, and challenges (Flores & Heppner, 2002; Kelly & Loew, 2018; Leifels, 2020).

Other critical factors counselors must examine represent the environment, approach, cultural group association, cultural identity, and usefulness and relevance of an intervention (Sternier, 2012). Culturally diverse personnel possessing fluency in both languages and cultures can better serve student populations (Kelly & Loew, 2018; Leifels, 2020; Sternier, 2012). These factors transform the student's experience and might also increase retention, effectiveness, and success (Sternier, 2012). Institutions that do not possess a composition of career counselors of diverse backgrounds must practice sensitivity and understand the role of culture, its impact, and outcomes as they attempt to form a unique connection with an individual (Kelly & Loew, 2018; Leifels, 2020; Sternier, 2012). Various negative shortcomings can fester when a counselor remains unconcerned with culture and the effects of vocational decision making (Kelly & Loew, 2018; Leifels, 2020). Individuals with a penchant for cultural competency connect and communicate information more effectively, confidently, transparently, thoroughly, and realistically (Kelly & Loew, 2018; Leifels, 2020; Sternier, 2012). Crockett and Hays (2011) emphasize some of the barrier's students face, including language, cultural norms, and values. Culturally competent counselors can recognize and understand nonverbal cues and cultural norms, including traditional attire, gestures, vocabulary, and body language (Leifels, 2020; Kelly & Loew, 2018; Sternier, 2012).

Recognizing, enacting, and maintaining culturally competent personnel, teams, and preserving cross-cultural communication represents a significant echelon in institutional effectiveness and might drastically alter success rates for first-generation Hispanic and Latino students. A diverse employee community may assist in elevating first-generation Hispanic and Latino students toward higher levels of degree achievement and more profound levels of

vocational awareness. This might ultimately result in higher social class attainment, aid in removing barriers, expand cultural humility, and can grant other first-generation Hispanic and Latino individuals the inspiration and hope needed to change their circumstances and pursue academic and vocational success (Mosher et al., 2017; Wyatt et al., 2019). According to Emerson and Yancey (2011), organizations must recognize the gravity of thick ethnicity within teams. Successful organizations that remain obligated to practice, develop, and enact thick diversity to represent dense cultural uniqueness embody the most productive institutions. Organizations who create culturally diverse groups improve the overall health of teams and the establishment, productivity increases, corporate reputation positively enhances, and organizations remain more equipped to maintain robust competitiveness in a progressively diverse global economy (Emerson & Yancey, 2011). Institutions that employ teams that do not reflect diversity hinder organizations from reaching greater success than establishments with culturally diverse constituents (Emerson & Yancey, 2011).

Distinguishing the significance of creating and preserving learning environments that promote diversity, autonomy, justice, fidelity, veracity, and impartiality prevails as paramount for student and organizational richness (Schuh et al., 2017). Institutional cultures must anchor themselves to upholding and preserving the respect, dignity, self-worth, and value of each individual and champion integrity, justice, equal opportunity, inclusion, and civility (Kaplin et al., 2020; Werner, 2017). The changing demographics of the student population in the Arkansas community college system and the positive consequences of culturally competent counselors and teams establishes the significance of rethinking past approaches of career development. Reimagining the way career courses are delivered at the Arkansas community college system may produce more capable, skilled, and proficient students, and could positively and

dynamically increase the meaningful impact an institution has on success rates for first-generation Hispanic and Latino students.

Summary

The exploration of appropriate and relevant literature uncovered the perspective of divine vocational purpose and calling and examined secular occupational development patriarchs of the past. The literature review revealed that various multifaceted variables contribute to declining success rates for first-generation Hispanic and Latino students. A penetrating analysis of existing career courses that accentuated positive and negative outcomes demonstrates that career development consists of overarching complex elements that significantly impact retention, transfer, and completion rates. Other significant factors examined represent perceived barriers, the impact of social structures, the influence of culturally diverse teams, and benefits of cultural awareness. As I synthesized existing evidence, a manifestation of emerging and developing multifaceted aspects and challenges presents a strong case for the study. These concerns remain multilayered, and the existing research investigated emphasized that additional research remains compulsory. Transforming practices, altering perspectives toward ascertaining higher levels of vocational calling, changing career course service offerings, and diversifying interactions may ultimately enhance the academic diligence of first-generation Latino and Hispanic college students. It can also potentially amplify vocational maturity and discernment, improve career decision making, and boost retention, transfer, and graduation rates as students gain a clearer understanding of their unique occupational strengths, empowering them to make better academic choices.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this chapter outlines the relevant methodological approach rationale. In this chapter, I discussed the research design and research paradigm. Identifying the population, explaining the recruitment procedure, sampling strategy, and articulating the data collection and data analysis process used to adequately address the research questions are also discussed. Next, justifying the ethics and trustworthiness of the study and defining the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the research were also covered.

Research Design

A qualitative case study design represented the most appropriate and reliable methodology for engaging and determining the best results for the target population. This approach equipped me to draw out meaningful context throughout the interviews and through other methods, and better qualified me to explain, determine, and interpret events, activities, circumstances, and aspects of an informant's experiences (Leavy, 2017). It reduced interpretation error, decreased bias, and increased credibility, trustworthiness, validity, and dependability, signifying foundational indicators of qualitative case study research (Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2009; Yin, 2012).

The intentionally created research questions summarize and capture the components examined in the literature review concerning the analyzed and explored phenomenon. Following the research question section, I address the participant selection process, the number of interviewees, and the selection of informants.

Research Paradigm

The most appropriate method for research design represented a qualitative case study framework. This rigorous and strict technique seeks to enhance the understanding of "relevant real-world situations and address important research questions" (Yin, 2009, p. 144). This

exploratory phenomenon provided insight into the research questions, which offered meaningful information for more complex, subsequent research (Yin, 2012). The practitioner gained deeper awareness, intellect, and knowledge toward distinct groups of individuals, an event, or an issue of the holistically bounded phenomenon of interest (Yin, 2009; Yin, 2012). This approach represented the most promising and beneficial technique because it holds no defined assumptions, expectations, or preconceived notions and attempts to uncover an in-depth sense of real-life experiences, while drawing out insightful contextual details of the phenomenon under investigation (Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2009; Yin, 2012). As a result, this approach remained unbiased throughout the process and resolute in capturing and ascertaining information in the interviews, with observations and other forms of evidence equipping the me to assess results and demonstrate ethical integrity, trustworthiness, reliability, and validity (Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2009; Yin, 2012). A case study also signified a relevant process due to the nature of this research. The fundamental components of this research style permitted me and informants to engage in a meaningful partnership to understand unique experiences, barriers, and perspectives, compelling these constituents to become co-contributors as problem-solvers and solution-finders concerning social reality, process and practice, and systematic interventions (Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2009; Yin, 2012). As trust and rapport developed, participatory interactions, engagements, and observations enabled me and empowered the informants to freely participate in conversation and activities that explore vocational opportunities, strengths, interests, limitations, challenges, barriers, and weaknesses. Investigation, exploration, collaboration, and cooperation illustrated a desire to succeed. The co-learning experience generated dynamic, practical, and productive results and helped discern how effective an academic program is working, demonstrating the value of a case study methodological approach for this research (Yin, 2009; Yin, 2012).

Population

Academic adjunct faculty members and career professionals working at a community college in Northcentral Arkansas who have experience instructing English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students represented the target population for the present study. To further clarify, a student whose parent/s or guardian/s have not completed a traditional four-year degree from a four-year institution and whose parent/s or guardian/s identified as Hispanic or Latino define a first-generation student (Salinas, 2020). Significant sensitivity correlates with when and how to use the terms Hispanic and Latino appropriately. For this research, an individual who speaks Spanish or who identifies as an individual of Spanish descent represents a Hispanic student. In contrast, a Latino student represents an individual from Latin America who may or may not speak Spanish (Salinas, 2020). For this study, academic adjunct faculty members and career professionals who have a history of instructing career courses in a community college and have experience working with English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students provided perceived benefits and represented the informant population for this research.

Recruitment and Participant Selection

The current study examined the perceived benefits of a career course attended by English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students and instructed by career professionals compared to academic adjunct faculty members. After receiving approval to conduct this research from the Institutional Review Board (IRB; Appendix H) at Abilene Christian University and the community college, recruitment ensued. I contacted colleagues in Northcentral Arkansas who instruct career courses in a community college setting and have experience working with English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students. I emailed an electronic participant recruitment letter to preselected academic adjunct faculty members and career professionals with experience instructing English-speaking first-generation

Hispanic and Latino students (Appendix A). The letter outlined the purpose of the study, the interview process, the time frame, and how members contribute throughout the study. Once I obtained initial interest from potential participants, a consent form was emailed electronically.

To promote ethical research practices and ensure that each participant engaged in the study voluntarily, I emailed an informed consent form to every participant who expressed interest in participating in the study (Appendix B). The consent form described the study's design, nature, purpose, and how the interviews occurred and explained the participant's role (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). The consent form also ensured that the participant's rights were respected and protected. It also established the individual's rights to confidentiality and assured them that their participation in the study remained anonymous. By signing the consent form, the participants understood that their contributions remained voluntary, and they could withdraw at any time during the study. I provided my contact information to the interviewees to share results should the participants want to know more about the study's outcomes. After receiving signed consent forms, the interviews proceeded.

Sampling

Purposive sampling warranted the best method for participant selection. Purposive sampling aims to gain deeper insight by selecting participants who meet particular criteria (Leavy, 2017; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). Purposive sampling produced inadequate participants and subjects for the interviews making it challenging to identify informants; therefore, I incorporated snowballing to further engage appropriate members for the study. Snowballing allowed me to ask existing informants for contact information of other individuals who might be interested in participating in the study (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015). The individuals in this study self-identified as community college academic adjunct faculty members and career professionals classified as full-time staff at a community college. Individuals who engaged in the

current study held knowledge in assisting, supporting, and guiding students with their career growth, development, and maturity.

Qualitative research encourages a minimum of participants, as large quantities of informants can produce an overwhelming amount of data (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). Therefore, interviewing five academic adjunct faculty members and five career professionals captured sizable data for the current study. Informant selection matched the following criteria: academic adjunct faculty members and full-time career professionals. These informants possessed a history of instructing career courses in a community college and have experience working with English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students.

Data Collection

For the present study, a rich data collection process through peer review, a focus group, followed by semistructured interviews, provided reliability, trustworthiness, and triangulation and further validated my findings (Garvis, 2015; Guest et al., 2006; Turner, 2010).

Utilizing peer review experiences provided additional insight and value throughout the process (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018; Yazan, 2015). Two peers who have experience working with English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students reviewed the interview questions. Peers examined the wording, quality, and clarity of questions and provided feedback if the questions elucidated the types of responses merited for the direction of the study. This process assisted in uncovering meaning and understanding and benefited me in solidifying data gathered (Guest et al., 2006; Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2012). Employing member checking further strengthened the accuracy of the data analysis process as participants validated major themes identified (Guest et al., 2006; Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2012). Members received a copy of the transcriptions to verify the accuracy of the data collected.

