Examination of the Relationship Between Classism and Career Agency

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ABSTRACT

EXAMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CLASSISM AND CAREER AGENCY

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Northern Illinois University, 2018
Dr. Suzanne Degges-White, Director

Classism is a recently studied but historically existent form of oppression. Classism may involve students feeling that they cannot pursue a degree or career due to discrimination related to their social class status. This study explored the relationship between classism, gender, age, race, socioeconomic status, and career agency through survey design research. Career agency is the primary dependent variable in this study. Career agency includes career choice, career forethought, and career-related actions. Psychometrically established instruments, including the Experiences With Perceived Classism Scale--Short Form and the Career Futures Inventory—Revised, were used to assess classism and career agency. Using this design, data were collected from undergraduate university students of various genders, races, socioeconomic statuses, ages, career ambitions, and potential experiences of classism at a large midwestern university in the United States. Student data were collected to explore any potential associations between any self-report of perceived classism and students’ reported career agency. Student responses were then analyzed through correlations, an independent-samples t test, and a multiple linear regression analysis.

Keywords: Classism, social class status, multicultural counseling, discrimination, career agency
EXAMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
CLASSISM AND CAREER AGENCY

BY
LUCY CHARLENE PARKER
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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
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FOR THE DEGREE
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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Louis and Terri Parker. Your emotional, financial, and mental support as well as unconditional love have provided me the confidence to pursue and finish this journey. I would never have completed this journey without either of you! I would also like to dedicate this work to additional family members, including my siblings, Jack Collins, Brea Collins, Brook Collins, Melissa Collins and Scott Collins; nieces and nephews, Aaron Trueblood, Everly Trueblood, Justin Trueblood, Lily Trueblood, JT Trueblood, Chelsea Trueblood, Brittany Trueblood, Emilee Powell, Terri Ann Belt and upcoming little one, Elizabeth Belt, Josclyn Collins, and Khloe Collins; and to all of my other extended family members. Specifically, I would like to also thank my Grandmother Charlene Tirey who passed away earlier this year. My Grandma Tirey’s tenacity and beautiful hopefulness are things I aspire to pursue long after my degree is earned. She is one of many strong women in my family whom I am so blessed to have. Additionally, thank you to all of my grandparents, including Joel Parker, Charlotte Parker, and Kenneth Tirey. I would like to dedicate this documentation to workers, clients, and students in all status employment positions for your foundational efforts, especially those affected by acts of overt and covert classism.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES ......................................................................................................................... ix

LIST OF FIGURES ..................................................................................................................... x

LIST OF APPENDICES .............................................................................................................. xi

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION ..................................................................................................................... 1
   Rationale ................................................................................................................................. 4
   Problem Statement ................................................................................................................ 4
   Purpose of Study .................................................................................................................... 6
   Research Questions ............................................................................................................... 6
   Definition of Terms ............................................................................................................... 7
   Limitations ............................................................................................................................. 13
   Delimitations ........................................................................................................................ 15
   Organization of the Study ..................................................................................................... 16

2. LITERATURE REVIEW ......................................................................................................... 17
   Addressing Current Financial Inequality ............................................................................. 17
   Classism as a Barrier to Future Financial Inequality ......................................................... 19
     Legislative Influences on Classism .................................................................................. 20
     Classism and Career .......................................................................................................... 21
   The Professional Need for Multiculturalism ...................................................................... 22
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Marginalization</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combating Marginalization Through New Counseling Models</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classism as Marginalization</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Perceived Classism</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classism Categories</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalized Classism</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classism Types</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isms Related to Classism</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generational Influences of Classism</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Statuses Related to Class</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Stereotype to Skepticism</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differential Identity Status</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrelationship of Education and Career</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Constraints as a Form of Classism</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers Outside of Financial Constraint</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theories of Student Development</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Student Biopsychosocial Development</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive and Neuroscience Theories of Development</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erikson’s Theory of Psychosocial Development</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schlossberg’s Theory of Sociocultural Development</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronfenbrenner’s Theory of Ecological Development</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecological and Multidimensional Theories of Gender Development</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theories of Student Career Identity</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super’s College Student Development of Career Identity</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Super to Savickas Continuum</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspects of Career Identity</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Roles and Career Identity</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Outcome Expectations</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Maturity</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Adaptability</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Choice</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Agency</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Agency and Gender</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Consideration of Classism and Career Agency</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3. METHODOLOGY

| Hypotheses and Research Questions | 61 |
| Participants | 62 |
| Administration Procedure | 63 |
| Instruments and Variables | 63 |
| The Experiences With Classism Scale--Short Form | 64 |
| Predictor Variable of Perceived Classism | 64 |
| Career Futures Inventory--Revised | 64 |
| Criterion Variable of Career Agency and Subscales | 65 |
Demographic Information ........................................................................................................ 66
Predictor Variable of Gender ................................................................................................. 66
Predictor Variable of Race ..................................................................................................... 66
Predictor Variable of Socioeconomic Status ....................................................................... 66
Predictor Variable of Age ..................................................................................................... 67
Data Analyses ........................................................................................................................ 67
Validity Considerations ......................................................................................................... 68
Summary ................................................................................................................................. 69
4. RESULTS .............................................................................................................................. 70
Description of the Sample ..................................................................................................... 71
Descriptive Statistics .............................................................................................................. 71
  Summary of Descriptive Statistics of the EWCS-SF ............................................................. 74
  Summary of Descriptive Statistics of the CFI-R ................................................................. 75
Reliability Analyses ................................................................................................................ 77
Analysis of the Data ................................................................................................................ 78
  Hypothesis 1 ......................................................................................................................... 78
  Hypothesis 2 Assumptions ................................................................................................. 79
  Hypothesis 2 ......................................................................................................................... 79
  Hypothesis 3 Assumptions ................................................................................................. 81
  Hypothesis 3 ......................................................................................................................... 81
  Summary ............................................................................................................................... 83
5. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY .............................................................................................. 84
  Summary of Results ............................................................................................................ 84
Limitations ......................................................................................................................... 85
Discussion of Hypotheses .................................................................................................. 86
Hypothesis 1 ....................................................................................................................... 87
Hypothesis 2 ....................................................................................................................... 87
Hypothesis 3 ....................................................................................................................... 88
Ancillary Analyses ............................................................................................................. 89
Discussion of Major Findings ........................................................................................... 90
Implications for Counselors and Counselor Educators .................................................... 91
Recommendations ............................................................................................................ 92
  Recommendations for Counselors .................................................................................. 92
  Recommendations for Counselor Educators ................................................................. 95
  Recommendations for Future Research ........................................................................ 97
Conclusion ........................................................................................................................ 99
BIBLIOGRAPHY .............................................................................................................. 101
APPENDICES .................................................................................................................. 121
LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Variables Table</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Frequencies of Demographic Variables</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Descriptive Statistics of Demographic and Ancillary Variables</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Perceived Classism Variable</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Career Agency Variable</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Reliability Statistics</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Correlation Between Career Agency and Perceived Classism</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Independent Samples T Test</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Model Summary</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Coefficient Table</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Perceived Classism Variable</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Career Agency Variable</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### LIST OF APPENDICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. INFORMED CONSENT AND RECRUITMENT SCRIPT</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. EXPERIENCES WITH CLASSISM SCALE--SHORT FORM</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. CAREER FUTURES INVENTORY--REVISED</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. EMAIL CONFIRMATIONS FOR INSTRUMENTS</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. ANALYSES GRAPHS</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. IRB APPROVAL NOTICE</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. CURRICULUM VITAE</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The United States is historically known for encouraging autonomy, individualism, and the increasingly elusive American Dream (Hagan, 2017; Walters, 2015). Despite its cultural pervasiveness and instillation of hope, the American Dream oversimplifies challenges that many individuals in America still face (Hagan, 2017; Liu et al., 2007). The American Dream is based on systems justification theory, which states that awards, accomplishments, and capital come to those who deserve these by working hard enough (Diestelmann, 2017). Although national inclusion has increased, various Americans still experience everyday discrimination related to racism, sexism, ableism, and recently studied, but historically existent, classism (Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005; Eshelman & Rottinghaus, 2015; Hau, 2012; Liu et al., 2007). Many of the individuals who face everyday classism are our clients and students (East et al., 2016). Counselors’ knowledge of classism that clients may face is imperative to facilitate clients’ empowerment to cope with the everyday unfortunate discrimination of classism (Clark, Moe, & Hays, 2017; East et al., 2016; Foss et. al., 2011; Liu et al., 2007; Smith, 2008).

Classism was historically present even during the foundation of American education (Hau, 2012). Initially, U.S. education was based on a model which fostered social stratification, where students of wealthier families spent time in school while students in poorer families worked outside of the classroom in areas such as mining fields, and farms (Hau, 2012). Since this time, classism has gained increased attention within higher education (Glenn, 2017; Langhout, Drake, & Rosselli, 2009). Despite increased attention, classism, especially classism toward poorer people, still exists. According to Cozzarelli, Wilkson and Tager (2001), those who
identify with being in the poor, lower, or working-poor class experience more negative stereotypes than their middle-class co-participants. Classism still exists in public and higher education as well (Liu, 2004). According to theories including critical race theory (Crenshaw, 1989, 1993), feminist theory (Acker, 1987), LatCrit theory (Huber, 2010), and social justice theories (Miller, 1999; Justice, 2013), education accessibility needs to continually grow to increase, maintain, and foster minority students. Many students who are affected by academic exclusion or academic barriers are students in social class minority statuses. For example, one in five high school seniors in America will not pursue a higher education degree due to various classism-related barriers, including lack of money or lack of confidence (Ma, Pender, & Welch, 2016).

Though some students from lower class statuses do prevail despite overwhelming classism-related and other barriers, only few actually obtain their own American Dream. Reed (2017) elaborated on the resiliency factors of students facing classism and class-related issues. Resiliency factors for these students include family, mentorship, and modeling from others whom students identify with regarding self-ascribed status. Some of these resiliency factors are influences for the few students who do obtain their dreams regardless of classism. However, despite resiliency factors, many students may still be inhibited by classism-related barriers and feel or be stuck. Of all potential barriers considered, perceived classism is one for which counselors need to gain added awareness (Simons, Koster, Groffen, & Bosma, 2017). For example, although past researchers have suggested that social class status is related to unresolved issues in counseling, the counseling field has yet to extensively study classism or various subtypes of classism, including perceived classism (Beutler, Machado, & Neudeldt, 1994).

*Perceived classism* is defined as classism which is observed discrimination based on a person’s social class standing (Simons, Koster, Groffen, & Bosma, 2017; Thompson & Subich,
Perceived classism has briefly been introduced in recent social science research (Liu, 2013; Thompson, 2008; Thompson & Subich, 2012). Thompson and Subich (2012) synonymously used the term “classism” with the term “perceived classism” when creating one of the first classism-related assessments, the Experiences With Classism Scale, to measure perceived classism. Researchers assert perceived classism may inhibit students’ education and occupational dreams (Eshelman & Rottinghaus, 2015; Liu et al., 2004; Thompson, 2008; Thompson & Subich, 2012). Expanding on implications from current research, perceived classism was used as the main independent variable in this study.

Liu asserted the American Dream may be a myth for many minority students, due in part to perceived classism and classism-related barriers (Liu, 2001b, 2011, 2013). For example, if students ultimately attend and graduate college, they may do so with thousands of dollars in debt, obtain an unsatisfactory job versus their desired career, or worse, be unemployed (Thompson, Dahling, Chin, & Melloy, 2017). Recent findings of millennial students’ experiences of unemployment as well as the few studies of students’ experiences of classism in education catalyze the need to continue to study students’ experiences of classism and classism as related to their career agency (Liu, 2001b, 2011, 2013; Rottinghaus et al., 2012; Thompson et al., 2017). McMahon (2014) and Richardson (1993, 1996, 2000) have also shared encouragement for social science researchers to study career-related decisions and behaviors in relation to socioeconomic status and social class. These authors also found in their research that much of the career-counseling-related theories that are popular in the counseling fields are often overwhelmingly focused on a “perceived middle-class bias” (Richardson, 1991, 1993, 1996, in McMahon, 2014, p. 1). Due to the need to further understand career-related characteristics with social class and classism, this study aimed to explore the relationship between classism and career agency.
Career agency is defined as “the perceived capacity for self-reflection and forethought to intentionally initiate, control, and manage career transitions” (Rottinghaus, Buelow, Matyja, & Schneider, 2012, p. 65). Career agency is the main dependent variable in this study. Career agency is a construct important for review, especially with students’ reports of potential experienced classism, as career agency is related to self-perception and self-action toward career pursuits.

**Rationale**

By understanding students’ experiences of classism and reports of career agency, helpers may attain added knowledge to empower these students to more realistically obtain their own American Dreams. Helping students attain educational and occupational pursuits may help them individually as well as also influence macro-scale economic employment growth (Saegert et al., 2007; U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Goldin and Katz (2007, 2009) asserted that increased student attendance in intrinsically desired careers may also increase overall national economic growth and reduce future national unemployment. Other authors also noted that well-educated workers are also more competitive and successful both nationally and internationally (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013).

**Problem Statement**

As referenced, currently many students and clients in public and higher education are affected by classism (Glenn, 2017; Langhout, Drake, & Rosselli, 2009). Diverse issues related to students and clients in higher education are assumed to be addressed by counselors and other helpers (Ponterotto, Casas, Suzuki, & Alexander, 2009). Reinforcing this duty to provide student and client beneficence, the counseling profession focuses on foundations of diversity, culture, social justice, and advocacy (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2016).
Despite the counseling profession’s emerging social justice focus, little professional advocacy or client advocacy has been done for clients facing classism or for clients facing career agency issues related to classism (Clark, Moe, & Hays, 2017; Liu, 2001b, 2011, 2013). The problem driving this study includes counselors’ lack of awareness of students’ or clients’ experiences of classism and experiences of classism in potential relation to their career agency (Clark, Moe, & Hays, 2017; East et al., 2016; Foss & Generali, 2012; Rottinghaus, Buelow, Matyja, & Schneider, 2012; Smith, 2009). Lack of counselors’ knowledge about classism and career agency is problematic for both current and future clients, as both current and upcoming counselors are not trained to possess competencies related to classism and career agency-related issues (East et al., 2016; Foss & Generali 2012; Liu et al., 2004; Liu, 2011b, 2013; Reay, Crozier, & Clayton, 2010; Smith, 2009; Sturm, 2012; Thompson, 2008; Thompson & Subich, 2012).

As referenced in the introduction of this dissertation, Liu (2001b, 2010, 2011, 2013; Liu et al., 2004) is a social class researcher. He has been one of the few individuals in the social sciences to do counseling-related advocacy for students and clients with social class-related issues. Liu (2013) recently composed a clinical model for counseling psychologists termed Social Class Counseling Consciousness (SCCC) model. In Liu’s (2011) SCCC model, counselors are encouraged to help clients understand, accept, embrace, and navigate life in their identified social class status. Liu’s SCCC model has recently encouraged helpers, specifically counseling psychologists, to help clients by becoming aware of various nonlinear and ever-evolving phases of their social class status development. These phases include a client 1) having no knowledge of one’s social class status, 2) being hypersensitive to or feeling insecure about
one’s social class status or 3) being accepting of self and conscious of one’s self-ascribed social status (Liu, 2013).