I established and conducted a focus group via Zoom containing open-ended questions to determine a sense and awareness of the phenomenon under investigation (Appendix C and Appendix D). I turned Zoom cameras to an off-setting to protect individual responses, autonomy, and privacy, which helped keep informants' personal identity confidential. I auto-recorded the interviews along with writing handwritten descriptive notes. The Zoom interviews lasted an hour. After data were collected and used to complete the study, I destroyed the information. These guided meetings dynamically collected rich data to better understand influencers, motivators, and other compelling factors that impact English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students and provided insight into the components contributing to overall academic and vocational prosperity. As an understanding manifested, an apparent awareness of the values associated with this population produced richer meaning in how to enable this population throughout their educational journey. Implementing rigorous procedures equipped me to ascertain perspective and insight into the factors, barriers, and perceptions that influence career decision making and vocational calling for the target population. Incorporating a focus group strengthened the data collection process and permitted me to examine group dynamics rather than informants and their responses in isolation (Leavy, 2017; Turner, 2010). Focus groups evaluated and measured voice consistency as members possessed the freedom to collectively contribute as the dialogue progressed (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018; Turner, 2010). Opting to utilize focus groups granted informants the opportunity to develop and expand meaning and perspective. These atmospheres created safe and comfortable environments for individuals to express their concerns, thoughts, and feelings, and offered insightful experiences with members of similar backgrounds (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). Focus groups provided me with an alternative view concerning data collection and added validity.

Once the focus groups met, volunteers from the focus groups participated in semistructured interviews conducted via Zoom (Appendix E and Appendix F). I auto-recorded the interviews along with writing descriptive notes, establishing the significance of diversification in the data gathering process. The Zoom interviews lasted an hour. I turned Zoom cameras to an off-setting to protect individual responses, autonomy, and privacy and helped keep informants' personal identity confidential. After data were collected and used to complete the study, I destroyed the information. I sought to gain an understanding of how culture contributes to perspective, decision making, growth, support, and development; therefore, natural settings, social life, cultural norms, barriers to success, and determining a value and belief system were considered and explored, improving interactions, rapport, and conversations throughout the field research process. Incorporating a multilayer approach for data collection increased reliability and trustworthiness, validating the significance of triangulation (Garvis, 2015; Guest et al., 2006; Turner, 2010). Data collection through consensual semistructured interviews with eight distinctively constructed open-ended questions established greater awareness, understanding, and richer context into the phenomenon under investigation. To engage participants, purposefully designed questions discerned how patterns form, perspectives developed, and commonalities emerged. These informal interactions developed an open and intimate conversation throughout the process. Intense and attentive listening provoked deeper dialogue, adding richer meaning as the discussion developed, which prompted follow-up questions (Guest et al., 2006; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018).

Interviews provided a basic understanding of influencers and highlighted the cultural impact on career decision making, awareness of career development tools, utilization of career resources, and experiences with academic adjunct faculty members and career professionals (Leavy, 2017). Semistructured interviews provided meaningful data and perspective regarding

the research questions explored and granted the interviewees more control of the conversation throughout the dialogue (Garvis, 2015; Guest et al., 2006; Turner, 2010). Detailed semistructured interviews promoted thorough discussion and provided insight into the examined phenomenon (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). The objective of this rigorous process sought to obtain saturation, representing no new information surfacing or new data providing ambiguity (Leavy, 2017).

Data Analysis

Employing rigorous data analysis techniques allowed for the most dependable and trustworthy results for this study; therefore, Transcription Puppy was used for transcribing, followed by coding, condensing, and unifying general themes (Leavy, 2017). Six distinct coding methods describe unique techniques researchers employ in qualitative research. These practices include in vivo coding, values coding, descriptive coding, process coding versus coding, and dramaturgical coding (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). For the current study, process coding and in vivo coding represented the most practical method for applying and interpreting data because these practices tether information to purposeful, symbolic, and meaningful language used by the participants (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). The coding process equipped me to discern the most valuable perspectives of the interviewees and helped keep the research targeted and grounded in the language, expressions, and terminology of the participants (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018).

Organizing and preparing relevant and meaningful data also remained critical throughout the process. A rigorous coding process helped reduce and classify data by designating expressions, words, or phrases to data segments as they became more apparent throughout the coding process (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). With interviews consisting of copious data, reducing the length of the interviews to approximately one-third made the data analysis process manageable (Guest et al., 2006; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018).

Not all data established relevance. Intense analysis of appropriate text aided me in obtaining significant meaning and answering the research questions (Guest et al., 2006; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). I analyzed and evaluated the data multiple times and pondered major concepts allowing me to concentrate on emerging themes (Guest et al., 2006; Leavy, 2017). Condensing large amounts of data assisted in gaining critical perspectives of data results followed succeeded by the coding process (Guest et al., 2006; Herr & Anderson, 2015). I engaged in the coding process to further refine and classify data (Leavy, 2017). As significant themes emerged, assigning words or phrases to the data yielded richer meaning concerning the exploration of the phenomenon (Leavy, 2017; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). Although coding, classifying, and theming transpired intermittently, recognizing patterns, and determining themes remained critical in making sense of the data and uncovering profound insights concerning the phenomenon (Guest et al., 2006; Turner, 2010). As condensing and patterning reached completion, unifying the data followed to better discern and establish outcomes. Integrating this procedure demonstrated that data variables can produce various results.

Maintaining authenticity and ethical standards remained critical throughout the process. Annotating outliers added an extra layer of trustworthiness and demonstrated that data analysis remained rigorous and enhanced credibility, dependability, and fidelity (Guest et al., 2006; Leavy, 2017; Turner, 2010). I committed to hypothesizing, discerning, and learning more profoundly about the experiences of a particular group (Guest et al., 2006; Turner, 2010).

To strengthen credibility and trustworthiness, triangulation establishes a reliable study. This process seeks to add validity and confidence through multiple sources, perspectives, and understanding of the data collected (Guest et al., 2006; Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2012). For this study, engaging two different types of experts, and utilizing two separate methods enriched findings and validated that a researcher considers various modalities which supports in unifying,

confirming, or disconfirming results (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018; Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2012).

Triangulation assisted in the process of comparison and increased the dependability of this research. These techniques enabled the analyst to transcribe, code, and annotate the conversations, allowing me to remain attentive, focused, and observant of the informants while progressing through the interview at a manageable pace.

Ethics and Trustworthiness

Ethics and trustworthiness produce paramount qualitative research studies. To ensure this study maintained and preserved ethical integrity, veracity, and fidelity, examining credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability followed (Shenton, 2004). Herr and Anderson (2015) describe indicators that constitute integrity and reliability for qualitative research, which include “quality, goodness, validity, trustworthiness, credibility, and workability” (p. 61). To safeguard academic rigor and uphold ethical standards, the following measures endorsed elevated trustworthiness. The concerns of validity and credibility signify foundational indicators of qualitative research. These two concepts established that I employed a rigorous data collection process, which assists the reader in trusting that the findings promote dependability (Roberts & Hyatt, 2019). Foundational objectives in qualitative research design include achieving validity and credibility. Implementing these criteria prevailed as intentional operational measures, such as the duration of the interview, sampling, triangulation, experience, analysis, debriefing sessions, peer serenity, and construction of thoughtfully designed interview questions that accurately test the overarching research question (Herr & Anderson, 2015; Shenton, 2004). Transferability describes similar problems in various settings, including sufficient background data, indicating the study does not promote isolated research but validates that the study can apply to various situations and populations. Adequate contextual information provided this study with confirmation, supporting transferability (Shenton, 2004). Dependability supports the idea

that this research design offers other scholars the opportunity to retest the same framework. Significant reported details equip future researchers to repeat the study should they elect. Adhering to these criteria indicated that this study exhibits the parameters of dependability and further validates the trustworthiness of the study (Roberts & Hyatt, 2019; Shenton, 2004). Producing an authentic study addressing confirmability established trustworthiness that follows proper protocol and applies triangulation (Stake, 1995; Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2012).

Assumptions

Assumptions suppose that aspects of the research are fundamentally true and decrease uncertainty throughout the study (Ellis & Levy, 2009). The literature review revealed that postsecondary institutions offer career courses to assist students with career decision-making, career self-efficacy, and career maturity yet exposed mixed outcomes with improvement, effectiveness, and success. Another assumption represented that the community colleges in Northcentral Arkansas offer career courses instructed by academic adjunct faculty members rather than career practitioners. I expected that academic adjunct faculty and career professionals understand fundamental aspects of successful teaching methods and would remain motivated, capable, competent, and eager to assist students. I assumed that these constituents possessed adequate time, instrumentation, resources, and knowledge to develop students' vocational calling and help them determine a practical path for degree attainment. I assumed that students held an inclination to work with their career practitioner to discuss their vocational strengths, how those qualities aligned with an academic degree, and that they stayed truthful, authentic, and open in communicating their preferences and opinions and committed to upholding their responsibilities and expectations to enhance their success.

Limitations

Characteristics deemed beyond or outside the control of the research design signify limitations and can impact, influence, or affect interpretation or the results (Ellis & Levy, 2009). Due to the current institutional climate caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, student participation would be challenging for this study and signified a limitation. Another limiting factor represented gender. Since the researcher-participant relationship remained a swift-moving, professional connection, sharing and exchanging experiences and information could only represent surface-level feelings, responses, and reactions, indicating another limitation. I assumed that the feedback provided remained authentic, honest, genuine, and reliable. Generalizing findings and applying these presuppositions to other individuals who self-identify as English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic or Latino students represents another limitation.

Delimitations

Explaining delimitations and establishing clear boundaries provided me control concerning certain factors for replication of the study and aims to ascertain viability should other researchers duplicate the research (Ellis & Levy, 2009). Critical factors that this research enacted and remained within my control included the student population investigated, sample size, qualification criteria, and school setting and location. Though other first-generation student groups experience low retention and completion, stay unaware of student support services, lack academic discernment, and possess inadequate development of their unique vocational calling, this study only sought to obtain a fundamental awareness of the perceived benefits a career course has on English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students from the perspective of academic adjunct faculty and career professionals.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative case study sought to determine the perceived benefits of first-generation Hispanic and Latino students attending community college in Northcentral Arkansas who participated in a career course instructed by career professionals compared to a course offering instructed by academic adjunct faculty members. The effectiveness of career courses and academic deficiencies, coupled with low retention, transfer, and completion rates among this population continue to concern institutions, demonstrating the significance of this study (Mokher & Leeds; 2019; Storlie et al., 2015). Focus groups and semistructured interviews of academic adjunct faculty members and career professionals attempted to reveal any perceived differences for the target population. The focus group's open-ended questions established a fundamental awareness of the phenomenon under investigation. Consensual semistructured interviews developed insight and understanding of perceived benefits, equipping me to discuss findings in the following chapters.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this chapter discusses and presents the findings gathered from the focus group and semistructured interviews and addresses the research questions. This chapter includes the restatement of purpose and design of the study, sample size, interview protocol, presentation of findings, and summary. Three purposely crafted research questions guided this study.

Research Questions

RQ1. From an academic adjunct faculty and career professional perspective, how do English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students benefit from participating in a career development course led by a career professional as opposed to an academic adjunct faculty member?

RQ2. From an academic adjunct faculty and career professional perspective, how do English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students interact with academic adjunct faculty members compared to career professionals concerning their career goals?