Liu (2013) has encouraged counseling psychologists to use this model to help individuals with class-related issues such as classism-related trauma. Liu has generated the SCCC Model and the description of classism-related trauma which may include affective aspects such as depression, isolation, feelings of lack of worth, or behavioral and contextual aspects such as being homeless, being bullied, or being subject to violence (Liu, 2011, 2013; Liu et al., 2007). Despite Liu’s work, scarce additional classism-related or social-class-related research, especially from a counselor education perspective, has been done.

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore and further understand the relationship of students’ experiences of classism within higher education as related to career agency.

**Research Questions**

Research questions that drove this study’s various hypotheses include:

**Research Question 1:**

What is the relationship between perceived classism and career agency?

**H1:** Students who report higher levels of perceived classism will report lower levels of career agency.

**Research Question 2:** Does the level of reported career agency between men and women differ?

**H2:** Men and women’s ratings of career agency will be different.

**Research Question 3:** What proportion of the variance in career agency can be accounted for by perceived classism, age, gender, SES, and race?
H₃: A moderate amount of variance in career agency among undergraduate students, as measured by the CFI-R, is accounted for by the following variables: perceived classism, age, gender, SES, and race.

**Definition of Terms**

This section describes important concepts central to this study, including age, career, career agency, classism, discrimination, gender, marginalization, multiculturalism, race, social class status, socioeconomic status, and the psychometric instruments that describe classism and career agency.

**Age**

*Age* is operationally defined by the number of complete years that a student has lived. This predictor variable of age is operationally defined as a continuous variable and a self-report of the student’s numerical age since birth.

**Career**

For this study, *career* is defined using Cochran’s (1994) and Super’s (1980) definitions. These authors collectively defined career as a pursuit or position which occurs over a continued period throughout a person’s life, in which a person works using skills, knowledge, and experiences. Many contemporary career counseling theorists state that career consideration, pursuits, and attainment commonly occur consequently after college for many young adults (Wiese, 2018). On average, individuals change their career choices and careers about four times in their lifespan (Thompson & Subich, 2007). Career is also a component of *career agency*, which is the main dependent variable in this study and is defined using the Career Futures Inventory--Revised (CFI-R) (Rottinghaus et al., 2017).
Career Agency

Career agency refers to “the perceived capacity for self-reflection and forethought to intentionally initiate, control, and manage career transitions” (Rottinghaus, Buelow, Matyja, & Schneider, 2012, p. 65). Human agency is the umbrella component which compartmentalizes specific agencies, including career agency (Chen, 2002). Chen (2002) said action, also known as agency, is “goal-directed, purposeful, and intentional behavior” (p. 122). Career agency is the primarily observed dependent variable in this study and is operationally defined as the score on the reported Career Futures Inventory--Revised (Rottinghaus et al., 2017).

Career Choice

This study focused on the relationship of perceived classism in relation to career agency (which includes career choice). According to Kelly and Hatcher (2013), career choice, career goals, and career outcomes are personified in a student’s internal and external environments (p. 105). These authors also asserted that career choice is influenced by several variables including socioeconomic status and educational attainment. This study specifically explored the assumption that career agency may be influenced by barriers related to classism.

Classism

Classism is the primary independent variable in this study. Classism is defined as discrimination based on an individual’s social class standing (Collins & Yeskel, 2005; Ostrove & Cole, 2003; Thompson & Subich, 2012). Lott (2002) defined classism as “acting stereotypes and negative attitudes in ways that separate, exclude, devalue, discount, and define the working class or working poor as ‘other’” (p. 100). However, other authors have expanded Lott’s (2002) definition to any social class group, including those in the middle and upper classes as well (Granfield, 1991). This study particularly focused on perceived classism, which is the perception
of being discriminated against due to a student’s social class status (Ostrove & Cole, 2003; Thompson & Subich, 2012).

**Discrimination**

The definition of *discrimination* is “behavior that treats individuals differently because of their membership in a minority group” (Gollnick & Chinn, 1994, p. 104). Discrimination may include behaviors toward students in part due to their minority identities or intersectional identities (Collins, 1991). A student’s social class status may be an intersection that is subject to marginalization and discrimination. Duffy, Blustein, Diemer, and Autin (2016) defined *marginalization* as “the relegation of people or groups of people to a less powerful group within society” (p. 132). The majority group of college and university attendees in America include middle-to upper-class, hetero-passing students aged 18-25 years old (Reay, Crozier, & Clayton, 2010; Sturm, 2012). According to Reay, Crozier, and Clayton (2012), students in lower or working-class statuses are considered within an underrepresented or minority status in higher education. Students in minority groups in higher education may experience discrimination or marginalization related to perceived classism (Liu, 2011, 2013; Thompson & Subich, 2012). For this study, classism is operationally defined as the score reported on the Experiences with Perceived Classism Scale (Thompson & Subich, 2012).

**Gender**

*Gender* is a multidimensional construct that describes a student’s identity as a person related to being either male, female, non-binary, transgender, cisgender, or potentially another identity type (Acker, 1987; Gill, 2012; Liu, 2001a; Liu, 2001b; Meerwikjk, & Sevelius, 2017; Sedgwick, 1965; Smith & Schonfeld, 2000). For broad generalization, this study operationally defined the variable of gender as male, female, non-binary or other.
**Multiculturalism**

According to various counselor education theorists and psychologists, the term *multiculturalism* is phenomenological, contextual, and relates to the integration and differentiated recognitions of aspects of culture and intersections of culture (Hernandez, 2013; Liu, 2013; Smith, Foley, & Chaney, 2008; Toporek & Pope-Davis, 2005). Multicultural intersections of a person may include race, gender, physical body typology, mental or physical disability, socioeconomic status, and social class status (Collins, 1991; Crenshaw, 1989, 1993). In addition to describing an individual’s intersectional identity, multiculturalism is also a fundamental term which guides this study. This study incorporates multiculturalism as undergraduate students of randomized intersections and identities were the sample demographic. Students in varying cultural identities were asked about their unique experiences of potential perceived classism and career agency.

**Race**

*Race*, along with gender, is a multidimensional and socially created construct (Acker, 1987; Collins, 1991, Crenshaw, 1989, 1993; Liu, 2011). Though race is typically operationally defined as a group of people based on distinct physical traits, such constructs are more than biological traits alone (Milan-Tyner, 2018; Omi & Winant, 1994). Race is operationally defined in this study as African American/Black, Caucasian/White, Asian American, Native American, Latino/Hispanic, and Multiracial/Other. According to Bryant-Davis and Ocampo (2005), Landrine and Klonoff (1996), and Liu (2013), students in varying gender, sex, or racial identities have reported experience everyday prejudice and discrimination that may also be related to their social class identity. These findings, specifically those by Landrine and Klonoff (1996) of students’ intersectional focus including social class status, have guided the creation of the
Experience with Classism Scale (EWCS). The EWCS was used in this study to assess students’ experiences of classism (Thompson & Subich, 2012).

**Social Class Status**

The term *social class status* is used to further understand a student’s self-identified class status (Liu, 2011, 2013; Liu et al., 2004). According to Krieger, Williams, and Moss (1997), social class describes “social groups [that] arise from interdependent economic relationships” (p. 344). Social class status is traditionally conflated with socioeconomic status (SES). Rather than defining social class status entirely, SES is a piece of a person’s social class status (Liu, 2001b, 2010, 2011, 2013). Pope-Davis and Coleman (2001) elaborated that the term “status” suggests a position of an individual in a hierarchically organized system. For social class status, a person’s status is considered within an economically based hierarchical system. Social class status is holistically a multilayered contextual construct which integrates an individual’s identified race, self and parent educational attainment, self and parental income, and interpersonal power in society (Kraus et al., 2012; Stellar et al., 2012; Thompson, 2008). In a similar definition, Langhout, Rosselli, and Feinstein (2007) also reference social class as “a combination of economic, social, and cultural capital” which is influenced by context (p. 146).

This study incorporates the collation of these definitions of social class status as these definitions suggest that students’ identity, including their class status, is multilayered and ecologically influenced (e.g., such as understanding identity using Bronfenbrenner’s model as described in Chapter 2 of this documentation) (Chen, 2002; Eshelman & Rottinghaus, 2015; Liu et al., 2004). Bronfenbrenner’s model and other ecological models guide this study as these models, versus more traditional identity-based models, view a student’s social class status as different from but including their socioeconomic status (Liu 2011, 2013; Liu et al., 2004).
Like researchers using ecological models, this study considers social status as multidimensional and influenced by social prestige and social power (Thompson & Subich, 2007, pp. 228-237). This study further solidifies various definitions within the term “social class” as researchers currently assert that a succinct and sufficiently defined term is yet to be cohesively written out in literature (Diestelmann, 2017; Rubin et al., 2014). Furthermore, social class status contains the definition of status. Status is defined as a position in a hierarchical system (Pope-Davis & Coleman, 2001). Thus, social class status is a status within a hierarchical context (Pope-Davis & Coleman, 2001). Examining how students identify regarding classism related to their ascribed social class status may also reveal information regarding pursuit of their desired careers related to social class (Liu, 2011, 2013; Thompson & Subich, 2007).

**Socioeconomic Status (SES)**

Socioeconomic status (SES) is defined as a part, but not all, of a person’s social class status in society (Hagan, 2017; Liu, 2013; Rubin et al., 2014). SES is measured by traditional objective indicators, including a student’s own income or a student’s parents’ annual income, household wealth, educational attainment, and reported past or current financial capital (Baum, Garofalo, & Yali, 1999; Liu et al., 2007). With consideration of operationally defining SES using parental income, this study also used students’ self-reported parental SES as a predictor variable in this study. Perry and Wallace (2013) state that although SES has been studied intensely as a sociological term, SES has not been examined intensely as a psychological construct on a macro-scale level (Connors-Kellgren, 2017). Factors including career choice, identity, attitudes, customs, expectations, psychological context, age, and vocational experience may also influence a student’s self-reported SES (Connors-Kellgren, 2017, p. 10).
Limitations

This study’s limitations include contextual and statistical limitations. Quantitative data, which guide the design of this study, do not capture the entire context (i.e., the why questions) of students’ descriptions of their perceived classism or of their anticipated career agency (Creswell, 2014). This survey design method may not entirely capture all the reasons or contexts regarding classism in higher education or decision making related to undergraduate students’ career agency. The primary goal of this study is not for complete particularization, but rather broad generalization for macro-scale understanding. Macro-scale findings through statistical patterns may help counselors operationally define concepts including classism and social class, better understand larger trends related to classism, and provide empirical support for future funding requests for added exploration of the topics of classism and career.

Another salient limitation of this study includes the operational definition of this study’s variable of social class. As referenced, SES is a variable which has been defined using various measures. Of these measures, SES has frequently been researched using parental income. Due to past research and practical means of operationalization, this study used students’ self-reported parental SES as a predictor variable in this study. To increase accuracy and generalization of the results of this study, one revision may include adding additional variables to define a student’s self-reported social class status, which includes SES. In fact, this study’s limitation is consistent with the gap in past research to sufficiently define social class status.

A second potential limitation of this study includes that this study’s participants were limited only to students deciding on careers in one university and in counseling courses, career counseling courses, psychology courses, or rehabilitation-service-related courses. This sample of students may produce a skewed sample, as these students have already been accepted into
college, are pursuing a university degree, and seemingly have enough self-forethought and personal agency to take a course related to self (i.e., such as a counseling course) or career (i.e., career counseling courses). Though this participant sample is valuable for added construct validity of classism in higher education, much of what this study describes could involve people not yet in higher education. Classism may be a larger barrier for past high school students who do not enter or are not accepted into college (Thompson & Subich, 2012).

The constructs of race and gender being asked with preset answer choices may have also added limitations to this study. Despite various social constructivist theorists’ knowledge that both gender and race are constructs on a continuum, this study presents pre-identified choices for students for statistical generalization purposes (Creswell, 2014). For the sake of pure statistical analyses, students in the gender continuum are represented by the pre-identified answer choices of male, female, non-binary, or other. Along with gender, additional variables in this study are operationally defined and thus may not match the phenomenological identity of specific or “outlier” students (Liu, 2013).

Another potential contextual limitation that may impact findings regarding skewness of the data is the possibility of social desirability bias or the Hawthorne effect (Nishishiba et al., 2014). Due to the length of this questionnaire (survey) in its entirety or because of potential impression management to the administrator, students may have answered in a way that they think a researcher would like them to answer (Creswell, 2014). Students may have also opted to answer “neutral” in one of the administered instruments due to this being a choice in the 6-point Likert scale. To further mitigate any survey response bias such as these, the informed consent (Appendix A) states for participants to “please answer honestly and please remember that your completion and submission will remain anonymous to this researcher.”
Delimitations

Various delimitations that were utilized for this study included the following criteria: 1) location of participant recruitment and 2) participant undergraduate status and type. Participation for this study included only students at one midwestern university in Illinois. This first delimitation was intended to provide a first macro-scale sample to understand students’ perceptions of potential classism and career agency in a four-year university as differentiated from other settings or institutions. Data from these participants need not be conflated with other student types outside the distinguished experiences of students at a four-year institution.

The second delimitation of this study included participant data to be exclusive to only undergraduate versus graduate students. Students in their undergraduate trajectory may have less social privilege or may seemingly face more classism versus graduate students, due to undergraduate students being in a lower academic status. According to Liu et al. (2007), educational attainment may provide privilege and power that influences social class status. With this research in mind, undergraduate students were the target sample for this study as these students may face increased career-related barriers or other barriers related to classism.

The obvious delimitations of university location and undergraduate student type were chosen for this study to more thoroughly generalize versus particularize students’ experiences at a four-year university. Moreover, in part due to the dearth of macro-scale research to drive themes related to classism in higher education, this study focused on quantitative generalization of classism and career agency versus the more recently utilized qualitative research (i.e., which has been minimally done) to describe students’ experience with classism or career agency (Okech, Astramovich, Johnson, Hoskins, & Rubel, 2006; Vaccaro, 2009). This study’s main research questions also drive quantitative macro-scale hypotheses rather than qualitative inquiry.
(Creswell, 2014). It is hoped that the quantitative usage in this study catalyzes future macro-scale studies not only regarding counselor education research related only to these specific constructs but also overall increasingly the nature of quantitative research practice in the counselor education field (Okech, Astramovich, Johnson, Hoskins, & Rubel, 2006; Vaccaro, 2009). Macro-scale research is not only desired in counselor education to understand larger patterns, but macro-scale quantitative research is one of the few evidence-based designs that earns funding for the various social science and counseling fields (Vaccaro, 2009).

**Organization of the Study**

This study is presented in five chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction, rationale, problem statement, purpose statement, research questions, significance of the study, and definitions of terms for this study. Reasons to further understand class-related and career-related aspects for added cultural competency and client beneficence are also presented with the background information in this chapter. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature of constructs including classism and career agency. Undergraduate students’ experiences, identity-related development, as well as typical student college and occupational trajectory are also described in this chapter. Chapter 3 provides a description of this study’s methodology, participant sample, instrumentation, procedures, data collection, and analyses. Chapter 4 presents the results of the data collected. In Chapter 5, implications from results and previous literature surrounding classism and career agency are discussed.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

This study aimed to explore students’ experiences of classism in relation to career agency. This chapter addresses historical, societal, and contemporary literature regarding classism and career agency in counseling research as well as inside and outside of higher education.