RQ3. What do academic adjunct faculty members perceive as the most significant barriers for English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students that could affect their career growth, maturity, self-efficacy, and career identity compared to career professionals?

Restatement of the Purpose and Design of the Study

This qualitative case study sought to determine the perceived benefits of English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students attending a community college in Northcentral Arkansas participating in a career course instructed by career professionals compared to a course offered by academic adjunct faculty members. Purposive sampling and snowballing engaged participants who regularly interact with and have experience working with the target population concerning their career goals. Through consensual focus groups and

semistructured interviews, seven intentionally designed open-ended questions established greater awareness and understanding and provided rich context to the phenomenon under investigation.

Sample Size

I employed purposive sampling to engage participants. This method produced few informants, necessitating snowball sampling to increase the sample size (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015). I asked colleagues to refer and direct me to other potential informants with the same experience (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015). I relied on the technique of snowballing to recruit the participants needed to conduct the study (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015). The sample group consisted of seven career professionals and six academic faculty members. All participants for this study worked at a community college, identified as females, possessed an advanced degree, and held five to 20 years of instructional experience teaching the target population. Once the recruitment process concluded, I contacted participants to coordinate interview times (Leavy, 2017; Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2009; Yin, 2012).

Interview Protocol

Participants received a recruitment letter and consent form via email (Appendix C). Each participant signed the consent form. The interviewees and I coordinated meeting times for the focus group and semistructured interviews (Garvis, 2015; Guest et al., 2006; Leavy, 2017; Turner, 2010). For the present qualitative study, I established interviews with career professionals separate from academic faculty members (Leavy, 2017; Turner, 2010). The focus group interview occurred via Zoom. The focus group transpired to obtain a fundamental understanding of the investigated phenomenon (Garvis, 2015; Guest et al., 2006; Turner, 2010). I uploaded recordings of the Zoom meetings to Transcription Puppy to assist with transcription. Respondents provided awareness of their perceptions of the benefits of career courses, their

effectiveness, and how they have integrated career theory and career types into their courses to increase success (Garvis, 2015; Guest et al., 2006; Leavy, 2017; Turner, 2010).

To follow appropriate qualitative rigor, after the focus group interviews, volunteers for the semistructured interview emailed me (Garvis, 2015; Guest et al., 2006; Turner, 2010). I coordinated with the volunteers a time to meet via email for the semistructured interview meetings (Garvis, 2015; Guest et al., 2006; Leavy, 2017; Turner, 2010). Respondents provided detailed insight into the phenomenon under investigation (Garvis, 2015; Guest et al., 2006; Leavy, 2017; Turner, 2010). Informants described barriers and impediments to success, discerned the significance of vocational calling, career maturity, and career goals, and articulated quality of instruction, equipping me to answer the research questions (Garvis, 2015; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018; Turner, 2010). I uploaded the Zoom meetings to Transcription Puppy for transcription.

Table 1 outlines the interview experience for this study. I interviewed five career professionals and five academic adjunct faculty members. The length of the focus and semistructured interviews for career professionals totaled 94 minutes. The duration for academic adjunct faculty members totaled 99 minutes. The transcriptions for each group contained 21 pages.

Table 1*Interview Experience*

Group	Interviewees	Number of minutes	Page length
Career Professional	1	94	21
	2	94	21
	3	94	21
	4	94	21
	5	94	21
Faculty	1a	99	21
	2b	99	21
	3c	99	21
	4d	99	21
	5e	99	21
Total	10	193	42

Audit Trail

I created an audit trail to track the steps taken throughout the research process (Appendix G). The log helped me establish a system that collected, organized, and prepared information throughout the study, increasing reliability, integrity, and trustworthiness (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018; Starcher et al., 2018). This system aided me in classifying, categorizing, and synthesizing data, improving the execution and presentation of findings (Daniel, 2019). Because there were multiple interviews with distinct groups, the audit trail helped me arrange, group, and sort data from different members, allowing me to properly reference participant information (Daniel, 2019). It provided structural insight into the actions taken for this qualitative research and helped me prepare results (Daniel, 2019; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). The audit trail enables other researchers to use the same framework should they want to duplicate this study and follow qualitative rigor (Daniel, 2019; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018).

Coding and Descriptive Notes

Process and in vivo coding were implemented to draw out rich context while concurrently documenting descriptive notes (Garvis, 2015; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). This

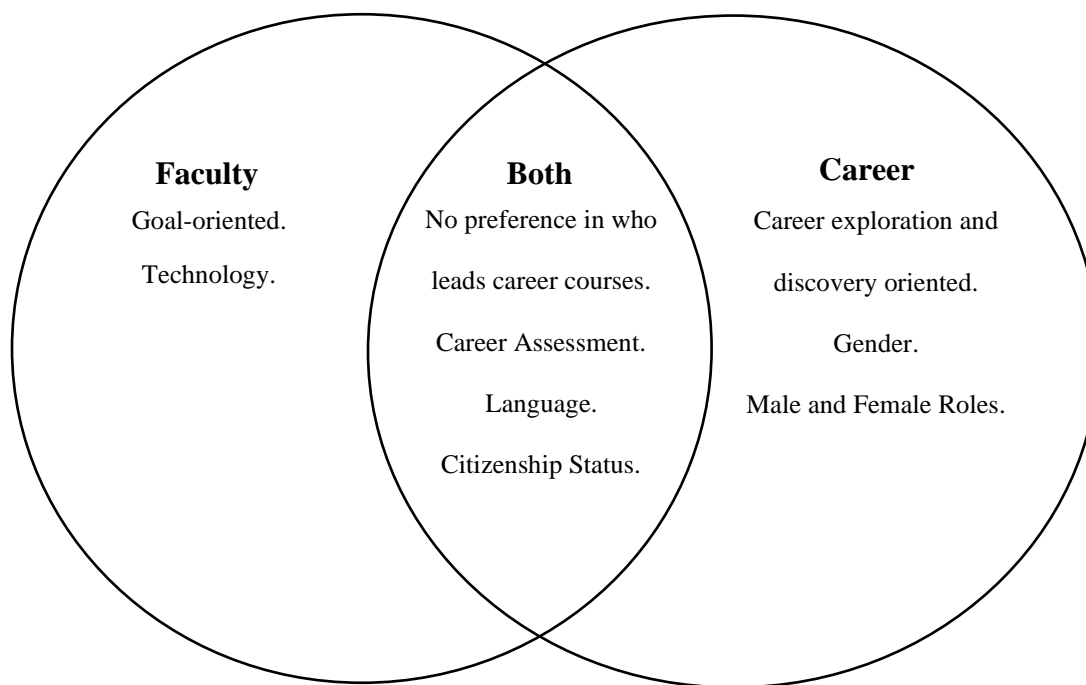
practice helped with data collection, preparation, and analysis (Garvis, 2015; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018; Yazan, 2015). I printed the transcripts, and as I reviewed the information, I identified emerging themes and color-coded them into groups by research question. Themes found for RQ1, I labeled green; themes for RQ2, yellow; and themes for RQ3, orange. This approach assisted me in unifying data to present findings (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Terzis et al., 2022). Reviewing and comparing transcriptions and descriptive notes helped solidify emerging patterns and themes (Garvis, 2015; Guest et al., 2006; Leavy, 2017; Turner, 2010). These methods equipped me to analyze the data and extract meaningful language that focused on perspectives, expressions, and terminology that helped me identify emerging patterns (Garvis, 2015; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). It represents the most valuable practice for interpreting data because it connects information to meaningful language used by the participants (Garvis, 2015; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). The coding process equipped me to determine applicable and useful perceptions and experiences of informants. It assisted me in keeping the research grounded in the language, expressions, and terminology of the participants (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018).

Codebook to Establish Themes

Interview recordings were uploaded to Transcription Puppy to assist me with transcription. Employing process coding and in vivo coding, allowed me to create a codebook to label phrases and words used by the informants (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Terzis et al., 2022). This exploratory process allowed me to define and determine codes and themes as I analyzed the data and examined the text (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Terzis et al., 2022). I assigned distinct colors to each research question as themes emerged. This process allowed me to develop a list of codes and themes and tether the information to sentences and phrases used by the respondents to capture, prepare, interpret, and present data for the study (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Terzis et al., 2022). This approach equipped me to uncover an in-depth sense of the real-life experiences of

the informants while drawing out insightful contextual details of the phenomenon under investigation (Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2009; Yin, 2012). I used the words, expressions, and sentences of the interviewees to categorize themes and determine meaning of the extensive and detailed text analyzed from the focus group and semistructured interviews (DeCruir-Gunby et al., 2011; Guest et al., 2006; Yazan, 2015). The codebook permitted me to review information across various sources throughout my research. It enabled me to assess and compare the data, sort, and classify the information to unify and construct themes (DeCruir-Gunby et al., 2011; Guest et al., 2006; Yazan, 2015). The codebook documented consistency and helped make sense of the information throughout the data analysis process (DeCruir-Gunby et al., 2011). The codebook assisted in the data analysis process to validate patterns, relationships, and themes (DeCruir-Gunby et al., 2011; Guest et al., 2006; Yazan, 2015). The coding process occurred multiple times to reach saturation, until no new information surfaced (Leavy, 2017).

As patterns emerged, I constructed themes to make sense of the data (DeCruir-Gunby et al., 2011; Guest et al., 2006; Yazan, 2015). I examined data from each group separately to ensure the accuracy of the information and emerging themes (Guest et al., 2006; Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2012). The themes identified were then compared to determine similarities and differences in responses or perspectives (Guest et al., 2006; Leavy, 2017; Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2012). Informants received a copy of the transcripts to confirm and validate the data. This approach strengthened the trustworthiness of the research through member checking (Guest et al., 2006; Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2012). The Venn Diagram below displays commonalities and differences between the two groups interviewed (Figure 1). To strengthen accuracy, two colleagues with experience in providing peer review feedback examined the manuscripts to confirm veracity (Garvis, 2015; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018; Yazan, 2015).

Figure 1*Identified Themes***Results**

This research employed a qualitative case study to determine the perceived benefits of English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students attending a career course at a community college in Northcentral, Arkansas. This study compared career courses instructed by career professionals as opposed to courses led by academic adjunct faculty members. By implementing Holland's (1959) personality type framework, this research determined the level of career identity, clarity, and maturity one acquired through exploring a career development course instructed by different professional groups (Morgan, 2017; Nistal et al., 2019; Sverko & Babarovic, 2006; Yang et al., 2005). The study also attempted to assess student-faculty and student-career professional interactions and identify significant challenges, barriers, and impediments English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students experience from the perspective of each group (Allen & Smith, 2008; Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Hart-

Baldrige, 2020; Romo et al., 2020). Informants who participated in this study represented co-contributors in explaining, improving, and solving problems in social reality (Garvis, 2015; Patton, 2015). Three purposefully designed research questions engaged two distinct groups for this study: academic adjunct faculty members and career professionals.

RQ1 examined any significant advantages or positive impact career courses have on the target population when led by career professionals instead of academic adjunct faculty members. RQ2 investigated each contributing group's career conversations with the student population to determine effectiveness in supporting career objectives. RQ3 identified the significant barriers from the perspective of faculty members and career professionals that consistently hinder the target population from achieving academic and vocational success.

Themes and Patterns: Career Courses and Career Assessment

Respondents actively contributed to answering RQ1 that focused on the differences students may or may not experience when career development courses are led by academic faculty as opposed to career professionals. Each informant expressed a favorable attitude toward career courses (Allen & Smith; 2008; Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Joslyn, 2015; Morris, 2017). However, respondents did not share a preference for career courses led by career professionals or by academic adjunct faculty members. Interviewees indicated that it depends on the instructor's qualifications, experience, and background. Institutions often permit faculty and career professionals to teach career courses, and the curriculum adjusts to knowledge, interest, and experience (Allen & Smith; 2008; Hansen et al., 2017; Hart-Baldrige, 2020). These preferences may support the mixed outcomes career courses show with improvement, effectiveness, and success, leading to higher withdrawal levels for first-generation Hispanic and Latino students (Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Grier-Reed & Chahla, 2015; Mokher & Leeds, 2019).

Interviewee 8: I think anybody can do a good job teaching a career development course... I stand by the fact that if you had experience in that field, you can teach the class in a way that gives them a reality [18].

Interviewee 7: I think it depends on the professional and the level of the class itself. If it was more of a career person, someone has been in the trenches, they could get the education directed better and also help the student to see different paths underneath that umbrella and what specific paths they might want to take [17].

Interviewee 2: I think it would come down, in my opinion, just whether they are trained or not. You could be a faculty person and be trained in it, and be able to communicate it, or not [12].

Interviewee 1: I think it depends on the situation. I think you have academics who stay very forward in their fields so that they know when there are changes or new technology, new ways of doing things, and just updated workforce daily operations....like someone who's very in touch with their industry....I think it all depends on academics on how effective they are in helping someone with that workforce side of things [11].

Interviewee 5: I also feel like, absolutely, it depends on the person. Sometimes, the person that would be put in charge of teaching this type of class may not see that as a priority, have student success as a priority....as a result, they are not passionate about the class. They are not passionate about teaching this topic, possibly [15].

Career courses help students develop their career identity and prepare them to make better academic and degree choices (Joslyn, 2015; Murphy & Murphy, 2018). Informants expressed the importance of students participating in a career course focused on career exploration and career identity. These courses support students' vocational discernment, boost

career confidence, and improve career self-actualization (Ledwith, 2014; Murphy & Murphy, 2018). Respondents expressed that after completing a career course, their students remain more confident, possess a better awareness of career opportunities, and have an improved understanding of how to make better academic and vocational choices (Galles et al., 2019; Joslyn, 2015; Murphy & Murphy, 2018). Institutions that offer intentionally led career courses help students achieve higher levels of career thought, increase vocational calling, and improve vocational identity and decision making (Galles et al., 2019; Joslyn, 2015; Morris, 2017).

Interviewee 4: For my students, they are very decisive after the career course. They either know this is where I am going, and they are 100% in, or they say thanks, this wasn't for me, I am going to do something else. They tend to be very confident after the course [4].

Interviewee 3: For the career-oriented classes, since they are so hands-on, it gives them that opportunity to figure out pretty quick whether or not they like this and if they want to pursue further or work in that field in general, or whether their like, this is horrible, I hate it, I want to go back and do something completely different [3].

Interviewee 6: I think this course would also allow them to dig a lot deeper into certain careers that they may think they know about, but don't really have a deep understanding of all that career may entail, for example, they may think that they may want to go into nursing and they think it's one certain aspect of nursing, but a career course would allow them to dig deeper into all the different types of nurses and medical professions [6].

Interviewee 8: Taking one, they will see all the elements of what it pertains to, considering, and then deciding on a career, and the steps to be taken. Whereas I don't think any of us really have all that all-in-one place at one time, we sort of figure it out as we go

along; with this it's a targeted time for that person to have everything in front of the person and I think that is a big benefit [8].

Participants preferred career courses incorporating Holland's theory or a similar approach into a course by administering a career assessment or other activities. Informants articulated that these courses help students recognize their strengths and provide improved direction in the goal-setting process (Creed & Hennessy, 2016; Lent et al., 2019). They also expressed that it deepens students' awareness of themselves, provides an applicable and practical understanding of potential career pathways, and assists them in helping discern a major, occupation, and career (Galles et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2014). Respondents confirmed that Holland's theory positively impacts student outcomes and equips them to make better academic and career choices (Johnson et al., 2014; Joslyn, 2015; Morgan, 2017; Nistal et al., 2019).

Interviewee 5: I use the Strong Interest Inventory. I have a small booklet that I can give to students that's called Where Do I Go Next? It's really nice because it breaks down the different Holland types into what you would enjoy learning about, where you might like to work, the kind of environment, or things that another person would use to describe you [15].

Interviewee 1: Any aptitude or interest inventory can only just broaden their horizons and see what abilities and things that they have in them, so I think they can only help with their decisions [11].

Interviewee 3: I think their very useful, the ones we use, and the reason being has already been stated, is that these students, have never thought of this before, all that they might be interested in, and how their aptitude might be toward investigative, or maybe they didn't know they were that social..., so the discussion and conversation, and then further exploration...We use the O'NET Interest Profiler on

MyNextMove.org whenever they don't really have an idea what area that they're interested in... and help them with figuring out what jobs will be available in those areas that the Interest Profiler shows would be suitable for them [3].

Interviewee 4: Well, I think the more information they have, the better informed they are to make a well-informed decision. I think any of these aptitudes or interest inventories can only just broaden their horizons and see what abilities and things that they have in them. I think they can only help with their decisions [4].

Interviewee 8: I used O'NET. O'NET does this very thing for them with the 60 situations they decided if they think they would enjoy as an interesting profile. It gives them one of the strongest fields using these very same John Holland's theory of career choice categories...Some of them say, "That's right on." Then they get to think about that and then they start, then they go and will then actually investigate careers that are lined up with their interests that are on the O'Net website. They're learning about themselves. It's very useful for them [18].

Themes and Patterns: Goal-Oriented vs Career Exploration and Discovery Conversations

Both groups of participants interviewed expressed positive conversational interactions concerning career exploration with the target student population (Allen & Smith, 2008; Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Joslyn, 2015). Students who develop personal, academic, and career goals and tether those objectives to specific timelines can enhance intellectual and vocational decision-making (Chen, 2015; Martin et al., 2016; Sibley et al., 2020). However, faculty appeared more goal-oriented, while career professionals focused on career exploration and discovery (Allen & Smith, 2008; Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Trolan et al., 2019; Trolan & Parker, 2017). Faculty discussed goal setting, while career professionals considered career discovery and awareness (Carson, 2011; Parker & Trolan, 2020; Trolan et al., 2019).

Interviewee 10: With my students, I try to, not daily but at least once a week, show them a career pathway and we see what the income is, what the job outlook for that is, what kind of people like the job, what the aspects of the job are, maybe show a little video of the job [20].

Interviewee 8: My conversations, David, with them usually are very much in healthcare. Are they interested? What are their qualities? They feel like they might be interested in and really, with that population, specifically, just what it looks like and what their expectations are in a career as a nurse or a paramedic or a CNA [18].

Interviewee 7: I discuss it with them when they tell me what their major needs are and decide which path in the classroom they take [17].

Interviewee 5: In my experience, about half of the students in a class would have an understanding of what direction they want to go. About half of the others would not. And so, I would really focus with them on teaching them research methods and ways to look up what is possible, what the salary expectations could be, and also how long it would take them to go to school and to earn the credentials necessary to do that job [15].

Interviewee 1: A lot of times, I find that they don't have a lot of career knowledge. They are pursuing something maybe they've seen on TV or perhaps their parents are steering them towards. We try to give them some information on things on campus maybe they didn't know about. What is an MLT? What does a surge tech do, robotics, different things like that. It gives them a broader knowledge of what they could do with their education [1].

Interviewee 2: I think in my experience, it depends on how receptive a student is to career coaching. Some students that don't know what they want to get into maybe aren't

ready fully to have that conversation. But if a student is receptive to taking the YouScience assessment or sitting down and having an actual appointment where we discuss those strengths and discuss those goals and what they value and what they want to get out of their career, then we go there [12].

Themes and Patterns: Significant Barriers

Informants of both groups acknowledged unique challenges for this population. Various obstacles and barriers prevent this population from attaining success, and they frequently encounter impediments, causing higher withdrawal and dropout compared to their peers (Contreras, 2017; Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Romo et al., 2020; Vincent, 2020). Career courses signify one of many factors that influence career decision-making with the target population (Contreras, 2017; Romo et al., 2020; Vincent, 2020). Interviewees conveyed that family dynamics represent a critical factor in the career decision-making process (Choi et al., 2019; Contreras, 2017; Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Vincent, 2020).

Interviewee 4: The family is such an important part of their culture, and they really are influenced by their families. One of my students a year ago was a young woman and she wanted to be a doctor... her parents wanted her to go to LPN school... but her statement was, "I love my parents, they're afraid for me to dream [4].

Interviewee 8: I think we talked in the last interview about the family being very, very strong in this decision making. His family is trying to push him into nursing. Letting him know that male nurses were being valued, make a lot of money, and were very much in demand, which is all correct, but his heart was not in it. It was pretty apparent from interviewing and sitting down with him that his heart wasn't in it. I was able to establish that rapport that he opened up, that he preferred working hands-on, to being able to do something [18].

Interviewee 4: I can think of one specific example. She was the only English-speaking person in her family besides her younger brother. She struggled between what she wanted to do for her career and what her family needed her to do to be able to provide. Her, I guess, concern for her culture was that her parents would choose the direction of her career [14].

Establishing academic and vocational goals for this population can be challenging due to the unique factors they experience (Choi et al., 2019; Contreras, 2017; Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Vincent, 2020). Divergent obstacles exist for this group compared to their non-first-generation peers, affecting retention and completion rates (Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Diehl et al., 2019; Gelbgiser, 2018; Kelsey et al., 2018). Interviewees identified barriers that hinder increased success for the target population. Categories discussed by respondents that affect the decision-making process included language and access to technology (Contreras, 2017; Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Skrefsrud, 2018).

Interviewee 8: So, for me, the first thing that comes to my mind is not being here as a legal citizen and not being able to speak English [18].

Interviewee 3: In talking about the language barrier that I've seen that causes issues in the healthcare programs where maybe they speak English well enough that everybody just assumes that they'll be fine. But if it's not their first language, whenever they're studying something where the words or so are foreign to even English speakers, it can be especially challenging for them as well [13].

Interviewee 5: Obviously, the language cultural barrier that causes... I mean, we've seen that here. Not being able to offer courses with a Spanish-speaking tutor or instructor available, that's a really tough place to be [15].

Interviewee 7: Technology can also be affected by the culture. The few students of this category, I'm thinking they may have even a lesser chance of obtaining unless they can check out through the library resource center, the computers, having the internet availability [17].

Citizenship status exemplified another impediment to success. The educators interviewed often compared language and citizenship status and indicated that it can delay achievement (Kelly & Loew, 2018; Leifels, 2020; Skrefsrud, 2018). Citizenship and financial challenges of DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) students exemplified barriers, and how those factors impact decision making (Kelly & Loew, 2018; Leifels, 2020; Skrefsrud, 2018).