Addressing Current Financial Inequality

Though all students potentially face barriers regarding their desired career aspirations, students in poverty are especially vulnerable to various internal and external career and academic barriers (East et al., 2016; Foss & Generali, 2012; Goodman et al., 2013; Plotnick, Smolensky, Evenhouse, & Reilly, 2000; Reiman, & Leighton, 2015; Smith, 2009). Poverty and other class-related barriers inhibit students from their own American Dream (Hagan, 2017). Specifically, students in poverty are described as pupils from non-resourced or low-resourced areas (Smith, 2009). One example of barriers faced by students in poverty includes that the schools to where students of lower social statuses are often assigned are poorly funded. Poverty-stricken students also tend to score lower on high-stakes standardized tests and assessments, drop out of high school more frequently, and earn fewer postsecondary degrees than students in more affluent schools (Bartlett, Hart, Satterthwaite, De la Barra, & Missair, 2016; Fouad & Brown, 2000; US Department of Education, 2001, 2008). According to sociological researchers Colclough and Beck (1986), historically, many students from less affluent public schools were suggested to pursue vocational degrees rather than four-year universities, even when they desired a four-year university degree.
Additionally, students in poverty may also be marginalized for their additional minority status, such as their race, gender, or sexual identity (East, Powers, Hyatt, Wright, & May, 2016; Gilmore & Harris, 2008; Lee & Waithaka, 2017; Liu, 2013; Thompson & Subich, 2007; Thompson et al., 2012). Freire (1970, 1973) outlined that oppression toward varying demographics with minority statuses exist in educational and other societal systems in part to maintain the status quo. Freire’s (1970, 1973) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* has precipitated much research about the need to understand and mitigate educational marginalization. Building from Freire’s and other social justice theorists, Pietrantoni, Glance, and Smith (2015) found that students in high school experience classism that is reported to potentially exacerbate the marginalization they experience related to other identities, including their sexual orientation, gender identity, or racial identity (Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005; Freire, 1970, 1973).

Working-class students, also known as poor working-class students, meet basic needs but experience stressors such as families living paycheck to paycheck (Tach & Edin, 2017). In fact, only a small portion of working-class/poor working-class students can attend four-year universities due to economic and sociopolitical barriers (Langhout et al., 2007; Liu, 2001b). Sociopolitical barriers include financial hardship as well as the lack of other physical and psychological resources. Physical resources include money, technology, professional contacts, and proximity to higher education (Liu, 2013; Peterson, 1993). Psychological resources include confidence, eagerness, and self-efficacy (Liu, 2013; Mau & Bikos, 2000; Thompson & Subich, 2012).

Though a small percentage of students in lower status classes do graduate college, these students’ graduation rates are staggeringly low in comparison to their peers of higher social classes. Specifically, students from households earning up to $96,000 have a 50% graduation rate
from college by the age of 24 years old (US Census Bureau, 2015). Comparatively, students in households earning up to $36,000 have only a 6% graduation rate from college by the age of 24 years old. Lack of access as well as the stark discrepancy in graduation rates from institutions of higher learning for poorer students is known as oppression. The specific oppression type based on these examples is known as macro-level classism, also called institutional classism (Liu, 2013; Thompson & Subich, 2007). Another example of macro-scale classism related oppression is that in a recent study, Liu (2010) found that students’ experiences of classism and socioeconomic status were related to educational attrition. Liu’s (2010) research is based within the ideas of Freire (1970, 1973) that oppression of populations is encapsulated within not only political structures but also in academic, philosophical, and career structures. The various types of classism are unfortunately also existent within all of these structures referenced by Freire (1970, 1973).

**Classism as a Barrier to Future Financial Equality**

Despite that approximately 26% of the U.S. population is composed of both racial and ethnic minorities, higher education settings predominately enroll students who identify as White, cisgender, and in higher social class statuses (Ponterotto, Casas, Suzuki, & Alexander, 2009). In addition to lower representation in higher education, students who identify as racial, ethnic, gender, or financial minorities also disproportionately comprise first-generation college students. Moreover, poverty is also often generationally transmitted. Students who grow up poor or in poverty also have less financial resources to attend or participate as fully in school as their wealthier peers. For example, Spichal (2009) reported that first-generation college students, who included approximately 21% Black students, 25% Hispanic students, and 40% White and all other racially identifying students, did not pursue self-reported desired careers due to not being
able to afford to finish their baccalaureate degree nor pursue required graduate school for some of their desired careers. Instead of pursuing their desired careers, students in marginalized intersections, including students in lower social classes, often pursue less intrinsically appealing careers and earn less compensation after college (Saw, Chang, & Chan, 2018). Additionally, researchers have asserted that many students from low SES groups also often do not pursue their desired academic or career paths because of increased self-doubt and increased fear of rejection in social situations (Kraus et al., 2012).

**Legislative Influences on Classism**

Though the United States is one of the wealthiest countries in the world, the financial disparity gap is alarming and growing (Hagan, 2017). The U.S. growth in wealth disparity increases the visibility of class and other statuses (Hagan, 2017; Liu, 2013). Statistically, 21.4% of African Americans, 21.4% of Hispanics, 10.4% of Asian Americans, and 11.6% of Caucasians are categorized as living in poverty (Liu, 2013; Plotnick et al., 2000; US Census Bureau, 2015). In addition to race and income disparity, the divide between the highest and the lowest social class groups continues to grow. Tragically, at least 18 million children still live in poverty, which is also equivalent to one out of every three children (Bartlett, Hart, Satterthwaite, De la Barra, & Missair, 2016; US National for Education Statistics, 2016). Particularly, 13.5% of Americans, which is approximately 43.1 million people, live in poverty (Liu, 2013; Plotnick et al., 2000; US Census Bureau, 2015). This already sizeable number does not include the additional individuals who identify in the working class, working poor class, or lower class.

Despite awareness of the robust number of children and adults in poverty and in lower financial statuses, many current legislative programs that empower these people, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy
Families (TANF), have experienced recent reduced funding or complete defunding (Tach & Edin, 2017). Supplemental programs assisting individuals of lower financial status to pursue college have also been cut. Programs helping individuals who identify as working class or in lower classes to obtain food, subsidized housing, or basic transportation or shelter have also been cut from much federal and state legislation. Additionally, little or no attention has been given to help these individuals by means of psychoeducation, psychological support, or physical support (Tach & Edin, 2017). Lack of basic resources, such as monies as well as psychoeducation and psychological support for these individuals, is another example of macro-level classism (Liu, 2013; Tach & Edin, 2017; Thompson, 2008). Other macro-level barriers and forms of classism influenced by legislative cuts include lack of access to mental healthcare, lack of access to physical healthcare, and lack of food security for individuals identifying in lower class statuses. These barriers may further impede educational progress and occupational progress for those in lower social classes (Bronfenbrenner, 1993; Liu, 2013).

**Classism and Career**

Eshelman and Rottinghaus (2015), McMahon (2014), and Richardson (1991, 1993, 1996) noted inadequate empirical research addressing social class and career choices, career outcome expectations, and career agency. As introduced in Chapter 1, educational and career attainment are vital components of the often-mythical American Dream (Liu et al., 2007). Classism is an “ism” that is experienced by many individuals who identify as belonging to an intersectional minority social class status in and outside of America (Liu, 2013). Individuals who identify as racial, ethnic, gender, ability, sexual, or class minorities currently compose more than half of the U.S. population (US Census Bureau, 2015). The U.S. being increasingly composed of individuals with different intersections reveals increased national diversity. Moreover, such
diversity within America is expected to continue to grow significantly by 2020 (Toossi, 2012). This growing diversity within the U.S. influences counselors and educators to facilitate further inclusive services for minority students.

Though increasing population diversity is evident, increases of diversity in higher education are still lagging. In 2016, about 54% of university students were White, while only 13% were Black, 14% were Hispanic, and the remaining 15% identified as other than one of these three larger groups (US National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). The incongruence between U.S. population demographics and the population of students in higher education supports the belief that helpers need to consider each and all “isms” faced both within and beyond American educational settings (Smith & Schonfeld, 2000). Eshelman and Rottinghaus (2015) reinforced the assertion for the need to increase educational diversity as these authors stated that higher education is often a necessary catalyst to occupational achievement.

The Professional Need for Multiculturalism

One example of ways that “isms,” including classism, are already being addressed includes educational requirements of counselor education programs that have also been adopted by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs [CACREP]; (CACREP, 2016). Only recently, the CACREP organization determined that multiculturalism should be one of eight core learning requirements for students enrolled in accredited counseling graduate programs (Pope & Davis, 2001). Additionally, the American Counseling Association (ACA), the largest professional counseling association in the U.S., similarly encourages the need for multiculturalism in counselor education. ACA’s philosophy encourages inclusion, as this organization’s mission statement is “to enhance the quality of life in society and counseling profession and those who are served” (Diambra et al., 2011, p. 83).
To further apply inclusion in counselor education, CACREP leaders and faculty encourage students in all counseling specialties to have at least one multicultural counseling course in their graduate coursework (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2016). Considering professional counselors’ focus on multiculturalism, this study reinforces that understanding classism is a part of understanding multiculturalism (Clark, Moe, & Hays, 2017; Freire, 1973; Liu, 2013; Simons, Koster, Groffen, & Bosma, 2017; Toporek & Pope-Davis, 2005). Without knowledge of the relationship between an individual’s class and overall self-identity, including with their career role, knowledge about an individual’s multicultural identity is missing (East, Powers, Hyatt, Wright, & May, 2016; Lee & Waithaka, 2017; Liu, 2013; McMahon, 2014; Richardson, 1993, 1996, 2000). As with other intersections of a person’s identity, inaccurate stereotypes may be accepted about people in certain social class statuses, especially with inadequate understanding of social class or classism (Gilmore & Harris, 2008). Career counseling theories and other counseling theoretical orientations which are culturally inclusive and relevant are continually needed in the counselor education field, career counseling field, as well as other helping fields (East et al., 2016; McMahon, 2014; Richardson, 1993, 1996, 2000).

**Introduction to Marginalization**

Duffy, Blustein, Diemer, and Autin (2016) defined marginalization as “the relegation of people or groups of people to a less powerful group within society” (p. 132). These authors elaborated that “experiencing marginalization is a critical barrier to work” (Duffy et al., 2016, p. 132). Various career counseling and psychology theorists have considered socioeconomic status (SES) in context to other forms of marginalization such as race, sexual orientation, gender, disability status, and other identities (Autin, Douglass, Duffy, England, & Allan, 2017; Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005; Pope & Davis, 2001). Foundational theorists, including Eshelman and
Rottinghaus (2015), Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994), Liu (2013), Thompson and Subich (2011), and East et al. (2016), have asserted that in comparison to other identity intersections studied, social class has not been emphasized as a topic of study due to stigma against the poor.

Despite the traditional oversight of social class as a focus of study, current researchers including Liu (2013) and Thompson (2008) encourage researchers to fill the knowledge gap about individuals’ social class and relevant influencing variables (potential experienced classism). Variables of importance for continued counselor education review include past findings of class being related to less resolution in counseling work (Beutler, Machado, & Neufeldt, 1994). With these direct counseling relations and other relations in mind, this study explored classism in relation to a person’s career aspirations, specifically career agency.

According to social justice theory (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2016) and psychology of working theory (Blustein et al., 2008; Thompson, 2008), despite added physical resources, aspects of social class may still be stigmatized, resulting in marginalization. Social Justice Theory in education conceptualizes that some advantages in life are accessible based on a person’s educational level (ACA, 2014; Freire, 1973; Miller, 1999; Sensoy, & DiAngelo, 2017). For example, individuals of lower classes have lower fiscal resources as well as lower psychological and community supports, rather than other groups of people in higher social classes (Miller, 1999; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

Social justice theory conceptualizes classism as a form of marginalization (Miller, 1999; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Specifically, classism is a form of marginalization that needs to be further studied and defined within both the academic as well as career systems (Collins & Yeskel, 2005). Recent researchers who have briefly researched classism partially explained the effects of class as well as other intersectionality differences as they relate to an individual’s
career in theory of psychology of working theory (Blustein, 2011; Chan, Cor, & Band, 2018). Psychology of working theory conceptualizes various relational, social, and intrapersonal factors which affect a person’s career choice, development, and satisfaction (Blustein, 2011).

Reinforcing social justice theory and psychology of working theory, Johnson (2006) also asserted that many inequalities and inequities result from disproportionate or classist macro-scale or societal structures. Inequalities and inequities due to classism in the academic and career-related arenas are existent but are still lacking the awareness of many counselors, helpers, and educators (Liu, 2011; Liu et al., 2004). The nature of the study reinforces professional counselors’ intrinsic mission to help clients and students potentially dealing with classism “by making privilege our problem [too], so that we may help end the rather large distinctions of social dominances and oppressions in our current society” (Johnson, 2006, p. 8). McIntosh (2010) shared that the idea of privilege means holding power or advantages related to some type of identity status. McIntosh (2010) and other social class researchers also reinforce the importance for counselors to help clients in marginalized statuses including in lower social classes statuses, as she asserted that less mobility, less legal accommodation, and increased self-doubt are related to lower social class status.

**Combating marginalization through new counseling models.** One way that scholars and clinical supervisors have helped students and counselors to better understand people who identify in lower social class statuses is by using poverty simulations as well as models focused on additive empathy, including the social class worldview model (SCWM) and the I-CARE model (East, Powers, Hyatt, Wright, & May, 2016; Foss & Generali, 2012; Liu, 2011; Nickols & Nielsen, 2011). The social class worldview model focuses on helping clients through fostering additive empathy, consciousness, self-pride, and self-advocacy for clients (Liu, 2013). The I-
CARE model incorporates the skills Liu encourages in the SCWM and was created through an integrated counselor education and psychology-based lens (Foss & Generali, 2012). The I-CARE model focuses on additive empathy and strength-based interventions as well as a genuine therapeutic relationship, counselors acknowledging a client’s very real poverty-related and other struggles, and advocating for clients inside and outside of counseling. The SCWM and I-CARE model are salient models but are only recently established and are a few of many needed interventions, models, and forms of awareness for working with people with class-related issues (East, Powers, Hyatt, Wright, & May, 2016; Foss & Generali, 2012; Hagan, 2017; Liu, 2011, 2013; Nickols & Nielsen, 2011).

**Classism as marginalization.** Classism is defined as discrimination based on identified social class standing (Collins & Yeskel, 2005; Ostrove & Cole, 2003; Thompson & Subich, 2012). Classism may include individuals from any social class, such as individuals from lower, middle, or upper-class statuses. Similar to Thompson’s (2008) definition, Ostrove and Cole (2003) defined classism as discrimination based on a person’s social class. According to Simons, Koster, Groffen, & Bosma (2017), the majority of people studied did experience some form of classism and the highest rates of classism were experienced by men. These authors also found that individuals who experienced more perceived classism were also more likely to report increased health problems and feelings of inferiority. This recent study also supplements past studies that reported that classism was correlated with students’ feeling fear of rejection, inadequate, and not belonging (Granfield, 1991; Liu, 2013).

In addition to feeling inferior and being shamed by others, as referenced previously, perceived classism is assumed to be related to other forms of marginalization as well as related to career and academic barriers (Hau, 2012; Liu, 2010, 2013; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017;
Thompson & Subich, 2012). Other forms of marginalization which are often conflated or associated with perceived classism include racism, sexism, ageism and ableism (Langhout et al., 2007; Liu, 2013; McIntosh, 2017; Thompson, 2008; Thompson & Subich, 2012). One unfortunate and all-too-often real example which describes the occurrence of discrimination of a person based on race and class is that students of color generally face more classism in higher education than non-minority students (Langhout et al., 2007, p. 173). Also, students who face discrimination due to class commonly concurrently experience other “isms” (Hau, 2012). For example, researchers have found that students who identify as lower or working class and who also identify as gay or as a racial minority are less as likely to graduate from college than their peers (Hau, 2012; Liu, 2013).

Concurrently with much of the beginning research on social class, which began in the 1990s, Dr. Mindi Thompson also asserted that classism is related to clients’ needs in mental health, social class perceptions of mental health professionals, academic and career discrimination, and vocational choice and unemployment (Thompson, Dahling, Chin, & Melloy, 2017; Thompson, 2008; Thompson & Subich, 2012). Dr. Thompson is a major author of foundational research addressing a person’s self-identified social class status. Due to Thompson’s extensive research on classism, as well as her operationally consistent definition of classism and recent creation of the Experiences with Classism Scale, her definition of perceived classism is the primary definition guiding this study.

**Introduction to perceived classism.** Perceived classism is defined as perceived discrimination based on a person’s social class standing (Ostrove & Cole, 2003; Thompson & Subich, 2012). This definition is congruent with other definitions of classism, including Lott’s (2002) description. A student or individual may perceive to be “separated, excluded, devalued,
or discounted” due to being in a social class group (Langhout et al., 2007, p. 149). Perceived classism has been repeatedly assessed using Thompson and Subich’s (2012) Experiences with Classism Scale (EWCS). Perceived classism is also a construct that Miller, Miller, and Stull (2007) suggested warranted further consideration, particularly by counselors, counselor educators, and other educators.

Prior to Mickelson and Williams’s (2008) research, Croizet and Claire (1998) researched effects of classism which were related to students’ feeling isolated and not belonging. Students in lower classes were found to report more feelings of inferiority, exclusion, and pressure to “pass” as in the middle or upper class (Granfield, 1991; Liu, 2013). “Passing” was described by Granfield (1991) as dressing, speaking, or behaving in ways outside of a student's self-identified class culture. Though perceived classism may not cause internalization of stigma or these feelings of needing to pass, this type of discrimination may exacerbate students’ already existent feelings of inferiority and may predict stress, depression, and low self-esteem (Mickelson & Williams, 2008; Thompson, 2008; Thompson & Subich, 2012). These authors also found perceived classism to be associated with feelings of shame by others, higher physical health issues, and other increased negative emotions such as embarrassment (Liu, 2010; Mickelson & Williams, 2008).

Classism categories. Though related to emotional distress and in need of further exploration, perceived classism is not the only category of classism that exists (Hagan, 2017; Liu, 2013; Thompson & Subich, 2012). Classism may be categorized by the social class group or the social economic status (SES) of which the people or person receiving discrimination identify (Liu, 2013; Ostrove & Cole, 2003; Thompson & Subich, 2012). Examples of classism types include those developed by various past and recent social class researchers (Hagan, 2017; Liu,
According to Thompson et al. (2017), Thompson and Subich (2012); and Liu (2013), classism may also be categorized as downward classism (classism directed to someone of a perceived lower class status), upward classism (classism directed to someone of a perceived higher class status), lateral classism (classism perceived toward members of the same class), perceived classism (observed including downward, lateral, or upward classism from others) and internalized classism (also known when a person identifies in the class that others assume they belong). These definitions and types of classism have only begun to be empirically explored (Hagan, 2017; Liu, 2013; Thompson et al., 2017). Of the few studies on various SES groups and classism, working poor and lower class students were found to face the most of all types of classism, except upward classism (Hagan, 2017; Liu, 2013; Reed, 2017). However, similar supplementary research on upper class individuals revealed that students from upper class statuses also report pressure and perfectionism that they report is related to their experiences of upward classism (Liu, 2013).

When considering classism types, much research remains (Liu, 2011, 2013). Researchers, including social psychologists Mickelson and Williams (2008), have begun to study perceived classism and have found perceived classism being associated to inferiority feelings, stress, depression, and low self-esteem (Mickelson & Williams, 2008; Thompson, 2008; Thompson & Subich, 2012). These authors also found perceived classism to be associated with feelings of shame by others, higher physical health issues, and other increased negative emotions such as embarrassment (Mickelson & Williams, 2008).

**Internalized classism.** Perceived classism is different than internalized classism as individuals who face classism may not define themselves or feel entirely inferior solely based upon the classism they experience (Mickelson & Williams, 2008; Thompson, 2008; Thompson
& Subich, 2012). From the few research studies that have begun to describe internalized classism, they noted that internalized classism, though different than perceived classism, is similarly related to increased anxiety, depression, emotional distress, and feelings of failure, embarrassment, shame, and exclusion (Hagan, 2017; Liu, 2013; Pedrotti, 2013; Russell, 1996).

Liu (2013) originally termed the idea of classism including the various types in the theory of Liu’s social class worldview model (2002, 2011, 2013). Despite Liu’s beginning research to define classism and classism categories, instruments to measure these constructs, including overall classism, downward classism, lateral classism, upward classism, perceived classism, and internalized classism are needed to further understand and differentiate these classism categories (Liu, 2002, 2013; Simons, Koster, Groffen, & Bosma, 2017; Thompson & Subich, 2012). Hagan (2017) recently created a psychometric scale called the Internalized Classism Scale for Poor and Working Class in the United States (ICSPWC). In her recent research, Hagan (2017) found internalized classism to be related to affective distress, such as shame and embarrassment.

Hagan’s definition of internalized classism reinforces the beginning composition of internalized classism that researchers Russell (1996), Liu (2002, 2011, 2013), and Pedrotti (2013) defined. Liu (2013) particularly defined internalized classism as classism that individuals may repeatability experience due to “affluence guilt” for people identifying in upper classes statuses (i.e., or for people who move up in class status; p. 62) or “feelings of inferiority or stigma due to not meeting or maintaining a person’s social class expectations” for people remaining in middle, lower, or working classes (Liu, 2013, p. 8). Few research studies have incorporated this still somewhat vague concept of internalized classism. Additionally, a research study by Liu (2002) related internalized classism to reports of acceptance of the status quo and motivation to work harder. Despite latent associations with acceptance of the status quo or

**Classism types.** Classism is not only deconstructed into categories but is also experienced as different types and from different sources. Classism sources include interpersonal classism (micro-level), institutional classism (interpersonal or macro-level), and citational classism (which includes stereotypes and jokes about individuals in various social classes; citational classism may be of a micro-level or macro-level type; Gilmore & Harris, 2008; Langhout et al., 2007; Liu, 2011, 2013; Phillippe, 2016; Thompson & Subich, 2012). Interpersonal classism involves class-related discrimination between two or more individuals as discriminating toward one another. Institutional classism involves classism toward individuals through intentional or unintentional behaviors, policies, or procedures in an institution such as higher education or a job setting. Another example of institutional classism is the inability of some students to access higher education due to financial barriers; this form of classism, as described earlier, is macro-level classism (Liu, 2013; Thompson & Subich, 2007).

When considering the different classism types, financial disparity and macro-level classism may be only part of the problem as to why some Millennial and Generation Z students (i.e., those who are traditional college age) are not succeeding in or even enrolled in higher education (Eshelman & Rottinghaus, 2015; Liu et al., 2004; Thompson, 2008; Thompson & Subich, 2012). When again considering different forms of classism, the small amount of research that has focused on classism has focused primarily on individuals experiencing lower bound perceived classism (Thompson, Dahling, Chin, & Melloy, 2017).
The most similar studies to this study include Eshelman and Rottinghaus’s (2015), Langhout et al.’s (2007), and Thompson and Subich’s (2011) studies. Eshelman and Rottinghaus (2015) found that when surveying adolescent to young adult students, social class was a predictor of educational attainment and related to occupational outcome expectations. Langhout et al. (2007) surveyed students in an upper-class college with tuition being approximately $40,000 per year. These authors found that the students who identified as primarily upper class and White did report everyday experiences of classism. Similar to the other studies, Thompson (2011) found that classism was a predictor for students’ career decision making. Though these researchers have asserted that social class and classism may predict educational and career-related decisions, few studies regarding classism and career aspects have been conducted (Eshelman & Rottinghaus, 2015).

Isms related to classism. This study explored university students’ experiences and self-report of perceived classism and career agency. Similar to classism, multiple intersections, statuses, and “isms” experienced affect the potential career agency of college students. These factors are described in the following section. Other intersections, outside of a person’s social class, may also be subject to discrimination (Acker, 1987; Chan, Cor, & Band, 2018; Crenshaw 1989, 1993; Huber, 2010; Liu, 2013). Other “isms” which are related to students’ lack of access to or success within higher education include sexism, racism, ageism, and ableism (Acker, 1987; ACA, 2014; Crenshaw, 1989, 1993; Huber, 2010; Liu et al., 2007, 2013; McIntosh, 2017; Thompson, 2008). These different “isms” may each or all be interrelated with classism and may affect the way people think about themselves, work, and perform (Blustein et al., 2008). One example of the interrelatedness between intersectional discrimination and career, includes the research finding that students who identify within a racial, gender, sexual, or class minority
status often experience increased work instability (the inability to obtain or maintain a job) when compared to their male, hetero-passing, White peers (Connors-Kellgren, 2017). Current macro-scale trends show that sexism is also another unfortunately all-too-often occurring “ism,” as currently women are underrepresented in math and science fields and are underpaid in all fields when considered next to their male colleagues (Callahan, 2017).

**Generational influences of classism.** Another status and ism (e.g., ageism) affecting many traditionally aged university students includes their age and generational status (Prioste, Narciso, Gonçalves, & Pereira, 2017). In fact, Connors-Kellgren (2017) shared that personal and environmental influences, including generational status and age, need to be explored in relation to career agency. Connors-Kellgren (2017) asserted that age and generational status may be predictive of students’ career aspirations and choices. Age and generational status are not only potentially predictive of students’ career aspirations but also may be related to the type of classism an individual experiences (Liu et al., 2004; Thompson & Subich, 2012).

Along with age and status, other personal and environmental factors worthy of further research include both macro-level and micro-level classism (Liu, 2013). Macro-level classism, as described earlier, is classism created from institutional barriers. Comparatively, micro-level classism includes acts such as shaming students by deducting students’ potential grade points for not completing online assignments, especially if these students have no access at home or within a school system to a computer (Bronfenbrenner, 1993; Liu, 2013). Many researchers and counselors identify macro-level and micro-level classism as forms of marginalization (Ostrove & Cole, 2003; Thompson & Subich, 2012).

**Other statuses related to class.** Current researchers assert that the traditional social class definition is inadequate because of it being primarily dependent on a third person’s point of view...
of an individual’s social class status versus self-perception of status via the individuals themselves (Liu, 2013, Thompson & Subich, 2011). Different than the traditional definition of social class being defined by a third party, today’s contemporary definition of social class is based from both (a) the status in which others assume individuals’ status to be located as well as (b) from the person’s self-ascribed status (Liu, 2013). Similar to classism, social status is a phenomenological construct, as it is defined at least partially first-person by individuals themselves (Fouad & Brown, 2000; Liu et al., 2004; Thompson & Subich, 2007). Additionally, unlike the traditional definition of social class or the often previously conflated concept of socioeconomic status, social class is multidimensional. Most social science and economic behavioral researchers define social class status as a three-dimensional construct. According to Brown et al. (2008) and Thompson (2008), the three dimensions of self-identified social class status include (a) a person’s economic resources, (b) their prestige (synonymous with privilege), and (c) their social power. According to gender development and queer theorists, gender is also a historically and currently salient intersection which is related to a person’s privilege and power in society as well as social class (Acker, 1987; Chan, Cor, & Band, 2018; Collins, 1991; Egan & Perry, 2001; Crenshaw, 1989, 1993; Freire, 1973; Huber, 2010; Liu, 2011, 2013; Thompson & Subich, 2007, 2012).

**From stereotype to skepticism.** As referenced in the previous sections, the lack of knowledge about social class can perpetuate inaccurate assumptions and stereotypes about a person’s class identity. Class status is only one intersection of identity (of many) that is susceptible to stereotyping. For example, other stereotypes based on “isms” include stereotypes based in racism, sexism, ableism and ageism (Autin, Douglass, Duffy, England, & Allan, 2017;
Gilmore & Harris, 2008; Langhout et al., 2007; Liu et al., 2007, 2013; McIntosh, 2017; Smith, Foley, & Chaney, 2008; Thompson, 2008; Thompson & Subich, 2012).

For example, two frequently stereotyped age groups in the U.S., based on age and class, include members of the Generation Z status as well as members of the Millennial Generation (Jurkiewicz, 2000). Members of Generation Z are individuals born between 1995 and 2009. Members of the Millennial Generation are individuals who were born between 1981 and 1995. Students of these generations may fall victim to classist stereotypes, such as being labeled as “lazy” or “entitled,” especially when considering university students and monies acquired, work ethic, higher education attendance, or career pursuits (Brown, 2017; Lutz, 2017; Raymer, Reed, Spiegel, & Purvanova, 2017).

Empirical data and increased objective investigation can mitigate stereotypes about these students and guide education professionals to knowledge of the actual current trends of these groups’ behaviors (Brown, 2017). In contrast to stereotypes, current national statistics show an increase in higher education involvement by Millennial and Generation Z college students (Glenn, 2017; US Department of Education, 2008). Although students are stereotyped as disengaged or lazy, many students may be highly engaged in their education (Brown, 2017; Lutz, 2017; Raymer, Reed, Spiegel, & Purvanova, 2017).

**Differential Identity Status**

Despite punitive or inaccurate stereotypes, students may identify within phenomenological constructs including within a unique multidimensional *differential identity status* (Thompson & Subich, 2007). Differential status is defined as “a person’s relation to levels and types of economic resources, in addition to societal valuation and access to societal control and influence” (Fouad & Brown, 2000, p. 382). Differential status is often used to describe a
person’s unified intersections including social class status, race, ethnicity, gender, and ability. More broadly, differential identity status describes the combination of an individual’s social status combined with their “economic, historical, social, or political culture” (Thompson, 2008, p. 4).

Considering perceived classism in a broad framework, such as with differential identity status, is important as classism exists with and correlates with other contextual factors (Thompson & Subich, 2008, 2012). For example, researchers, including Liu et al. (2004) and others, asserted that perceived classism is often associated with physical and other psychological barriers related to educational aspirations (Thompson & Subich, 2007). Liu (2013) also reflected that being categorized and stigmatized as being a member of the lower, working, or working poor class is often associated with stress, mental illness, vocational difficulty, and self-esteem issues. Comparatively, to the existing research about individuals in lower statuses, Liu (2013), Langhout et al. (2007), and Thompson and Subich (2012) noted an absence of research addressing the effects of a person being associated with a higher or lower social class regarding their experiences of classism.