Interviewee 1: I was at an institution where we weren't admitting Hispanic students or students weren't being admitted due to some misunderstanding about whether they could or could not be enrolled. I think there was some question of citizenship...[11].

Interviewee 3: I've seen issues for DACA students particularly with being able to go to college, because they're not going to qualify for any kind of federal student aid in terms of just being able to afford it in the first place. Also, with some of the older students who may have come here later after they had an education in another country, there are issues where the few are wanting to try to transfer any of that. Then they have to figure out whether or not it's worth it [13].

Interviewee 5: I had a student recently that was a DACA student. She had a goal in mind, what she wanted her job to be, and what she wanted to work towards in her degree. But she understood that she didn't really qualify for any federal aid...She was going to do one class at a time and had to make it online, so she can work so she can afford it. It's pushing her goals back a bit to reach that end goal, to get that job that she wants [15].

Evaluating male and female roles within the Hispanic and Latino culture were explored. Informants expressed that gender roles within the culture in many circumstances are distinct, and expectations for male and female roles influence decision making (Choi et al., 2019; Diehl et al., 2019). These cultural norms remain powerful, strong, and influential and can affect career readiness and academic achievement triggering higher withdrawal and dropout rates (Joslyn, 2015; Kelsey et al., 2018; Kouyoumdjian et al., 2017).

Interviewee 1: The Hispanic culture is a male-dominated culture, it's a masculine culture. I think a lot of times to see a first-generation college student in the Hispanic world that's a female, that maybe wants to work in construction or explore that as a career, may not get as much support from home as if she was looking at the CNA or female male careers. What is perceived in that way, although I don't know that there's a lot of other factors besides gender and deportation that I think leads into that fear for first-generation college students, and that are in that culture, too [1].

Interviewee 4: Going back to the gender question... there was an incident where her phone was on all the time and the other girls were complaining about it, that her boyfriend had to be involved all the time. She couldn't turn the phone off, she had to do all these things and such...to stay in really well with the boys who were legalized US citizens so that you could marry them in hopes that they chose you so that you could get your green card [4].

Summary of Themes

An emerging themes table was established to display the thematic patterns for the research questions (Figure 2). As the interview dialog developed for RQ1, respondents expressed that students benefit most when qualified, capable, and experienced individuals lead the courses. They determined that students who participate in a career course remain better prepared to make

academic choices and increase their career self-efficacy. Informants indicated that career courses that incorporate a career assessment tool into the curriculum equip students to establish an intellectual blueprint and form a vocational purpose. Both groups for RQ2 expressed positive interaction with English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students. However, faculty have more goal-oriented interactions while career professionals focus on career exploration and discovery dialog. Interviewees for RQ3 articulated that the target population encounters more divergent challenges than their non-first-generation peers. Respondents communicated that family dynamics, culture, English language proficiency, technology, legal status, and gender represent barriers for this population.

Figure 2*Emerging Thematic Patterns*

RQ1. From an academic adjunct faculty and career professional perspective, how do English -speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students benefit from participating in a career development course led by a career professional as opposed to an academic adjunct faculty member?						
Themes:	Who Leads Career Courses	Relevance and Success of Career Courses	Career Assessment			
RQ2. From an academic adjunct faculty and career professional perspective, how do English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students interact with academic adjunct faculty members compared to career professionals concerning their career goals?						
Themes:	Positive Career Interactions	Goal-Oriented	Career Exploration and Discovery			
RQ3. What do academic adjunct faculty members perceive as the most significant barriers for English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students that could affect their career growth, maturity, self-efficacy, and career identity compared to career professionals?						
Themes:	Family Dynamics	Culture	English Language Proficiency	Technology	Legal Status	Gender

Summary

College-level career courses help students experience career development, growth, and maturity, and support their academic and vocational success (Galles et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2014; Joslyn, 2015). As postgraduate career readiness remains a major concern, these courses academically and vocationally equip students to experience internal improvement, resulting in higher levels of meaning and purpose for a personal, educational journey toward academic excellence and vocational success (Joslyn, 2015; McDow & Zabucky, 2015; Whiston & Blustein, 2013).

This study revealed that informants considered career courses beneficial for students in helping them discover their strengths, careers, and career paths, and more meaningful when the instructor holds adequate qualifications, skills, and experience (Creed & Hennessy, 2016; Joslyn, 2015; Morris, 2017; Samuel, 2014). However, respondents communicated no preference concerning who leads career courses, only that an individual possesses the capabilities to teach it effectively. It exposed that both faculty and career professionals have the propensity and aptitude to administer career assessments, interpret results, and work with students on expanding personal career awareness. This study added to existing research that demonstrated while faculty are inclined to work with students on setting goals, career professionals remain more oriented toward career exploration and discovery (Allen & Smith, 2008; Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Trolan et al., 2019; Trolan & Parker, 2017).

The current research revealed various components that influence career decision making and success for English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students (Engle & Tinto, 2008; Murphy & Murphy, 2018; Romo et al., 2020; Vincent, 2020). Critical to one's growth and maturity represents one's values, beliefs, convictions, and identity (Patton et al., 2016). The most significant aspects discussed involved family dynamics, language, citizenship status, access to technology, and cultural roles. This research emphasized an ecosystem of factors that affect and impact purpose and vocation (Contreras; 2017; Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Romo et al., 2020; Vincent, 2020). Therefore, considering epistemology as a significant influencer remains warranted and may uncover other barriers to success when exploring one's developmental journey of academic and vocational self-efficacy.

Throughout this study, proper research protocols were followed to maintain integrity, credibility, trustworthiness, and preserve veracity. I worked with colleagues to examine the interview transcripts (Garvis, 2015; Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2012). These peers have experience with

the target population and helped me analyze the information to validate emerging themes and patterns and certify that the coding process remained accurate (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2012). I used an audit trail and reflected on descriptive notes to organize and prepare data (Daniel, 2019; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018; Starcher et al., 2018). This process equipped me to track, categorize, and arrange information from the different professional groups who participated in this study. It enabled me to analyze, understand, and explain the data collected, allowing me to interpret the information and present the findings of the explored phenomenon (Daniel, 2019; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018; Starcher et al., 2018). Employing two separate techniques and utilizing the expertise and experience of two different professional groups demonstrates I remained committed to upholding ethical standards of principled qualitative research (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018; Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2012). It shows I considered different research modalities and employs diverse mechanisms for collecting data, establishing triangulation, and improving the integrity and credibility of results (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018; Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2012). Triangulation permitted me to engage in comparison and increased the reliability and dependability in verifying, unifying, and confirming findings, further validating the results through multiple sources (Guest et al., 2006; Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2012).

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This research investigated the perceived benefits of a career course instructed by an academic adjunct faculty member compared to a career professional and employed a qualitative case study design. The underlining objective of this study sought to determine any significant perceived differences or positive outcomes with academic or vocational preparedness when an academic adjunct faculty member instructs a career course instead of a career professional. I wanted to ascertain a better awareness of the career interactions, conversations, and productive dialogue between English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students, faculty, and career professionals. I also sought to gain insight and understanding of the advantages English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students experience when participating in a career course led by an academic adjunct faculty member compared to a career professional. Last, I sought to obtain a greater awareness of what academic adjunct faculty members and career professionals perceive as significant challenges impacting or influencing career development for English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students. This chapter articulates a meaningful interpretation of the findings and discusses delivering relevance for practical application. It explains conclusions, limitations, and describes recommendations for future studies.

Discussion of Career Courses and Career Assessment

Faculty and career professionals who participated in this study determined that students in career development courses benefit most when qualified, capable, and experienced individuals lead the courses. Dedicated instructors passionate about teaching career content help students remain committed, motivated, and better prepared to understand unique individual strengths, discern a degree, discover occupational interests, and identify a career pathway. Informants asserted that students benefit from enrolling in a career course, supporting past research (Folsom

& Reardon, 2003; Gaertner et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2020; Zins et al., 2019). It allows them to discover more about their career identity, gives them the ability to dig deeper into certain occupations and careers, improves their confidence and clarity, and increases career knowledge and awareness (Galles et al., 2019; Morris, 2017; Murphy & Murphy, 2018). The concept of self-improvement and actualization remains deeply rooted and intertwined within the delivery of a career course (Joslyn, 2015; Morris, 2017; Samuel, 2014). These courses have stayed flexible in learning methodology, adaptable with approach, supportive of self-development, and mutable in creating teachable moments so students can experience prosperity. The data presented in this study add to the existing knowledge that a career course remains relevant and beneficial to students and educational institutions (Galles et al., 2019; Ledwith, 2014; Morris, 2017; Murphy & Murphy, 2018). Institutions have deliberately implemented career courses, and instructors have attempted different strategies within those offerings to assist students in achieving academic and vocational prosperity (Joslyn, 2015; Morris, 2017; Samuel, 2014). However, connecting these students to more profound levels of vocational clarity might produce healthier success rates than teaching general career theory, equipping them to make better academic and occupational choices.

Both academic adjunct faculty members and career professionals discussed how administering a career assessment can be a valuable tool in preparing students to make better choices. Through administering a career assessment, students can identify, recognize, and acknowledge career strengths, interests, blind spots, weaknesses, and areas of improvement and help them create an action plan concerning developing limitations, establishing an academic blueprint, and forming a vocational purpose (Donnay et al., 2005; Grutter & Hammer, 2012; Herk & Thompson, 2012). Career courses integrating Holland's theory (1959) of career type or similar theories through administering a career assessment and other relevant activities were

favorable. Respondents articulated that they have positively impacted student outcomes. Interviewees discussed the Strong Interest Inventory, YouScience, and O'Net as powerful tools for assisting students in uncovering their career strengths. By administering and interpreting a career assessment, students can attain a clearer pathway to intellectual and vocational success and stay empowered through their newly discovered purpose (Donnay et al., 2005; Grutter & Hammer, 2012; Herk & Thompson, 2012). They become enabled to discern a major effectively, and can experience higher commitment, dedication, and perseverance (Donnay et al., 2005; Grutter & Hammer, 2012; Herk & Thompson, 2012). Vocational assessments boost cognitive skills and critical thinking toward one's occupational calling, provoke deeper interactions toward mechanical skills development, and stimulate a deeper perspective and insight into real-world application (Donnay et al., 2005; Grutter & Hammer, 2012; Herk & Thompson, 2012). These instruments help students learn about career maturity, promote career autonomy, encourage self-efficacy, and foster healthier levels of career self-actualization (Joslyn, 2015; Ledwith, 2014; Murphy & Murphy, 2018). These tools aim to explore career options and enhance the thought process concerning those occupational opportunities, and students can create a more precise roadmap toward declaring a major and construct an educational blueprint for success. These assessments assist students in overcoming vocational challenges and dysfunctional career thought (Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Joslyn, 2015; Osborn et al., 2019; Soriaa & Stebleton, 2012). They intend to foster career confidence and more profound levels of vocational discovery, and identify cultural work settings for them to thrive, ultimately causing students to make better academic and vocational choices (Donnay et al., 2005; Grutter & Hammer, 2012; Herk & Thompson, 2012).