**Interrelation of Education and Career**

Barriers to access or completion of higher education degrees for Millennial and Generation Z students are interrelated and include both external issues, such as familial stress or lack of income, and internal issues such as lack of confidence (Connors-Kellgren, 2017; Liu, 2013; Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001; Taylor & Betz, 1983). Internal components such as self-identified social class and perceived classism may also hinder students’ higher education, career choices, and their agencies toward their desired careers (Liu, 2013). Though Liu (2013), Brown et al. (2008), and Thompson and Subich (2012) have identified the construct of perceived
classism, no researchers have yet focused predominately on classism in relation to students’ chosen or anticipated career. Despite this gap, many researchers have completed various correlational studies and have found that social class, but not classism, has been highly correlated to educational attainment and later occupational attainment (Connors-Kellgren, 2017, p. 10). Although only recently considered within counseling and higher education research, knowledge about the phenomena of perceived classism may increase counselors’ and educators’ understanding of the reasons that students choose not to pursue some careers, even if they do successfully overcome financial or academic enrollment barriers (Liu, 2013; Thompson and Subich, 2012).

Financial Constraint as a Form of Classism

When considering lack of physical resources as classism, authors Shah, Mullainathan, and Shafir (2012) and other social science researchers found that scarcity of resources due to financial instability or career instability may force people to only consider immediate solutions (Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocco, & Twenge, 2005; Liu, 2013). For example, people with scarce resources may pursue only immediate solutions to their current living and survival-related problems versus thinking ahead or engaging in long-term career planning (Connors-Kellgren, 2017; Roche, Daskalova, & Brown, 2017; Shah, Mullainathan, & Shafir, 2012). Similar to this research, robust research about the correlation between students’ lack of money and lack of higher education or desired careers has also been conducted (Connors-Kellgren, 2017; Hau, 2012; Perry & Wallace, 2013; Simons, Koster, Groffen, & Bosma, 2017).

Though researchers have previously focused on the relationship between inadequate financial resources or low SES and students’ lack of academic and career pursuits, additional research about perceived classism and career pursuits is still needed (Liu, 2013; Thompson &
Subich, 2012). Not only are students’ lower occupational expectations unfortunate, but low academic or career expectations may also likely directly and indirectly contribute to the continued disparity of wealth in and outside of the vocational world (Eshelman & Rottinghaus, 2015). Making education more financially accessible may be only a partial solution to facilitating inclusion of diverse students in higher education and in various careers (Connors-Kellgren, 2017; Liu, 2013).

**Barriers Outside of Financial Constraint**

Studies have been conducted to explore classism with workers, and researchers found that classism-related experiences do predict work outcome (Diaz, 2010). Though this research is important, research regarding classism in relation to students’ career agency rather than already-established workers’ experiences of classism alone is also needed (Liu, 2013; Thompson, 2008; Ziebell, 2010). When extending the consideration that classism may impact a student’s ultimate career choice and career agency, Ziebell (2010) shared that middle school students in inner-city schools were less likely to confidently choose potential careers than their peers. These students were less confident in selecting potential careers as they shared about confounding factors including lack of academic and career resources, lack of role models in various desired careers, and lack of opportunities (Ziebell, 2010, p. 41).

The preceding paragraph considers various student types as well as workers who are already established in jobs. Often, occupational achievement requires a higher education degree, such as a two-year or a four-year degree (Eshelman & Rottinghaus, 2015). Despite the frequent prerequisite of higher education, unfortunately only about 71% of students completing 12 credits in their freshman year of college return for a second year (and even less will graduate from a two-year college or a four-year university) (US National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).
Also, as noted earlier, students belonging to differing minority groups may experience forms of discrimination including racism, classism, or other types (Liu et al., 2007; McIntosh, 2017; Smith, Foley, & Chaney, 2008). These forms of discrimination are examples of barriers which may be associated with students’ financial inability, or they may exist beyond financial inability. Considering discrimination associated to academic and career aspirations, Diaz (2010) shared that barriers for many minority students to pursue various careers or education levels may be due to lack of self-esteem. As Diaz’s example shows, academic barriers and career barriers for minority students may extend beyond attainment of financial resources alone.

**Theories of Student Development**

External factors, including disparities in the vocational world as well as internal developmental factors, may affect the careers that students believe they can pursue (Liu, 2013). Various developmental models including the biopsychosocial model, cognitive models, psychosocial models, sociocultural models, and ecological models describe both these internal and external factors affecting students (Killam, Degges-White, & LMHC-IN, 2017; Supekar, Musen, & Menon, 2009). College student biopsychosocial development as potentially relating to their potential experiences of classism and career agency are described in the following section.

**College Student Biopsychosocial Development**

Students may be described using a variety of developmental models. These include cognitive and neuroscience models, psychosocial models, sociocultural models, ecological and multidimensional models, and career identity models (Killam, Degges-White, & LMHC-IN, 2017). Various models describe college student development because college students, who are typically young adults ranging between the ages of 18 and 24 years old, experience distinct transitional, psychological, and career development (US Census Bureau, 2017). This literature
review highlights college students’ development as it relates to understanding college students’ experiences. College students’ experiences were the focus of this study, particularly experiences with perceived classism and career agency.

**Cognitive and Neuroscience Theories of Development**

Traditional-aged college students undergo physical and biological changes often in tandem with their academic journey (Supekar, Musen, & Menon, 2009). These developments include growth in the body and the brain. College students experience what Superkar et al. (2009) termed a third stage of brain development. In stage three of the typical college student’s brain development, neural connections are still being formed. This formation is also termed as neuroplasticity (Supekar, Musen, & Menon, 2009). College students’ brain wiring, also called “grey” matter, is still pruning. Additionally, electrical processes which connect brain neurons are still connecting. Due to this growth process, many college students have less crystalized convictions and are arguably more impulsive than people of older ages. College students are often considered young adults, with brains which are still developing.

With this still-developing brain, young adult college students are more malleable to environmental contexts in comparison to older adults, whose brains have more fully developed (Supekar, Musen, & Menon, 2009). Contrary to their elders, young adult brains include a developing limbic system and amygdala (which regulates the person’s emotions) as well as a developing prefrontal cortex (which influences the person’s decision making). For example, because these and other parts of the brain are still developing, traditional college-aged students may be more impressionable to influences and prophecies generated by other people in comparison to their older adult, non-traditional college student peers. Thus, college students may internalize what others say about them more than their older peers.
Understanding these stages of brain development may help to further understand why classism and discrimination of any form are such significant barriers to students’ general well-being and potentially their career agency (Superkar et al., 2009). According to cognitive psychologist and theorist Jean Piaget (1966), young adults may also be influenced by their environment as their thinking is characterized based in what is called a formal operational stage and is increasingly based upon their relationships with others (Fischer, 1980). From both a neuropsychological and cognitive developmental lens, college students may be notably affected by others’ prejudices and discriminatory acts and predictably, classism towards them (Eshelman & Rottinghaus, 2015; Fischer, 1980; Liu, 2011, 2013 Liu et al., 2004; Piaget, 1966; Superkar et al., 2009; Thompson & Subich, 2012).

**Erikson’s Theory of Psychosocial Development**

Psychosocial theorist Erik Erikson (1968) conceptualized human development as occurring in various psychosocial stages. These stages include (a) Trust vs. Mistrust (identity as a baby), (b) Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt (identity as a toddler), (c) Initiative vs. Guilt (identity as a child in the typical preschool age), (4) Industry vs. Inferiority (identity of a child typically in middle school), (5) Identity vs. Identity Confusion (identity of a 15-to 18-year-old adolescent), (6) Intimacy vs. Isolation (identity as an emerging young adult and typical college student), (7) Generativity vs. Stagnation (identity as a middle-aged person), and (8) Ego Integrity vs. Despair (identity as an older adulthood). Given these age ranges, college-aged students are usually experiencing the Role vs. Role Confusion and Intimacy vs. Isolation stages of development (Degges-White, 2017; Erikson, 1959, 1968).

Erikson asserted that college students are deeply affected by the relationships they form around them in their typical role and intimacy stages of development (Erikson, 1959, 1968).
Relationship formation and identity formation can be shaped by perceived classism in many ways. Perceived classism may potentially be associated to limitations in students’ relationships, including their lack of career-related mentors or other career-related relationships (Liu, 2013). Additionally, when choosing careers, college students may be more susceptible to others’ beliefs or define themselves by the pressures and opinions of others, which may negatively shape their academic or career decisions. Erikson also asserted that college students may be "stuck” in an earlier developmental phase, which may impede academic and career pursuits and later sense of agency (Erikson, 1959, 1963a, 1963b, 1968). Classism may also influence college students’ developmental trajectory through Erikson’s stages.

**Schlossberg’s Theory of Sociocultural Development**

Another lens through which to view college students includes sociocultural theory (Schlossberg & Leibowitz, 2008). This theory describes student development by analyzing cultural, institutional, and historical contexts (Kortegast, 2017). Specifically, Vygotsky (1978) was a foundational theorist who used sociocultural theory to describe development. Vygotsky asserted individuals are not solely influenced by the external cultural influences they are exposed to. However, Vygotsky asserted that students are affected by the interaction of internal thoughts, feelings, and experiences along with their external pressures, situations, and experiences (Schlossberg & Leibowitz, 2008). Like Vygotsky, Schlossberg also conceptualized student development as all individuals, especially college students, are in development and undergoing consistent and significant changes (Barclay, 2017; Schlossberg & Leibowitz, 2008).

Transitions college-aged students undergo include transitional changes in identity, changes in location, changes in age, changes in living circumstance, changes in role, and (often overlooked) changes in financial income (Barclay, 2017; Thompson, Dahling, Chin, & Melloy,
Schlossberg elaborates that students may be moving in, moving through, or moving out of a transition. One transition students may experience in college includes moving to financial independence (Schlossberg & Leibowitz, 2008). Identification within a lower or higher social status and change when transitioning to or out of college may be stressful for many students (Schlossberg & Leibowitz, 2008).

Understanding the many transitions, especially as they relate to a students’ social class, is integral to understand their motives for future careers and lifestyle commitments. One example of stress associated with changing a student’s self-reported social status is called guilt from “class jumping” (Herrmann, 2017). Herrmann (2017) elaborates that students who “jump” social classes by receiving financial aid in college or by graduating college and thereafter finding a career are highly likely to experience guilt as their older family members may still identify in a lower social class status. Also, as Schlossberg and Leibowitz (2008) referenced, students typically in college are transitioning and are affected by feelings and meanings of “mattering” or “not mattering” (Barclay, 2017, pp. 44-55). To matter means to have a purpose and self-worth as well as having a purpose toward others. Professionals and higher education faculty members may facilitate students’ mattering by being attuned to students’ various intersections of identity. Intersections of university students’ identity include social class and the relating factors of social class, including perceived classism (Liu, 2013).

**Bronfenbrenner’s Theory of Ecological Development**

Student development may also be viewed through Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1993; Walsh, 2012). Bronfenbrenner’s model describes that student development is influenced by outward sources such as societal and family transitions, cultural influences, peers, family attitudes and other salient influences. This model includes five layers
(Perron, 2017; Walsh, 2012). Each of these layers branch from or surround the college student. These layers are the micro-system, meso-system, exo-system, macro-system, and chrono-system.

In this model, the micro-system may include a student’s family (consisting of present and past living members), peers, and acquaintances. A student’s meso-system includes the relationships between the individuals within the micro-system. One relationship example in a student’s meso-system is described by the triangle between a college student, the student’s parents, and the student’s professor (Bronfenbrenner, 1993; Perron, 2017; Walsh, 2012). A college student’s exo-system includes a broader spectrum of their environment (Walsh, 2012). Bronfenbrenner asserted that a student’s macro-system includes their views and expected norms of what it means to be a young adult in society (Walsh, 2012). These views are influenced by the society and culture where a student resides. This layer has direct and indirect influences, as college students, who are in a significant transition of finding their identity as they emerge into adulthood, may be impacted by environmental, cultural, and macro-systemic oppression such as classism.

Other dimensions of the college student identity which may be directly or indirectly influenced by experiences of classism include their reported financial identity, student identity, family identity, caretaker identity, personal identity and career identity (Olson, 2011). Fortunately, studies have shown that though classism may negatively influence interpersonal relationships of those experiencing this form of discrimination, social and family support may buffer some of the effects of classism (Pietrantoni, Glance, & Smith, 2015; Reed, 2017). Many researchers have also asserted that with interpersonal supports, individuals may exhibit resiliency to not internalize classism that they experience and to better cope (Liu, 2013; Mickelson & Williams, 2008; Pietrantoni, Glance, & Smith, 2015; Reed, 2017).
Ecological and Multidimensional Theories of Gender Development

Another common intersection of identity is gender (Collins, 1991; Simons, Beck, Asplund, Chan, & Byrd, 2018). Students may incorporate their gender into their identity in as early as their infant years (Gill, 2012; Krahé & Berger, 2013; Sedgwick, 1965). Students are influenced to define their gender not only by parents at an early age (e.g., gender reveal parties) but are continually and constantly gendered in our larger American society (Gill, 2012). Students’ gender identities include some of the most commonly studied constructs in both psychology and counseling (Egan & Perry, 2001; Petersen & Hyde, 2010; Simons, Beck, Asplund, Chan, & Byrd, 2018). Queer theory and gender development theorist Dr. Eve Sedgwick recognizes gender as a multidimensional construct (Sedgwick, 1965). Sedgwick’s description of gender regarding both context and biology is similar to the interrelated and ecological consideration of college students in Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model (Gill, 2012; Liu, 2013).

As in Bronfenbrenner’s model, queer theory researchers and contemporary Gender Development theorists outline that most students identify most prevalently but not exclusively, as male or female when recognizing their gender (Gill, 2012). Though undergraduate students most prevalently identity as either male or female, some students identify with identities which are outside of the traditional gender binary (Gill, 2012; Meerwikjk & Sevelius, 2017; Sedgwick, 1965; Smith & Schonfeld, 2000). Though increasing research has begun to incorporate students in other identities outside of the punitive gender binary, such as students identifying as transgender and non-binary, the numeric majority of students do identify within the traditional gender identities of male or female (Meerwikjk & Sevelius, 2017; Smith & Schonfeld, 2000).
Theories of Student Career Identity

Holistic conceptualization of college students through various interrelated models, including cognitive, psychosocial, sociocultural, ecological and career models concurrently, provide a deeper understanding of this study’s population. The multifaceted framework of this study and holistically focused model, social cognitive career theory (SCCT), conceptualizes students and various influences on students’ personal and career selves (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). Models from SCCT, Super’s career model, and Savickas’s career model are described for further understanding of student career identity (Bowlsbey, 2014; Lent et al., 2001; Rottinghaus et al., 2017; Savickas, 1997, 2005; Super, 1957; Super & Nevill, 1984; Whitson, 2008; Ziebell, 2010).

Social Cognitive and Social Cognitive Career Theories of Development

Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) evolved through the work of theorists Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994), and is an outgrowth of Albert Bandura's (1989) social cognitive theory. SCCT researchers assert that students’ career choices and their career agencies are affected by the interrelated triad of students’ beliefs, experiences, and behaviors. SCCT was originally constructed and used in research in the 1980s to explore potential predictive factors of students’ career and academic choices (Bandura, 1989; Betz & Hackett, 1983; Gainor & Lent, 1998; Hackett & Betz, 1981; Hackett & Lent, 1992; Lent, Lopez, & Bieschke, 1991, 1993; Sadri & Robertson, 1993). SCCT researchers found that various influences on students’ personal and career selves included anticipation, forethought, and active construction of meaning and environmental aspects (Lent et al., 1994; Thompson, Dahling, Chin, & Melloy, 2017).

Recent studies have also reinforced the support to use SCCT as a holistic framework through which to research college students and their experiences (Lent, 2001; Whitson, 2008).
For example, using SCCT as a framework, Whitson (2008) found that stereotype threat negatively influenced college women’s future career choices. In another study, Lent et al. (2001) found that self-efficacy impacts career choice of college students. Similar to stereotype threat, self-efficacy, and other barriers and supports, perceived classism may also be influential to college students’ career choices and career agencies (Liu, 2013; Thompson & Subich, 2008, 2012). Using the SCCT model, I studied perceived classism as perceived classism may or may not significantly relate to college students’ career agencies.

SCCT’s view of the blended consideration of both internal and external factors on college students’ career agencies is called multiple causality (Bunge, 2017). One example of multiple causality includes the interrelationship of a student’s SES, social status, and racial identity. Though some researchers have asserted that SES and social status are not predicted by race, other researchers have found that discrimination due to race has predicted SES and social status (Brown, 2017; Langhout et al., 2007; Liu et al., 2004). This study aimed to explore the potential interrelationship between a student’s SES, race, social status, and career agency (Eshelman & Rottinghaus, 2015; Langhout et al., 2007; Liu, 2013; Rottinghaus et al., 2017; Thompson & Subich, 2008, 2012).

Recent researchers using SCCT have focused primarily on the relationship between students’ identities and their career choices, but very few researchers have primarily considered these or other various intersections with a student’s experiences of perceived classism and career agency. Other aspects that can affect a student’s educational or career identity include (a) vicarious learning (watching others through modeling), (b) social persuasion (receiving and interpreting feedback), and (c) experiencing outcome expectations (predicting or anticipating
outcomes; Harris-Bowlsbey, 2014). This SCCT framework is elaborated upon in the following section as SCCT is the foundational framework for this study.

Super’s College Student Development of Career Identity

As college students have been conceptualized through a primarily biopsychosocial lens within an ecological context, they too need to be considered within the career development-related context for this study. Donald Super (1969) is the career theorist whose conceptualization of the career identity of college students was the framework used within this study. Super’s career theory is emphasized in this study as his theoretical model is the most developmental career theory in nature (Harris-Bowlsbey, 2014). Super’s theory is described as a “differential-developmental-social-phenomenological” career theory (Super, 1969; Super & Nevill, 1984). This theory is based on 14 assumptions which include that people differ in their abilities, personalities, needs, values, interests, traits, and self-concepts (Patton & Lokan, 2001; Super, 1957). Super asserted that various characteristics, not one characteristic alone, influence an individual’s decision in vocational fit. He also asserted that college students’ potential career fit(s) depend on their abilities, aptitudes, and interests.

Furthermore, Super recognized the contextual nature of career interests and choices as he asserted that these change over time as students’ self-concepts, self-roles, and lifespan change and evolve (Super, 1969; Super & Nevill, 1984). Recent theorists using Super’s career theory also accounted for other contextual factors which influence individuals’ career interests and fit, including 1) the individual’s parental socioeconomic level, 2) mental ability, 3) education, 4) skills, 5) personality characteristics, 6) career maturity, and 7) the opportunities to which individuals are exposed (Patton & Lokan, 2001). Within this context, individuals are theorized to
select a career role based on these factors as well as their career maturity. Career maturity, according to Super (1957), is a construct of various psychological, physical, and social features.

Super also asserted that college students’ personal and professional selves are interwoven and their careers are chosen based on contextual as well as internal influences. Students’ contextual influences, according to Super (1957), could include stages of which people identify in their career identity. Stages of Super’s career identity include (a) growth (interests), (b) exploration (crystallizing interests and implementation), (c) establishment (advancing and personalizing the career interest), (d) maintenance (innovating the career interest in an individual’s life), and (e) disengagement (continuing an intrinsic interest while ending behavior within that career, i.e., retirement).

As referenced in the previous paragraph, Super conceptualized college students’ development regarding their career selves versus their personal selves (Super, 1969; Super, 1957; Super & Nevill, 1984). Super connected the vocational, psychological, psychosocial, and personal developments (or selves) of college students as he theorized that these developments compose students’ holistic career selves (Ziebell, 2010). Super’s stages, which describe college students’ career selves, include crystallization, specification, and implementation (Super, 1957). Super elaborated that when individuals find a congruent “fit” between their personal, vocational, and other selves, they are likely to experience vocational choice satisfaction and vocational (career) maturity.

The study helps to further understand how students find a congruent career fit as this study’s observed variable of focus was career agency (Rottinghaus et al., 2017). Super’s theory is most efficacious for conceptualizing career agency as he considers career choice in a holistic lifespan continuum with specific context interactions. This contextual consideration of students’
career fit is parallel to the career agency that Rottinghaus et al. (2017) references. One
contextually emphasized application of Super’s work includes the use of Super’s Career
Rainbow in career counseling and in education to help clients explore their work and life roles
(Patton & Lokan, 2001). It is hoped that this study may indirectly contribute to knowledge to
create added career counseling interventions (similar to that of Super) for students facing
classism.

The Super to Savickas Continuum

This study used the career futures inventory--revised (CFI-R) which is based on the work
of career theorists Donald Super and Mark Savickas (Bowlsbey, 2014; Rottinghaus et al., 2017;
Savickas, 1997, 2005). The CFI-R is based on concepts from Super’s career development theory,
but also incorporates concepts from Savickas’s career development theory (2005). Like Super
(1957; 1969) Savickas draws from the concept of Super’s self and the self-in career (such as
through the Career Rainbow). Various other representations, including the Career Fit Hexagon
(CFH) and the Life Restructuring Portrait (LRP), are career assessments intended to help
students fit their personal and professional selves into their personal desired life narratives. The
CFH and LRP assessments are the foundation of Savickas’ Career Theory. Savickas’s career
theory and the CFI-R are appropriate for this study as Savickas’s theory is also grounded in
social learning theory which was influenced by foundational SCCT and social learning theorist
Albert Bandura (Bandura, 1977a; Bandura, 1977b, 1989; Savickas, 1997, 2005).

Compared to Super, Savickas asserted a more holistic model of career fit for students (an
extension of Super’s Career Fit Hexagon) which was affected by 1) genetic conditions/an
individual’s biology, 2) environmental conditions, 3) instrumental learning experiences, and 5)
decision-making skills (Bowlsbey, 2014; Savickas, 1997, 2005). Savickas also claimed that
individuals develop various skills to find their best career fit. Skills that individuals may develop include self-reflection, task approach, and worldview association skills. When considering this study and Savickas’s career theory, perceived classism may influence students’ perceived skills or applied skills including self-reflection, task approach, worldview and others listed by Savickas. Also, as earlier described, Thompson and Subich (2007) asserted that career identity is shaped by social class and context. Thompson and Subich’s definition of career identity is similar to the career identity construct that is described by both Super and Savickas as both Super’s and Savickas’s definitions and Thompson and Subich’s definition are reliant on both the student and the context around the student (Savickas, 1997, 2005; Super, 1957, 1969; Thompson & Subich, 2007, 2012).

**Aspects of Career Identity**

As previously introduced, a student’s career identity is considered multifaceted and ever evolving (Savickas, 1997, 2005; Super, 1957, 1969; Thompson & Subich, 2007, 2012). Factors that influence the development of a student’s career identity include contextual factors such as gender, race, and age as well as career-related factors such as career outcome expectations, career self-efficacy, career confidence, career choice, and ultimately career agency (Rottinghaus et al., 2017).

**Gender roles and career identity.** One contextual factor needed for further study in relation to career identity is gender (Egan & Perry, 2001; Milan-Tyner, 2018; Smith, Foley, & Chaney, 2008). Gender identity is oftentimes a core intersection of a student’s identity and may relate to a student’s career identity (Acker, 1987; Gill, 2012; Liu, 2001a; Meerwikjk & Sevelius, 2017; Sedgwick, 1965; Smith & Schonfeld, 2000). The interpersonal and intrapersonal perception of gender may relate to a student’s career identity in part, as individuals are often
socialized into varying careers based on their assumed gender (Acker, 1987; Hopper-Losenicky, 2017; Meerwikj & Sevelius, 2017; Milan-Tyner, 2018). For example, girls and women are often socialized and sometimes pressured to be in nurturing and caregiving roles and related careers as these are stereotypically “female careers” (Acker, 1987; Hopper-Losenicky, 2017; Teig & Susskind, 2008).

Conversely, women are less assumed to attend college for math or science-related fields and are often underrepresented in these career roles (Milan-Tyner, 2018; Whitson, 2008). In addition to socialization and pressure which may impact their career identity, women have also historically been paid less and are also currently still paid less than men (Naff, 2018). With varying social pressures related to gender and unequal pay, women’s career-related attitudes are not surprisingly impacted (Whitson, 2008). Despite current pressures and financial inequity, researchers have found that one protective factor for women’s career attitudes and career identity is their self-esteem (Rhodes, 2015). Preceding recent research, Sandford and Donovan (1984) asserted the importance of as well as the barriers to self-esteem for women. These authors as well as Rhodes (2015) shared that self-esteem is often inaccurately associated with being a masculine characteristic.

Though societal pictures, references, and pressures shape men to be and feel more confident and feel increased self-esteem, women reported often experiencing negative feedback with similar confidence or self-esteem expression. Comparatively, though men are encouraged to show high confidence and esteem, they are often shaped to appear stoic or display less emotion than women in society (Brody, 2000; Liu, 2005). In addition to understanding the socialization of gender and emotional expressiveness, added research about both men’s and women’s career-related attitudes and behaviors, including about their experiences of potential level of career
agency, is needed (Eshelman & Rottinghaus, 2015). Women’s and men’s career agency may be related to career-related factors which include career outcome expectations, career self-efficacy, career confidence, career choice, and ultimately career agency (Rottinghaus et al., 2017).

**Career outcome expectations.** One of the most studied career-related aspects of career identity is the construct of career outcome expectations (Diaz, 2010; Eshelman & Rottinghaus, 2015). Career outcome expectations are defined as the “perceived consequences” of a student applying to or being involved in a specific career (Diaz, 2010, p. 22). Lent et al. (2002) shared that outcome expectations describe how students think or expect they may perform in a future career. Many researchers using the SCCT framework to research and understand current college students have found that environmental influences may affect or predict students’ outcome expectations (Liu, 2013; Thompson & Subich, 2007, 2012; Whitson, 2008). Researchers finding predictive relationships between students’ environments and their career outcome expectations catalyzes the need for similar related studies (Eshelman & Rottinghaus, 2015). This study is one example of needed exploration, as this study similarly focused on environmental factors, but with the addition of perceived classism and with no outcome expectations, but instead with career agency.

**Career self-efficacy.** Another aspect of career identity includes career self-efficacy. General task self-efficacy refers to beliefs about the ability to complete a specific task (Bandura, 1977a and 1997b). Comparatively, career self-efficacy refers to the ability to achieve a specific career goal (Connors-Kellgren, 2017, pp. 19-20). Bandura (1977a, 1977b) and other career theorists including Rottinghaus, Buelow, Matyja, and Schneider (2012), define career self-efficacy as a student’s career confidence.
Career self-efficacy has been studied within SCCT to be shaped in part by the vicarious learning experiences of supporting peers (Liu, 2013; Thompson & Subich, 2007, 2012; Whitson, 2008). Specifically, students’ career confidence may be increased by having similar peer support and modeling of peers in their desired careers (Rottinghaus et al., 2012, pp. 21-22). According to SCCT, modeling refers to imitation by others without direct order or teaching (Bandura, 1977a/b, 1989). Modeling is also known as learning by example.

When considering various influences on career decisions, Ziebell (2010) found that, especially considering the career decisions of Black and Latina girls, confidence (self-efficacy) in potential careers was predictive of these students’ career choices. Career confidence, also known as career self-efficacy, has been found by many career theorists to predict or, at minimum, partially predict a student’s ultimate career choice and pursuit (Kelly & Hatcher, 2013; Ziebell, 2010). Much research has been done regarding career self-efficacy. For example, various researchers have studied career self-efficacy in relation to factors including direct SES (Liu, 2013; Thompson, 2008). Despite much research between career self-efficacy and factors including race, age, income, and SES, career self-efficacy has not been studied in relation to perceived classism (Ziebell, 2010).

**Career maturity.** Though not directly related, career maturity is indirectly related to career choice. Similar to Crites’s (1971) definition, Ziebell (2010) also elaborated that career maturity is a multidimensional construct which is defined as “an orientation to a career, information and planning about that career, consistency of career choices, crystallization of traits to the desired career choices, and wisdom gained within a career” (p. 23).

**Career adaptability.** Like career maturity, career adaptability is a construct now used in replacement of or synonymously with career maturity (Autin, Douglass, Duffy, England, &
Allan, 2017). Duffy et al. (2016) stated that career adaptability is defined “as a psychological construct that denotes an individual’s readiness to cope with vocational development” (p. 136). Much research regarding career adaptability has been conducted by career theorist Savickas (2005). According to Savickas, career adaptability is defined as an individual’s “readiness to cope with the preparing for and participating in their work role” (Savickas, 1997, p. 254). Career adaptability is a construct influential to a student’s ultimate career choice (and potentially to career agency), as researchers have found this construct to positively predict work satisfaction and goal pursuit (Connors-Kellgren, 2017, p. 18).

Career choice. Career choice is partially defined as the selection of a career path (Rottinghaus et al., 2017). Within the study, career choice is operationally defined in part through the construct of career agency and through perspectives of career theorists including Crites (1971), Super (1957, 1969), and Rottinghaus et al. (2017). For example, Crites’s (1971) asserted that career choice is influenced by the realism and consistency of a student’s career experiences as well as internal cognitive processes and affective processes. Savickas (1997, 2005) added to Crites’s definition of career choice in that he suggested that career choice is partially shaped by a person’s age and life experience. Collectively, a multitude of factors including age, gender, work role, and SES influence a person’s ultimate career choice (McIntosh, 2017; Ziebell, 2010). Career choice is well defined by various theorists as a decision or act which includes “a person’s inputs” and “environmental factors surrounding a person” (Kelly & Hatcher, 2013, p. 105). Despite knowledge about the definition of career choice, neither career choice nor career agency has yet been studied in relation to perceived classism. Though not empirically studied, classism has been anecdotally considered a factor, along with SES, that affects a student’s choice of career (Liu, 2013; McIntosh, 2017; Thompson & Subich, 2012).
Career agency. One aspect of career identity which encompasses career choice is career agency (Rottinghaus et al., 2017). According to Rottinghaus et al. (2017), career agency is defined as “the ability for an individual to intentionally initiate, control to some extent, and to manage career transitions for the career an individual intrinsically desires to pursue” (p. 65). Career agency is a relatively new construct and is oftentimes used synonymously with career self-efficacy. Despite synonymous usage with career self-efficacy, career agency is defined as more than simply “believing I can do a career” (Rottinghaus et al., 2017, p. 64). Comparatively, career agency describes “actually anticipating doing and doing behaviors to try my desired career pursuit” (p. 64).