The Impact of Vocational Assessments for a More Defined Academic Pathway

Career assessments represent meaningful tools that provide students with their unique, individualized career results (Donnay et al., 2005; Grutter & Hammer, 2012; Herk & Thompson, 2012). They inform, educate, equip, enable, inspire, and motivate students to make better academic choices (Joslyn, 2015; Ledwith, 2014; Murphy & Murphy, 2018). Through a deep exploration of results, students become mindful of how an academic pathway helps them develop into a more prepared, competent, and capable professional (Donnay et al., 2005; Grutter & Hammer, 2012; Herk & Thompson, 2012).

The most thorough career assessments are administered and interpreted by a certified practitioner (Donnay et al., 2005; Grutter & Hammer, 2012; Herk & Thompson, 2012). Respondents articulated that the Strong Interest Inventory and other similar assessments grant a practitioner and participant the opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue to increase career mindfulness, occupational interests, and opportunity. They prepare a student to experience improved career-decision making through the acquired knowledge of vocational calling (Donnay et al., 2005; Grutter & Hammer, 2012; Herk & Thompson, 2012). The expert explains type, clarifies type dynamics, defines hierarchy, and describes individual type (Donnay et al., 2005; Grutter & Hammer, 2012; Herk & Thompson, 2012). The skilled professional expounds on the impact of type preferences, deepens the understanding of type functions, and explains the application of type dynamics (Donnay et al., 2005; Grutter & Hammer, 2012; Herk & Thompson, 2012). Participants who opt to take the assessment obtain their personalized RIASEC (realistic, artistic, investigative, social, enterprising, and conventional) code assisting them in identifying their unique work personality (Donnay et al., 2005; Grutter & Hammer, 2012; Herk & Thompson, 2012). The distinct code helps an individual explore occupational scales that closely align with other individuals with the same or similar scales and considers the gender and

occupational satisfaction of persons within those occupations (Donnay et al., 2005; Grutter & Hammer, 2012; Herk & Thompson, 2012).

By administering occupational instruments, integrating vocational curriculum superiority, encouraging healthy shared learning, and promoting personal development, improvement, and growth, these transformative outcomes can dynamically shift underlying structural approaches in higher education from academic emphasis to vocational focus. They can alter organizational perspective, encourage deeper levels of systematic course correction, and emphatically convince internal constituents that critical operational components must shift to meet internal stakeholder needs. These actions can equip students to become competent and competitive working professionals and possibly provoke improved external stakeholder engagement and satisfaction. The positive institutional benefits of exploring the outcomes related to increased vocational awareness may elevate retention, transfer, and completion for English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students as they obtain a clearer academic pathway and enrich their college experience, adding extra levels of value and worth to the institution and beyond.

Discussion of Goal-Oriented vs Career Exploration and Discovery Conversations

Data demonstrates that students who experience positive interactions with faculty and career professionals remain more inclined to have a productive college journey than those who do not (Parker & Trolan, 2020; Trolan & Parker, 2017; Wiseman & Messitt, 2010). Healthy interactions between these constituents help produce a disposition toward investing in the development of human potential, followed by a clearer understanding of academic possibilities that align with vocational opportunities (Parker & Trolan, 2020; Trolan & Parker, 2017; Wiseman & Messitt, 2010). Faculty members and career professionals interviewed advocated for a strong belief and conviction of student servanthood. They continually act upon their inherent desire to transform the lives of students enrolled in academic and career courses. The

predominant resounding theme of these participants throughout the interviews remained to increase capacity, intellect, growth, and opportunity. In doing so, students become positively influenced and affected by amplified levels of achievement, competence, satisfaction, and success. As a result, healthier proficiency levels, aptitude, and confidence produce enhanced student engagement during the learning process (Allen & Smith, 2008; Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Trolian et al., 2019). It strengthens one's ability to make better academic choices, intensifies one's willingness to become involved throughout the growth process, and greater intellectual and vocational education prosperity transpires (Grutter & Hammer, 2012; Herk & Thompson, 2012). However, faculty advocated for creating goals with students, while career professionals supported engaging in career exploration and discovery (Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Joslyn, 2015; Trolian et al., 2019; Trolian & Parker, 2017).

The Significance of Establishing Goals

Those who enact realistic, relevant, measurable, and meaningful goals can increase overall success (Chen, 2015; Sibley et al., 2020). The current study revealed that faculty remain oriented toward working with their students to set goals to help them academically and discover a more distinct career path. Establishing goals, and through veracious dedication coupled with a striking commitment, academic and vocational transformation transpires (Chen, 2015; Martin et al., 2016; Sibley et al., 2020). As students obtain these targeted objectives, participation amplifies, and more explicit intentions become visible and manifest. By implementing goals, outcomes are less arbitrary and more purposeful, causing increased passion, enthusiasm, dedication, engagement, and profound insight toward achieving desired results (Chen, 2015; Martin et al., 2016; Sibley et al., 2020). Because goals stay deliberate, measurable, specific, relevant, and time-sensitive, the fundamental components of a goal-oriented framework can significantly increase results and establish healthier levels of academic and vocational success

(Chen, 2015; Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013). Students who do not work diligently on setting goals become less focused (Chen, 2015; Choi et al., 2019; Creed & Hennessy, 2016; Lent et al., 2019). Aimlessness reduces ownership and resourcefulness, increases dysfunction, and decreases determination, persistence, and perseverance (Joslyn, 2015; Murphy & Murphy, 2018; Whiston & Blustein, 2013). A substantial decline follows these undesirable effects in preferred outcomes (Chen, 2015; Werner, 2017). Therefore, goal implementation, determination, and fortitude prevail as principium to attain opulence.

The Significance of Vocational Exploration

This research exposed that career professionals advocated that career exploration interactions remain beneficial before establishing and determining targeted academic goals. They expressed that vocational clarity prevails as essential for student success. As students obtain clarity concerning their vocational strengths, they can enhance their human capital by developing their mental, physical, and emotional fortitude (Donnay et al., 2005; Grutter & Hammer, 2012; Herk & Thompson, 2012). A profound exploration of discerning career calling, considering traditional and nontraditional pathways through education, establishing life goals, and pursuing vocational identity remain paramount and may support first-generation Hispanic and Latino students in making better academic choices. A robust evaluation of vocational strengths, career identity and choice, and assisting students in discovering intense levels of career self-efficacy may contribute to higher retention, transfer, and completion. Uncovering higher levels of vocational discernment and career maturity can reduce dysfunctional career thought, increase self-sufficiency, and boost career confidence, compelling students to develop a more robust skill level, aptitude, competency, ability, and capacity toward their chosen academic and career path (Joslyn, 2015; Murphy & Murphy, 2018; Whiston & Blustein, 2013). Other critical benefits include expanding upon specific skills, competencies, and abilities necessary for personal

change, helping students streamline their academic interests and vocational calling, and propelling them toward higher levels of achievement and success. Engaging in career exploration and integrating a vocational aspect offers insight into the significance of academic discernment (Donnay et al., 2005; Grutter & Hammer, 2012; Herk & Thompson, 2012). This approach may prove more successful because it goes far beyond the habitual technique of incessant intellectual improvement. It dynamically moves toward more meaningful levels of calling. As academic and vocational calling efforts crystallize, students further amalgamate internal and external system engagement that can concatenate more favorable outcomes (Chen, 2015; Kaufman & Guerra-Lopez, 2013; Lowman; 2005).

Discussion of Significant Barriers

Faculty members and career professionals who participated in this research recognized that various impediments affect success for this population and varying multifaceted factors contribute to their academic and vocational success (Diehl et al., 2019; Gelbgiser, 2018; Kelsey et al., 2018). Data collected and examined throughout this study remains insufficient for uncovering all aspects of the challenges this population encounters concerning academic excellence and vocational success. However, data showed that first-generation Hispanic and Latino students frequently face diverse challenges, confront different educational barriers, and remain more underprepared for college and careers than their non-first generation, traditional peers (Diehl et al., 2019; Engle and Tinto, 2008; Gelbgiser, 2018; Kelsey et al., 2018). These factors contribute to lower retention, transfer, and completion rates for this population, and they continue to experience higher poverty levels, lower levels of postsecondary education, attain lower wages, and more prominent unemployment levels than their non-first-generation peers (Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Popescu et al., 2018).

Family dynamics and socialization represent powerful influencers among Hispanic and Latino students (Choi et al., 2019; Vincent, 2020). Cultural identity, pride, heritage, and ethnic socialization represent aspects of the career decision-making process (Choi et al., 2019; Hughes et al., 2006; Rivas-Drake, 2011; Vincent, 2020). They symbolize mechanisms by which one determines academic and occupational choice (Hughes et al., 2006; Murphy & Murphy, 2018; Rivas-Drake, 2011). Informants articulated that family norms and culture remain critical factors for student achievement. Hispanic and Latino students regularly evaluate their family's perspectives and opinions before deciding on their career goals (Rivas-Drake, 2011). As they contend between their vocational calling and their family's expectations, academic achievement, vocational choice, commitment level, clear goal orientation, and degree completion become negatively affected (Joslyn, 2015; Rivas-Drake, 2011). Students who struggle to discover fulfillment due to cultural factors, expectations, norms, and family characteristics often experience lower levels of career readiness, monetary hardships, and lack a protracted discernment of vocational and academic objectives (Engle & Tinto, 2008; Joslyn, 2015; Kouyoumdjian et al., 2017). Therefore, engaging and involving parents throughout the process and communicating academic success and vocational potential may positively affect retention and completion for this population.

English language proficiency represented a vital barrier to student achievement. Students who acquire English language proficiency and embrace some Anglo cultural norms experience higher levels of career self-efficacy and success (Mejia-Smith & Gushue, 2017; Phinney & Ong, 2007; Richardson, 2012). Students who continuously struggle with the English language and do not acculturate experience difficulties adjusting to education and become less precise when discerning an academic and vocational pathway (Mejia-Smith & Gushue, 2017; Phinney & Ong, 2007; Richardson, 2012). Without a comprehensive understanding of the English language,

students may not successfully learn how to navigate college, ascertain student resources, or leverage technology to enroll in courses, declare a major, or explore careers, affecting academic and vocational success.

Inadequate access to technology for rural college students can impact, affect, or delay student success (Henning-Smith, 2020). Students living in rural regions with slow internet speed and limited connectivity experience less creativity, have restricted access to information, and can develop a negative relationship with technology adoption (Henning-Smith, 2020; Kayapinar et al., 2018). Respondents conveyed that English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students have insufficient access to reliable internet connection and restricted accessibility to obtaining a computer, tablet, or other smart devices to complete coursework. Adequate availability of technology contributes to overall development and stimulates students toward higher commitment, motivation, and performance, causing a healthier adoption of curriculum, which can improve outcomes (Kayapinar et al., 2018). Students with limited technology proficiency experience more significant economic uncertainty, stay less aware of their academic and vocational opportunities, and remain less prepared to enter the workforce, further limiting their success (Henning-Smith, 2020; Hickman, 2016).