A student’s career confidence is described as a student believing they can do a career and often synonymous with the term “career self-efficacy” (Bandura, 1977a, 1989). A confident student may also verbally express that confidence to others. However, despite a student’s externalized expression, such verbal remark(s) from a confident student is not enough to define a students’ career agency. A student’s actual behavioral efforts to pursue the desired career in combination with their confidence to pursue a desired career, rather than their career confidence alone, is the definition of an individual’s career agency (Rottinghaus, Eshelman, Gore, Keller, Schneider & Harris, 2017, pp. 71-73). A student exhibiting career agency may express that they want and can be a doctor. This student, exhibiting career agency, would then also initiate behaviors which would make becoming a doctor more realistic. An example of a student being an active agent in their career choice includes a student signing up for a major in pre-medicine and calling a physician to interview or shadow them at work, along with their hopes and confidence to pursue becoming a future doctor. This definition of career agency is introduced here as this is the most current definition in counseling research and involves career choice.
(Rottinghaus et al., 2017). I aimed to further understand questions about career agency as in this study a student’s self-reported career agency was explored in relation to measurements of a student’s self-report of perceived classism experienced.

**Career Agency and Gender**

As referenced earlier, a salient variable that is yet to be extensively studied with career agency is gender (Eshelman & Rottinghaus, 2015). When studying career-related attitudes and gender, researchers found that women may feel more pressure than their male colleagues to “to do well” in careers (Rhodes, 2015). Though authors including Rhodes (2015) found that pressure to perform may bring emotional distress for women in varying careers, this same pressure may also inadvertently manifest in women exhibiting increased motivation and agency for careers (Rhodes, 2015). For example, researchers have found that when entering college and universities, girls tend to view themselves “weaker” in math and science-related careers (Correll, 2001, 2004; Eccles, 1987). Though this inferiority may manifest in emotional or mental distress, women who desire math and science careers may exhibit increased agency to overcome these feelings (Hopper-Losenicky, 2017).

**Relationship Consideration of Classism and Career Agency**

Gender is a factor, but not the only factor that may influence a student’s career agency (Eshelman & Rottinghaus, 2015). Beginning at least in their high school years, students are pressured and, in some cases, required to select academic majors or course tracks which may narrow or limit career choices they make thereafter (Diaz, 2010). Gender socialization may also influence the academic and career tracks that students make take (Hopper-Losenicky, 2017). In addition to gender, social class and classism may also influence a student’s academic and career choice (Connors-Kellgren, 2017; Liu, 2011, 2013; Liu et al., 2004; Rottinghaus et al., 2017;
Though increased knowledge about contextual factors in relation to career agency, including age, race, and gender needs to be done, even more research about social class and classism is needed due to the scarcity of class as a factor (Eshelman & Rottinghaus, 2015; Thompson & Subich, 2007, 2012). The few researchers studying the intersection of class and career include Richardson (1993, 1996, 2000) and McMahon (2014). When researching this integration of a person’s social class and career, Richardson (1993, 1996, 2000) shared that the term career, as a word alone, is biased due to this word being most used with middle-class colloquiums, language, and in middle-class culture. McMahon (2014) and Richardson (1993, 1996, 2000) also elaborated that the word career needs to be replaced with another term, such as work, to include all “paid, unpaid, volunteer, and caring work” which may then better reflect clients in varying social class statuses (McMahon, 2014, p. 16). In her research, McMahon (2014) also suggests that the integration of social class and career needs to be continually studied together as understanding this intersection is more congruent to better understand our clients in a “globalized” and integrated society (p. 17).

Classism and career agency should be studied to identify if any potential relationship between classism and career agency exists. Studying classism and career agency may also catalyze a more inclusive labor force. Other practical considerations related to researching perceived classism in education include the need to decrease the barriers related to admission and retention of lower and working-class students in higher education (Liu, 2013; Thompson & Subich, 2012) while increasingly meeting the projected demand for increased diversity for future jobs (Smith & Schonfeld, 2000). Despite increased societal growth in residential and workforce diversity, funding to students of lower social classes and students in other minority groups for educational or occupational experiences continues to decrease (Brown, 2017; Liu, 2013). With
concrete and psychological barriers in mind, professional helpers may begin to understand why the need to attract, retain, and keep students of all different social classes in higher education is salient.

**Summary**

An increase in social justice in the professional realm has been encouraged in many of today’s helping careers (Autin et al., 2017; Duffy, Blustein, Diemer, & Autin, 2016). To reinforce multicultural inclusion, researchers have started studying classism and ultimately encouraging that classism be eliminated (Liu, 2011, 2013; Thompson, 2008; Thompson & Subich, 2012; Toporek & Pope-Davis, 2005). A small amount of research, which primarily incorporates the relationship between socioeconomic status (but not social class status) and classism, has been conducted (Liu, 2013; Thompson & Subich, 2007, 2011). With this small amount of research conducted, classism has been found to affect college students’ general well-being and other aspects (Liu, 2013; Thompson & Subich, 2011; Thompson, 2008).

Despite some research about classism, the direct effects of classism in relation to career identity, specifically career agency, is yet to be studied (Garriott, Navarro, & Flores, 2017; Gushue, 2006; Justice, 2013; Lent, Ezeofor, Morrison, Penn, & Ireland, 2016; Lim, Lent, & Penn, 2016; Liu & Ali, 2008; Rottinghaus et al., 2017; Thompson & Subich, 2007, 2011). This study aimed to begin to fill the research gap regarding classism and career agency (Lee & Waithaka, 2017; Liu, 2013; Thompson, 2008; Thompson & Subich, 2012). This literature review shaped this study’s focus, as concepts including social class, classism, career agency, college students’ experiences of classism, college students’ development, and college students’ reports of career agency were described. No current researchers have explored the relationship between classism and career agency among college students. Studying the relationship of classism and
career agency may potentially help counselors, counselor educators, and other educators to better understand, facilitate, and shape a more inclusive and multiculturally competent education system and workforce in society.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides in-depth review of the hypotheses, research questions, data collection procedures, and analyses for this study. This study was driven by gaps explained in the literature in Chapters 1 and 2. Methodology for examining the relationships among perceived classism, age, gender, SES, race, and career agency are described. The research questions and hypotheses are presented in the first portion of this chapter. The second half of this chapter includes this study’s data collection procedures and analyses.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

The main hypothesis of this study included exploration of the relationship between perceived classism and career agency. Research questions that drive this study’s various hypotheses include:

Research Question 1:

What is the relationship between perceived classism and career agency?

H1: Students who report higher levels of perceived classism will report lower levels of career agency.

Research Question 2:

Does the level of reported career agency between men and women differ?

H2: Men and women’s ratings of career agency will be different.

Research Question 3: What proportion of variance in career agency can be accounted for by perceived classism, age, gender, SES, and race?
H₃: A moderate amount of the variance in career agency among undergraduate students, as measured by the CFI-R, is accounted for by the following variables: perceived classism, age, gender, SES, and race.

Participants

For practical purposes, I surveyed the accessible population in this study. The sample (n) selection is a convenience sample of at least 138 undergraduate students enrolled in either an introductory psychology course, an introductory counseling course, a career counseling course, rehabilitation services course, introductory communications course, or a general university course (i.e., University 101) at a public, midwestern university in the United States. Students in this sample were asked to voluntarily complete an online Qualtrics survey. By hypothesis (H₃), the size of n=138 is the minimum number of participants required for a multiple linear regression with a moderate effect size. The minimum sample sizes listed were chosen as these values are the minimum samples sizes needed to not commit a Type II error. This n=138 was determined using the statistical computer program G* Power, *a priori*, with a threshold of alpha (α) at 0.05, statistical power (β) at 0.80, and 0.15 effect size (d, moderate effect size). Exploration of (H₃) with a larger effect size is n=63. To continue to reduce Type II error, I chose to use thresholds of Cohen’s effect size of moderate effect size.

By hypothesis, the minimum size required for an independent samples t test (H₂) is n=128 with thresholds of alpha (α) at 0.05, statistical power (β) at 0.80, and 0.15 effect size (d). Pearson product moment correlations (i.e., Pearson r correlations; H₁) has the following characteristics of n=84 with thresholds of alpha (α) at 0.05, statistical power (β) at 0.80, and 0.3 effect size (d). These thresholds were set at the stated numerical quantities to strive for
statistically significant results as well as to avoid a higher probability of committing a statistical Type II error (Creswell, 2014).

**Administration Procedure**

The procedure used for this study was survey method research design and included the one-time administration of the Experiences with Classism Survey--Short Form, the Career Futures Inventory--Revised, and a simple demographic questionnaire. The administered survey included self-report of aspects including perceived classism, gender, age, race, and career agency. Participation remained anonymous and administered links were de-identified and sent through an online survey system, called Qualtrics (Qualtrics LLC, 2016). The primary sampling plan for this study was convenience sampling (Creswell, 2014).

Specifically, undergraduate student participants were administered these surveys during an undergraduate class during which I attended. Students were provided a link to access this survey in class via phone or computer; students were also given paper copies to complete this survey in class if they did not have a smart phone or computer. An informed consent with a survey recruitment script is shown in Appendix A.

**Instruments and Variables**

The following section describes the main observed variables and instruments used in this study. The observed predictor variables for this study included perceived classism, gender, race, SES, and age. The observed criterion variable in this study was career agency. This study’s variables, demographic information collection, and variable operational definitions are included in the following section. The instruments, including the Experiences with Classism Scale--Short Form and the Career Futures Inventory--Revised are also described in the following section.
Moreover, these instruments are introduced and described regarding their original psychometric properties.

**The Experiences with Classism Scale--Short Form**

The Experiences with Classism Scale--Short Form (EWCS-SF) is a 25-item scale which assesses for a student’s self-reported experiences of perceived classism using a Likert scale from 1 (*Never Happened to You*) to 6 (*Happened Almost All of the Time*; Appendix B). This scale was created and normed by Thompson and Subich (2012). This scale has been normed on a variety of populations, including international students and a robust amount of traditional-aged college students. The EWCS-SF has consistently showed high reliability, internal consistency, and validity ratings. In Thompson and Subich’s (2012) original study, the Cronbach’s alpha for the EWCS-SF, also called the EWCS or the EWCS-Final, was .97 for the personalized classism subscale and .83 for the systemic classism subscale.

**Predictor variable of perceived classism.** The primary independent variable in this survey study is classism, which is operationally defined as a student’s perceived classism, as measured by the Experiences with Classism Scale--Short Form (EWCS-SF; Thompson & Subich, 2012).

**Career Futures Inventory--Revised**

The primary dependent variable in this survey method design study is the level of student’s reported career agency (Appendix C). Career agency was operationally defined as a participant’s score on the Career Futures Inventory--Revised (CFI-R; Rottinghaus et al., 2017). The original Career Futures Inventory was a 25-item measure that assessed for positive career planning attitudes (Rottinghaus, 2004; Rottinghaus, Day, & Borgen, 2005). This inventory was based in part on Super’s life-span, life-space theory (1969), Savickas’s (1997) career maturity
theory, and Bandura’s (1962) social learning theory. This scale was also influenced by the Big Five and the Strong Interest Inventory.

The initial validation study of the CFI used 663 participants in 2004 (Rottinghaus, 2004; Rottinghaus, Day, & Borgen, 2005). Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were done in initial validation. Internal consistency for the initial CFI was high, as the Cronbach’s alpha was high for all three subscales: (a) Career Adaptability was .85, (b) Career Optimism was .87, and (c) Perceived Knowledge was .73 (Rottinghaus, 2004; Rottinghaus, Day, & Borgen, 2005). Additionally, these subscale ratings were expressed through 5-point Likert scales which ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Convergent and construct validities were also explored and the CFI was shown to be strong when compared to similar assessments.

Since its creation, the CFI has been revised for increased efficacy (Rottinghaus et al., 2017). As mentioned, this study used this revised assessment, known as the Career Futures Inventory--Revised (CFI-R). The CFI-R consists of five updated subscales: (a) Career Agency, (b) Occupational Awareness, (c) Negative Career Outlook, (d) Support, and (e) Work-Life Balance. This assessment consists of 28 questions and has a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.92 (Rottinghaus, Buelow, Matyja, & Schneider, 2012).

**Criterion variable of career agency and subscales.** The primary dependent variable in this study was defined as a student’s career agency. Career agency was operationally defined by the Career Futures Inventory--Revised (CFI-R; Rottinghaus et al., 2017). Along with the criterion variable of career agency, the CFI-R consists of four additional subscales: (a) Occupational Awareness, (b) Negative Career Outlook, (c) Support, and (d) Work-Life Balance. Rottinghaus, Eshelman, Gore, Keller, Schneider, and Harris (2017) defined (a) occupational awareness as “how well an individual understands job market and employment trends,” (b)
negative career outlook as “negative thoughts about career decisions and the belief that one will not achieve favorable career outcomes,” (c) support as “perceived emotional and instrumental support from family and friends in pursuing career goals,” and (d) work–life balance as “the ability to understand and manage responsibilities to others across multiple life roles” (p. 65).

**Demographic Information**

Demographic data including gender, age, SES, race, and the student’s year in school was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Means, standard deviations, skewness ($S_3$), and kurtosis ($K_4$) for the EWCS-SF and the CFI-R and their sub scores were calculated and analyzed. Gender, age, SES, race, and perceived classism were this study’s predictor variables and are described in the following section.

**Predictor variable of gender.** As referenced, gender is a multidimensional construct and was operationally defined in this study as male, female, non-binary or other. Gender was coded using nominal measurement (Creswell, 2014).

**Predictor variable of race.** Race was operationally defined in this study as African American/Black, Caucasian/White, Asian American, Native American, Latino/Hispanic, and Multiracial/Other. Race was coded using nominal measurement (Creswell, 2014).

**Predictor variable of socioeconomic status.** The operational definition of socioeconomic status (SES) constitutes a student’s self-reported parental SES as is similar with other studies that use parental income as a student’s SES (Baum, Garofalo, & Yali, 1999). Though similar to prior research operationalizations of SES, using students’ reports of their parental SES may be only one dimension of the students’ actual social class status. SES was coded using ordinal measurement (Creswell, 2014).
**Predictor variable of age.** This predictor variable of age was operationally defined as a continuous variable and as a self-report of the student’s numerical age since birth. Age was coded using ratio measurement (Creswell, 2014).

**Data Analyses**

Methods of analyses that were utilized for this study included descriptive statistics and various inferential statistics. Pearson r correlations were used to explore the relationship between students’ reported level of perceived classism and their reported level of career agency. An independent samples t test was used to explore gender differences in reported career agency. Additionally, a multiple regression analysis was used to see if perceived classism, gender, age SES, and race are (or are not) predictors of students’ reported career agency (Creswell, 2014; Nishishiba et al., 2014).

Hypothesis 1 was that students who report higher levels of perceived classism will report lower levels of career agency. Hypothesis 1 was analyzed using Pearson product coefficients (Creswell, 2014). Pearson r correlations were analyzed for reported perceived classism using the EWCS-SF in association to factors on the CFI-R instrument. The sets of scores of each, the EWCS-SF and the CFI-R, are independent data, which are measured through ordinal scaling through the usage of Likert scales. The relationship between scores on the EWCS-SF and the CFI-R were analyzed through score comparisons with Pearson r coefficients. The analyzed Pearson r coefficients represent the negative or positive correlations found between students’ reported experiences of perceived classism as well as their reported career agency.

Hypothesis 2 was that there is a difference between men’s and women’s reports of career agency. Hypothesis 2 was analyzed using an independent samples t-test to determine if any mean differences in men’s and women’s reports of career agency do exist. An independent samples t
test is a statistical analysis which describes two independent means compared to one another when the data is normally distributed (Creswell, 2014). An independent *t* test was used specifically because men’s and women’s data are separate independent groups which were compared regarding their reported career agency.