Legal status signified a critical barrier to success, and informants conflated citizenship and language as a significant impediment for the target population (Abrego, 2011; Abrego, 2018; Rodriguez & Rodriguez, 2020). Interviewees expressed various challenges that DACA students encounter and considered these factors substantial constraints that impact decision-making (Abrego, 2011; Abrego, 2018; Rodriguez & Rodriguez, 2020). Personal well-being, economic, financial, political, and undocumented status represent unique obstacles this population encounters (Abrego, 2011; Abrego, 2018; Rodriguez & Rodriguez, 2020). Navigating the college experience remains difficult for this population, and educational institutions lack a profound

understanding of the barriers these students encounter as they seek to improve their academic and vocational circumstances (Rodriguez & Rodriguez, 2020). Faculty, staff, administrators, and researchers who increase their awareness of the distinct barriers DACA students endure may help eliminate barriers and cause more favorable effects on academic and vocational excellence.

Summary

Career development courses aim to enhance personal effectiveness, improve career decision making, stimulate intellectual responsibility and ownership, and elevate awareness and capacity, causing one to make better academic choices and experience higher retention and completion (Galles et al., 2019; Ledwith, 2014; Murphy & Murphy 2018). This qualitative case study sought to determine the perceived benefits of English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students attending community college in Northcentral Arkansas who participate in a career course instructed by career professionals compared to a course instructed by academic adjunct faculty members. As institutions of higher education consider the impact of career courses and advocate for offering more courses, research does not emphasize the differences in career courses led by academic adjunct faculty members as opposed to career professionals. This study discovered that respondents hold no preferences in who teaches a career course, only that individuals have the experience, qualifications, and capability to teach the course effectively.

This study observed occupational maturity, career choice, and vocational calling through Holland's personality type theory. Educators agreed that Holland's theory remains useful for their courses and in helping students uncover their career strengths. It benefits them by developing their personal understanding of occupational self-awareness and opportunities, eliminating career uncertainty, and triggering profound career conversations (Creed & Hennessy, 2016; Galles et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2014; Joslyn, 2015). Research validates that students

with unique conversations and interactions with educators experience higher levels of academic and vocational fulfillment, resulting in improved educational outcomes than those without (Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Parker & Trolan, 2020; Trolan & Parker, 2017). Both groups expressed having meaningful dialogue with their students. Academic adjunct faculty remained more goal-oriented, while career professionals focused more on career discovery. Positive exchanges with these experts can increase commitment, motivation, and dedication throughout their academic journey and activate the potential optimistic consequences these conversations have on the intellectual and vocational growth, development, and maturity of English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students.

Family culture, expectations, social structure, language, and citizenship status signified common critical barriers to success and discussed throughout the interviews. Outliers included access to technology, gender, and the difference between male and female roles. English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students consistently contend with different challenges than their non-first-generation counterparts (Covarrubias et al., 2019; Romo et al., 2020). These unique factors can hinder achievement as students cope with the variables that influence and determine their success. As institutions of higher education continue to diversify and serve more English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students, colleges must consider the distinct challenges and barriers this population faces as they seek academic and vocational prosperity (Romo et al., 2020; Shapiro et al., 2017).

This research offered relevant and valuable information into the perspectives of two distinct professional groups that regularly interact with English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students. Acquiring a better understanding of those perceptions provides a more practical application for implementation. It delivers a targeted solutions-based approach for organizational outputs, presents relevant data for discerning institutional and societal usefulness,

and can establish improved strategies for organizational efficiency. Comparing existing results to desirable outcomes can assist with organizational transformation. Discerning these outcomes may represent the most compelling conclusions in altering existing practices and methods to stimulate systematic change. Equipping institutions with functional and achievable information from internal stakeholders can activate improved collaboration and boost resource maximization. With the newly attained knowledge, institutions can enhance their overall structural framework and expand systematic involvement, which may help improve achievement and success for the target population.

Limitations

Strict qualitative rigor was followed throughout the research process to increase reliability, dependability, credibility, and improve trustworthiness. Limitations of this study include the significant effects of COVID-19, diversity in the sample size, and generalization of findings. Due to the economic conditions of COVID-19, engaging students in this study remained problematic and restricted results. Second, all members of this study identified as one gender and ethnicity. To increase diversity, conducting a study with male and female participants may produce different outcomes. Engaging Hispanic and Latino informants may also provide deeper insight and yield different responses, causing a more accurate representation of the investigated phenomenon. Conducting this research at a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) with a more diverse faculty and career professional composition could also significantly alter outcomes. Third, replicating this study with a more diverse population, at another institution in an urban region, or under other circumstances may uncover conflicting evidence or information. This study does not provide broad results to various groups negating good generalizability.

Practical Implications

Implications exist for the findings of this study. The uncovered data adds to current knowledge and research that demonstrates career courses can benefit students and educational institutions (Gaertner et al., 2014; Joslyn, 2015; Kim et al., 2020; Ledwith, 2014). It supports the positive consequences students experience when they enroll in a career course, complete a career assessment, participate in an interpretation session, and stay aware of their career identity (Joslyn, 2015; Morris, 2017; Samuel, 2014; Whiston & Blustein, 2013). However, it is unknown if there will be long-term positive outcomes on retention, transfer, and completion rates after completing the course. As English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students discover meaning and vocational purpose, they become more equipped to make better academic choices, and additional support prevails as compulsory (Joslyn, 2015; Ledwith, 2014; Murphy & Murphy, 2018; Whiston & Blustein, 2013). Increasing the visibility of educational wrap-around services remains essential to assist the target population more effectively in discovering academic and vocational prosperity. By advancing these fundamental facets of college provisions, students may experience higher levels of welfare, belonging, and healthier success rates. New and innovative strategies to support this population in achieving higher retention, transfer, and completion must penetrate the educational system to elevate achievement.

This study revealed specific similarities educators hold when evaluating the benefits of career courses, determining intellectual and career interactions, and assessing challenges and barriers that impede the target population from attaining improved achievement. Although various comparable factors emerged throughout the interviews, previous research does not show the differences of how these two groups interact with English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students with goal setting. This research discovered that, while academic adjunct faculty members engage with students to establish goals, career professionals remain oriented

toward career exploration and discovery conversations. The exchanges between educators and students represent a powerful, dynamic, and influential role in developing trust and rapport, impacting student learning, and developing growth and maturity, denoting as a critical aspect of student success (Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Parker & Trolan, 2020; Trolan & Parker, 2017).

Recommendations

This research provides three suggestions for future studies and two directions for future practice. These recommendations may significantly benefit English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students. The American educational system remains unique, mutable, diverse, robust, and second to none in transforming students into intellectual giants and preparing them for vocational greatness. Because our system remains adaptable and flexible, institutions have the inimitable ability to tactically track goal achievement, improve strategy, enhance productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency, and dynamically deliver clarity for executing short and long-term actions that produce more desired and favorable results.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Due to the economic conditions of COVID-19, engaging students in the research process remained problematic. I decided to eliminate student participation for the present research as it stayed uncertain when restrictions would lessen. A future study could focus on including student participation to determine their perspectives of career courses instructed by different professional groups. Their insight could provide meaningful analysis of course delivery, preferences in who leads career courses, the effectiveness of educators, preferred choices concerning career conversations, personal epistemology with career courses, and how confident they stay with academic and vocational discernment after completing the course.

Evaluating the long-term effects of outcomes rather than assessing a single course offering represents the second recommendation for future research. Measuring one career course

can yield quick results, produce untrustworthy data, or skew protracted outcomes. Evaluating a single course offering may also create unrealistic goals of success as curriculum, level of competency, effectiveness, or other variables that establish problem complexity with achieving outcomes. Assessing long-term outcomes may provide insight into how to better support the population of this study.

Considering any differences in performance, course outcomes, or quality of instruction when an academic adjunct faculty member leads a career course instead of a career professional represents another recommendation for future research. Pivoting toward participating in relevant, tailored, and meaningful intellectual content and establishing higher levels of vocational purpose may create a healthier alignment of academic engagement. It might potentially increase intrinsic motivation, and improve commitment, dedication, character, resilience, grit, and a willingness to persevere. Evaluating the differences in instruction can provide insight into the factors of the pedagogical change needed to maximize instruction for this population.

Recommendations for Future Practices

Employing a career intervention that emphasizes improving vocational awareness signifies a recommendation for future practices. As retention and completion rates continue to remain unhealthy at institutions of higher education with the target population, a career intervention that assists students in identifying their individualized occupational calling and connecting those strengths to an academic degree plan may help boost achievement. Students who understand their vocational strengths and establish a protracted degree and career blueprint may experience improved retention, transfer, and completion rates (Lam & Santos, 2018). As students become aware of their purpose, they become more equipped to make better academic choices, resulting in a more desirable educational journey (Joslyn, 2015; Ledwith, 2014; Murphy & Murphy, 2018). Deploying a career intervention, exploring the benefits of assisting students in

discovering their vocational strengths, helping them refine their calling, and supporting them in creating a long-term plan, may positively contribute to higher levels of retention and completion as students obtain a clearer understanding of their unique calling, and a more prevalent academic pathway, resulting in more propitious results. Employing a career intervention tailored to explore vocational clarity can potentially diminish efforts of dissolution and positively transforms the distained perspective of academic ineffectiveness (Lam & Santos, 2018). These results may also cause more favorable outcomes for internal and external constituents. Programs that aim to develop vocational self-efficacy and increase work-based learning opportunities can produce highly skilled employees, support a workforce-ready population, and generate more sustainable career pathways for students within different industries. Implementing a career intervention to assist this population in identifying career self-efficacy can help prepare them for comprehensive learning, become lifelong learners, and develop vocational fortitude to prevent them from reaching a career plateau (Lam & Santos, 2018).

Another future practice might focus on diversifying participant characteristics. All members of this study identified as one gender and ethnicity. Conducting a similar study in an urban region, expanding on member identification, such as male and female, age, informants from various ethnic backgrounds and socioeconomic status, or respondents with varied career development experience may produce different outcomes.

Conclusion

Achievement and success rates for first-generation Hispanic and Latino students remain a multidecade concern (Contreras, 2017; Contreras & Contreras, 2015). Enrollment for postsecondary institutions continues to increase for this population, and outcomes consistently indicate that they steadily experience lower retention, transfer, and completion rates compared to their non-first-generation peers (Contreras, 2017; Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Engle & Tinto,

2008; Soria & Stebleton, 2012). This qualitative case study occurred at a two-year community college in Northcentral Arkansas. The college incessantly experiences increased enrollment of English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students, and success rates remain a concern. To investigate the phenomenon, I observed occupational awareness, maturity, vocational calling, and career choice through Holland's personality type theory (Morgan, 2017; Nistal et al., 2019; Sverko & Babarovic, 2006; Yang et al., 2005). Holland's theory (1959) remains one of the most reliable and trustworthy theories across multicultural groups and time (Morgan, 2017; Nistal et al., 2019; Sverko & Babarovic, 2006; Yang et al., 2005). Focus groups provided fundamental awareness of the explored phenomenon, and semistructured interviews formed greater awareness and established more profound insight and understanding. Informants articulated the benefits of students participating in a career course, supporting previous research (Gaertner et al., 2014; Joslyn, 2015; Kim et al., 2020; Ledwith, 2014). They conveyed that career courses remain more valuable when led by qualified, competent, and experienced experts. Respondents expressed various impediments for the target population. Challenges communicated throughout the interviews align with previous research, suggesting that several known barriers exist for English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students (Contreras; 2017; Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Murphy & Murphy, 2018; Romo et al., 2020; Vincent, 2020).

Assessing the differences between the perceptions of academic adjunct faculty members and career professionals indicated a significant unknown. Faculty members discussed engaging in goal-setting conversations with their students, while career professionals participate in career discovery and awareness discussions. These differences underline a distinction in strategical academic and career planning, and little remains known concerning which approach proves more effective for short- and long-term usefulness, achievement, and success. In discerning the outcomes of this study, rather than evaluating one course, future research could emphasize a

longitudinal study to determine if a career course produces long-term effects on success rates or positively impacts achievement. Assessing any significant differences in outcomes between the studies prevail as paramount to establishing usefulness for protracted results. Establishing student perspectives to determine career courses value, effectiveness, and usefulness remains critical and represents future studies. Future research could focus on comparing expertise and quality of instruction. Different educators offer unique experiences, expertise, and competency. Evaluating these professionals, content knowledge, and effectiveness can provide insight into offering future career courses. Implementing a career intervention represents another recommendation for future studies. Incorporating a career intervention that remains tailored toward vocational calling, career choice, and occupational maturity, and directed toward identifying one's career interests, purpose, focus, and commitment may provide the motivation students need to experience vocational breakthrough. Attaining vocational breakthrough can equip students to engage in deeper dialog and strengthen vocational maturity, empowering them to make better academic choices as they obtain a clearer academic degree pathway.

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Appendix A: Participant Recruitment Letter

Date

Dear Recipient,

I am a doctoral student at Abilene Christian University in the Organizational Leadership Program. I am writing you today to kindly request your participation in a research study I am conducting titled: Examining the Perceived Benefits of a Career Course for English-Speaking First-Generation Hispanic and Latino Students. The purpose of this qualitative study seeks to determine the perceived benefits of English-speaking first-generation Hispanic and Latino students participating in a career course instructed by a career expert compared to a course led by an academic adjunct faculty member.

For rich data collection and to maximize relevant and reliable information, this study includes a focus group with open-ended questions followed by a semistructured interview. Both sessions will be offered via Zoom and last for about an hour. Zoom cameras will be turned to an off setting to protect personal identity.

Individuals who opt to participate in this study remain completely anonymous. At any time during the study, you may withdraw, and you will not be obligated to continue to participate.

Your insight and knowledge are of great value and significance should you choose to participate. Your contributions can provide a deeper awareness of the phenomenon under investigation and potentially help English-speaking first-generation Hispanic and Latino students achieve higher levels of academic excellence and vocational prosperity.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

David Mason, Doctoral Student, Abilene Christian University

Appendix B: Letter of Consent

Introduction: Examining the Perceived Benefits of a Career Course for First-Generation Hispanic and Latino Students

Dear Participant,

I am a doctoral student at Abilene Christian University, under the direction of a doctoral dissertation committee in the Organizational Leadership Program. I am conducting a study on the perceived benefits of a career course for English-speaking, first-Generation Hispanic and Latino students.

You may be able to take part in a research study. This form provides important information about that study, including the risks and benefits to you as a potential participant. Please read this form carefully and ask the researcher any questions that you may have about the study. You can ask about research activities and any risks or benefits you may experience. You may also wish to discuss your participation with other people, such as your family doctor or a family member.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or stop your participation at any time and for any reason without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this study is to determine the perceived benefits of English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students participating in a career course instructed by a career expert compared to a course led by an academic adjunct faculty member. Your participation can potentially help English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students achieve higher levels of academic excellence and vocational prosperity.

Should you choose to participate in this qualitative design research study voluntarily, you will engage in a focus group with open-ended questions. This initial conversation will last for about an hour and is intended to gain foundational awareness of the phenomenon under investigation. After the focus group, you may be asked to participate in a semistructured interview with open-ended questions. This interview will last about an hour and is intended to increase insight, awareness, and understanding of the phenomenon through rich dialogue and interaction. Both interview sessions will occur via Zoom, and a link will be electronically sent prior to the interviews.

RISKS & BENEFITS:

Participation in this qualitative study is entirely voluntary, and you will not be provided compensation, payment, a stipend, or any other form of reward for your time or contribution. Minimal risks exist for this study. Potential foreseeable risks include discomfort, fatigue, stress, and anxiety. Engaging in this study does not put an individual at risk of wellbeing, personal harm, or safety. There are also foreseeable benefits. These benefits include identifying positive

differences between instructional approaches, increased awareness of factors that influence the career decision-making process, and how a career course can be more effectively delivered in a higher educational institution for the target population.

PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY:

Any information you provide will be confidential to the extent allowable by law. Some identifiable data may have to be shared with individuals outside of the study team, such as the ACU Institutional Review Board members. All information acquired throughout the process of this study will be confidential. Your rights as a participant will be fully protected and respected. The collected data will be analyzed, categorized, and interpreted to define and explain outcomes. These results may be published at a later date; however, all information provided will be presented in a group format, and your name and other personal information will not be shared for any reason. After the data is collected and used to complete the study, the information will be destroyed.

CONTACTS:

At any time during the study, you are not obligated to continue and can withdraw. Should you have any questions or concerns before, during, or after the study, please contact, David Mason, at xxxxxxxxxxxx@gmail.com. You may also contact Dr. Christopher, faculty advisor, and chair. If you have concerns about this study, believe you may have been injured because of this study, or have general questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact ACU's Chair of the Institutional Review Board and Executive Director of Research Megan Roth, Ph.D. Dr. Roth may be reached at xxxxxxxxxxxx or xxxxxxxxxxxx@acu.edu
320 Hardin Administration Bldg, ACU Box 29103
Abilene, TX 79699

Consent Signature Section

Please sign this form if you voluntarily agree to participate in this study. Sign only after you have read all of the information provided, and your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. You should receive a copy of this signed consent form. You do not waive any legal rights by signing this form.

Printed Name of Participant	Signature of Participant	Date
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent	Signature of Person Obtaining Consent	Date

Appendix C: Focus Group Questions: Faculty

To gain a better understanding of the perceived benefits a career course may or may not have on English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students, six open-ended focus group questions include:

1. What do you perceive as benefits for English-speaking first-generation Hispanic and Latino students participating in a career readiness course?
2. At the beginning of a career readiness course, how confident do these students claim to be in discerning a major? Describe or provide examples.
3. After completing a career readiness course, how would these students describe their confidence in discerning a major?
4. Holland's theory of career choice suggests that each individual can be categorized into one of six types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional. How have you integrated these types into the course instruction to explore career identity?
5. Describe how Holland's theory of vocational type has impacted or failed to impact these students' decision-making on declaring a major?
6. How has COVID-19 affected retention and completion rates for English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students?

Appendix D: Focus Group Questions: Career Professionals

1. What do you perceive as benefits for English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students participating in a career readiness course?
2. At the beginning of a career readiness course, how confident do these students claim to be in discerning a major? Describe or provide examples.
3. After completing a career readiness course, how would these students describe their confidence in discerning a major?
4. Holland's theory of career choice suggests that each individual can be categorized into one of six types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional. How have you integrated these types into the course instruction to explore career identity?
5. Describe how Holland's theory of vocational type has impacted or failed to impact these students' decision-making on declaring a major?
6. How has COVID-19 affected retention and completion rates for English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students?

Appendix E: Semistructured Interview Questions: Faculty

To obtain a better understanding of the perceived benefits a career course may or may not have on English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students, eight open-ended questions employing a semi-structured approach consist of:

1. Describe your interactions with English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students concerning their career goals?
2. What challenges, barriers, difficulties, or influencers can delay college and career success?
3. How has Holland's theory of work types supported students' career maturity and identity?
4. What cultural factors have affected the college experience for English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students?
5. How might Holland's theory enhance the awareness of students' vocational strengths to equip them to make better academic choices?
6. What differences in performance or quality of instruction occur when a career course is led by a career professional instead of an academic adjunct faculty member?
7. How has COVID-19 affected retention and completion rates for English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students?
8. Is there anything else you would like to share, that I have not asked?

Appendix F: Semistructured Interview Questions: Career Professionals

1. Describe your interactions with English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students concerning their career goals?
2. What challenges, barriers, difficulties, or influencers can delay college and career success?
3. How has Holland's theory of work types supported student's career maturity and identity?
4. What cultural factors have affected the college experience for English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students?
5. How might Holland's theory enhance the awareness of students' vocational strengths to equip them to make better academic choices?
6. What differences in performance or quality of instruction occur when a career course is led by a career professional instead of an academic adjunct faculty member?
7. How has COVID-19 affected retention and completion rates for English-speaking, first-generation Hispanic and Latino students?
8. Is there anything else you would like to share, that I have not asked?

Appendix G: Audit Trail

Reference #	Action Item	Document	Date
	Focus Group Interview I		
[1]	Career Professional 1	Focus Group	June 14, 2022
[2]	Career Professional 2	Focus Group	June 14, 2022
[3]	Career Professional 3	Focus Group	June 14, 2022
[4]	Career Professional 4	Focus Group	June 14, 2022
[5]	Career Professional 5	Focus Group	June 14, 2022
	Focus Group Interview II		
[6]	Faculty Member A	Focus Group	June 14, 2022
[7]	Faculty Member B	Focus Group	June 14, 2022
[8]	Faculty Member C	Focus Group	June 14, 2022
[9]	Faculty Member D	Focus Group	June 14, 2022
[10]	Faculty Member E	Focus Group	June 14, 2022
	Semi structured Interview I		
[11]	Career Professional 1	Semistructured	July 13, 2022
[12]	Career Professional 2	Semistructured	July 13, 2022
[13]	Career Professional 3	Semistructured	July 13, 2022
[14]	Career Professional 4	Semistructured	July 13, 2022
[15]	Career Professional 5	Semistructured	July 13, 2022
	Semi structured Interview II		
[16]	Faculty Member A	Semistructured	July 13, 2022
[17]	Faculty Member B	Semistructured	July 13, 2022
[18]	Faculty Member C	Semistructured	July 13, 2022
[19]	Faculty Member D	Semistructured	July 13, 2022
[20]	Faculty Member E	Semistructured	July 13, 2022

Appendix H: IRB Approval

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
320 Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103
325-674-2885



April 11, 2022

David Mason
Department of Graduate and Professional Studies
Abilene Christian University

Dear David,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled

"Examining the Perceived Benefits of a Career Course for English-Speaking First-Generation Hispanic and Latino Students",

was approved by expedited review (Category 6&7) on 4/11/2022 (IRB # 22-039). Upon completion of this study, please submit the Inactivation Request Form within 30 days of study completion.

If you wish to make any changes to this study, including but not limited to changes in study personnel, number of participants recruited, changes to the consent form or process, and/or changes in overall methodology, please complete the Study Amendment Request Form.

If any problems develop with the study, including any unanticipated events that may change the risk profile of your study or if there were any unapproved changes in your protocol, please inform the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and the IRB promptly using the Unanticipated Events/Noncompliance Form.

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

Megan Roth

Megan Roth, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Sponsored Programs