Hypothesis 3 is that a moderate amount of variance in career agency among undergraduate students, as measured by the CFI-R, was accounted for by the following variables: perceived classism, age, gender, SES, and race. Hypothesis 3 was analyzed using a multiple linear regression analysis (MLR). An MLR was used to determine any relationships between demographic data and scores on the EWCS-SF to the scores on the CFI-R (Appendix E; Creswell, 2014; Nishishiba, Jones, & Kraner, 2014). According to Nishishiba et al. (2014), a multiple regression analysis is “performed when there is more than one independent variable in the regression analysis” (p. 349). Differences in the reported perceived classism experience scores, through usage of the EWCS-SF, in relation to various demographic data and according to students’ potential beliefs of career agency, through usage of the CFI-R, were tested through such analysis. Please see Table 1 for all analyses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Variable (DV)</th>
<th>Independent Variable (IV)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>Career Agency</td>
<td>Perceived Classism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Independent Samples T-Test</td>
<td>Career Agency</td>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Multiple Linear Regression</td>
<td>Career Agency</td>
<td>Perceived Classism, Gender, Age, SES, and Race</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Validity considerations.** Construct validity for this study may be limited because these administered assessments use self-reported and perceived self-reported variables. For example, both the EWCS-SF and the CFI-R assess self-reported behaviors or thoughts. Additionally,
because of the sampling method chosen for this study was convenience sampling, reliability and all convergent, divergent, and construct validities may be less generalizable (Creswell, 2014). Comparing this study’s results to other studies oriented to students’ perceived classism and career agency may enhance and further validate the generalization of this study.

**Summary**

This dissertation study was designed to fill gaps left by various social class researchers and career researchers including Thompson and Subich (2012) and Rottinghaus et al. (2017). This chapter outlined the three major research questions and statistical analyses used in this study. Chapter 4 will describe the demographic results and statistical analysis results of this study. Research to further understand how factors such as perceived classism, race, age, SES, and gender relate to career agency may further support counselors to help students in higher education attain their own American Dreams.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In Chapter 3, the methodology for this study was introduced, which focused on the relationship between perceived classism, career agency, gender, race, SES, and age. The first construct of gender was assessed through one question on the survey in which participants identified as either “male,” “female,” “non-binary” or “other.” The second construct was perceived classism and was comprised of 25 questions from the Experiences with Classism Scale--Short Form (EWCS-SF; Thompson & Subich, 2012). By using questions in the EWCS-SF, I asked students how many times they felt they experienced perceived classism. The third construct was career agency and was comprised of a total of 10 questions from the Career Futures Inventory--Revised (CFI-R) instrument in which students described their feelings of agency or lack of feelings of agency regarding their desired careers (Rottinghaus et al., 2017).

The Experiences with Classism Scale (EWCS-SF), the Career Futures Inventory (CFI-R) and a demographic questionnaire were administered to participants to assess relationships between the variables. Three hypotheses were tested using the following calculations: (a) a Pearson product moment correlation coefficient, (b) an independent samples t test, and (c) a multiple linear regression analysis. In this chapter, the results of these statistical analyses are described. Additionally, demographic data of the sample in this study are provided, followed by descriptive and inferential statistics and reliability analyses for both instruments used. Last, a summary of other results from the analyses are also described.
Description of the Sample

For this study, 211 undergraduate students at a mid-size, public midwestern university were administered the EWCS-SF, the CFI-R, and a demographic questionnaire. Students were emailed a survey link or given a paper survey in an undergraduate class per their instructor or from me. Students voluntarily submitted either anonymous paper or electronic surveys. Students were also given the option to send me their email address to be entered into a later drawing for a potential gift card prize. After all of the responses were collected, 202 of the total 211 surveys were included in the analysis. Due to a less than 50% completion rate, nine survey administrations were discarded during data auditing and review.

Of the completed surveys, 30 surveys, or approximately 15%, of the total number were administered to students via paper format. The remaining 172 surveys were administered to students via an electronic Qualtrics link. Due to data collection that included snowball sampling and voluntary participation, an accurate total response rate of the survey administration is unknown but approximated to be 51%. This percentage is estimated to be from student participation from a minimum total of 411 potential students from one-time visits to six different undergraduate course types including various introduction to counseling courses, career counseling courses, a general university course, a rehabilitation services course, a communications course and an introductory psychology course in a two-week time period.

Descriptive Statistics

Student participants included a diverse group of undergraduate students who differed in age, ethnicity, race, years in school, academic major, and parental income reported as their SES. Participants ranged in ages from 18 years old to 38 years old with 43% of students ranging in ages from 18 to 20; 49% were aged 21 to 24, 6% of students were aged between 25 to 29, and 2%
of students were 30-38 years old. There were 125 (62%) female students, 76 (37%) male students, and 1 (<1%) student who identified as non-binary who completed the assessment. The majority of participants identified as Caucasian/White, while 30% identified as African American, 17% identified as Latino, 4% identified as Asian American, 1% identified as Native American, and 8% identified as multiracial or another race. Most of the students, approximately 60% of students or 120 of the total 202 students, also identified as middle class. Students ranged from freshman to senior status with 20% freshman, 18% sophomore, 33% junior, and 29% senior status (Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2: Frequencies of Demographic Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-24</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-38</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Binary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race/Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian/White</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American/Black</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/a</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial/Other</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reported Parental SES Identified</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Poor Class</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Class</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Class</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Class</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These demographic data were analyzed with scores from the Experiences With Classism Scale--Short Form (EWCS-SF) and the Career Futures Inventory--Revised (CFI-R) instruments. The following section summarizes the scores from the overall instruments and the subscales within each, the EWCS-SF and the CFI-R.
Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Demographic and Ancillary Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N Statistic</th>
<th>Range Statistic</th>
<th>Minimum Statistic</th>
<th>Maximum Statistic</th>
<th>Mean Statistic</th>
<th>Std. Deviation Statistic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Combined Career Agency</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>.559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Negative Career Outlook</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>.843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Support</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>.717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Work Life Balance</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>.720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Perceived Classism</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>.593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalized Classism Subscale</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>.665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systemic Classism Subscale</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>.968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N</td>
<td>202</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 3, results indicated that students reported relatively high overall career agency with $\bar{x} = 4.08$, support with $\bar{x} = 4.10$, and work-life balance with $\bar{x} = 3.81$. Students comparatively reported low but still existent negative career outlook with $\bar{x} = 2.34$, personalized perceived classism with $\bar{x} = 1.67$, and systemic perceived classism with $\bar{x} = 2.10$. When comparing data using means, standard deviations, sample size, skewness, and kurtosis, these data are overall within the acceptable range. Conditions helping view these data include having a high sample size (i.e., as mentioned in Chapter 3 for each hypothesis) and having skewness and kurtosis falling within $+2.00$ and $-2.00$ (Creswell, 2014). The only exception to these assumptions is the kurtosis of career agency, which will be discussed further in this chapter.

**Summary of Descriptive Statistics of the EWCS-SF**

In the EWCS-SF, students’ reports of perceived classism were analyzed. The cumulative report for perceived classism included $\bar{x} = 1.79$ and $\sigma = 0.693$ out of a 6-point Likert scale (Figure 1). The cumulative mean for perceived classism was 1.79, which means students reported on average occasional perceived classism. These results also indicated students marked consistent scores without much deviation of scores on the 6-point Likert scale of the EWCS (i.e., within both lower and upper standard deviation bounds of $-3.58$ to $7.16$).
Figure 1: Perceived classism variable.

Specifically, 85% of students reported minimal (less than 10% or almost never to once in a while) cumulative perceived classism, 12% of students reported a moderate amount (10%-25% or sometimes) of cumulative perceived classism, and 3% of students reported a high amount (above 25% of the time or a lot to almost always) of cumulative perceived classism consistently. Also, despite the positive skew and moderate kurtosis of classism, parametric tests including Pearsons’ correlations, an independent samples \( t \) test and regression were used (due to their robust nature; Creswell, 2014; Table 4). Kurtosis was determined and interpreted due to the low standard deviation and similarity in students’ ratings.
Table 4: Perceived Classism Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Perceived Classism N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skewness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Error of Skewness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurtosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Error of Kurtosis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary of Descriptive Statistics of the CFI-R**

In the CFI-R, students’ reports of career agency were analyzed. The cumulative mean for career agency was $\bar{x} = 4.08$ and $\sigma = 0.559$ out of a 5-point Likert scale (Table 5). This sample mean value indicates that students reported on average strongly agreeing to having career agency. These results also indicated students marked consistent scores without much deviation of scores on the 5-point Likert scale of the CFI-R (i.e., within both lower and upper standard deviation bounds of -16.32 to -8.16). Another aspect of students’ career agency was moderate kurtosis of specifically, 4.350. This kurtosis may be due to the similar students’ ratings on the 1 through 5 Likert scale. Despite the variable of cumulative career agency having some negative skew and moderate kurtosis, parametric tests including Pearson’s correlations, an independent samples t test and a multiple linear regression were used due to these tests’ robust nature even with some variable kurtosis (Creswell, 2014; Figure 2). With the various hypotheses run, results indicated that both gender and working poor were significantly related to career agency. These hypotheses will be further explained in the following section. In addition to students’ reports of career agency, other self-reports included students’ self-reports of their work-life balance, occupational awareness, negative career outlook, and support for career pursuits, as these variables were subscales within the CFI-R (Table 3).
Table 5: Career Agency Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Career Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skewness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Error of Skewness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurtosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Error of Kurtosis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reliability Analyses for Instruments

For best practice, relatively new instruments including the Experiences with Classism Scale--Short Form and the Career Future Inventory--Revised, I analyzed the current Cronbach’s alpha values for the EWCS-SF and the CFI-R and for each subscale within each instrument used. Reporting the reliability for instruments will allow researchers to compare the results of this study to other research using these scales or scales of related constructs (Creswell, 2014; Table
6). Preferred values of the Cronbach’s alpha of each subscale and the overall scale are values between 0.70 and 1.00 because this is an exploratory study (Creswell, 2014; Field, 2013). When increased research is published, confirmatory research may be considered, and the EWCS-SF and the CFI-R will be reassessed and hoped to fall between the 0.80 and 1.00 range for their Cronbach’s alpha. These reliability scores were analyzed in this study to further understand the reliability and internal consistency of these data. For the purposes of this exploratory study, these scores were adequate. Adequacy to use these scales in current and future studies means that the items in these scales are consistent and related to one another.

Table 6 Reliability Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career Agency</td>
<td>.888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Outlook</td>
<td>.734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Life Balance</td>
<td>.780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>.792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Awareness</td>
<td>.694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*CFI-R (Total)</td>
<td>.837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systemic Classism</td>
<td>.829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Classism</td>
<td>.922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*EWCS-SF (Total)</td>
<td>.931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Complete Scales

Analysis of the Data

Three main hypotheses were explored with this survey administration. For these hypotheses, an alpha level of 0.05 was used as the criterion to detect statistical significance and to provide a 5%, bound for the probability of a Type I error (Creswell, 2014).
**Hypothesis 1**

Hypothesis 1 was that there would be a statistically significant correlation between perceived classism and career agency. A Pearson product moment correlation was calculated to test Hypothesis 1 (i.e. \(-1 < r < 1\)). Hypothesis 1 was tested using two variables with variable 1 being total perceived classism and variable 2 being total reported career agency (Table 7). Results from Hypothesis 1 revealed that there was not a statistically significant correlation between these two variables. The Pearson r for this correlation was \(-0.056\). With this hypothesis being \(p > 0.05\), students’ perceived classism is not expected to be statistically related to students’ reports of career agency. The Pearson’s r for this correlation test was also indicated 0.40 using G*Power. This level of power indicates that this data is highly likely statistically significant and exhibits a high likelihood of rejecting the null hypothesis if false. For this hypothesis test, because of the high power and non-statistical significance, I then accept the null hypothesis which is that there is no relationship between perceived classism and career agency (Table 7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Classism (Subscales Combined)</th>
<th>Career Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>(-0.056)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hypothesis 2 Assumptions**

Assumptions for analyzing gender mean differences between men and women using an independent samples \(t\) test included checking a) variables type, b) normal distribution of data, and c) appropriateness of variables for \(t\)-test analysis. Both data variables were checked for their level of normal distribution. Though gender is a factor variable in this \(t\) test, because it is a
nominal variable it did not have to meet normal distribution assumptions. Comparatively, the
dependent variable, career agency did have slight skewness and moderate kurtosis, however, due
to the robust nature of the \( t \) test and 202 sample size, these skew amounts are considered not
enough to cause inaccuracy. Thus, according to the central limit theorem and the statistical
assumptions, an independent samples \( t \) test was robust enough to still be reflective of these data
means. To check for equality of mean variances, the F result was observed and was >.05 for
Levene’s test. Thus, this test could be reviewed with equal variances assumed. Equality of
variance between gender means is important for the appropriateness of running this independent
samples \( t \) test. If variances were not equal, I violate this assumption and would have run another
test.

**Hypothesis 2**

A statistically significant difference was expected between men’s and women’s reports of
career agency. To assess this difference, an independent samples \( t \) test was used (i.e. \( H_2: \bar{x}_1 \neq \bar{x}_2 \)). The independent samples \( t \) test revealed a statistically significant difference between males’
(\( \bar{x}_1 \)) and females’ (\( \bar{x}_2 \)) reports of career agency. For this hypothesis test, I reject the null
hypothesis that no difference between gender means for career agency exists. Instead, different
gender means do exist. This mean difference is described by \( t(199)=2.462, \ p=0.045 \), and from
line 1 on Table 8. Due to my assumptions being met for this test, line 1 (i.e., equal variances
assumed) results were interpreted rather than line 2 (i.e., results for equal variances not
assumed). Confidence intervals ranged from -.323 to -.004. Confidence levels report in negative
values, as males were considered the referent group and reported lower career agency than
women.
Hypothesis 2 was non-directional and exploratory as career agency has not been studied regarding gender means. Females reported higher levels of career agency than men, with $\bar{x} = 4.14$, $\sigma = 0.487$, for women and with $\bar{x} = 3.98$, $\sigma = 0.654$, for men (Table 8). These results describe that women reported with a slightly higher career agency than men. Both genders reported having high career agency as both averages were approximately 4 on a 5-point Likert scale and were “agree” to reports of career agency. Though reporting a higher career agency, women were only slightly higher than men, specifically $p = .045$.

To check for the power and practical significance of women’s higher career agency mean, a Cohen’s d test was analyzed by $2(t)/\sqrt{df}$. For this data Cohen’s d was $2(-2.022)/\sqrt{199}$, which was 0.287. This value of 0.287 constitutes as a small effect size. This small effect size of women having a slightly higher mean in career agency could be due to a larger sample size of 202 or due to actual mean differences. To generalize this statistical and practical finding, results will need to be replicated with more men and women regarding the CFI-R. When considering the post hoc analysis of this regression, the power of career agency is very small (i.e., approximately $1/5^{th}$ of a Likert scale). For this study and with post hoc considerations, the mean difference between women and men is only one fifth of a standard deviation difference.

Table 8: Independent Samples T Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Agency</th>
<th>Equal variances assumed (Levene’s test)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. 2-tailed</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>2.462</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>.045</td>
<td>-.163</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>-3.23 to .004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>-1.885</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>125.501</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>-1.63</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>-3.35 to .008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Increased analysis is encouraged to see if with other sample sizes women continue to report higher career agency than men.

**Hypothesis 3 Assumptions**

For Hypothesis 3, data were checked for meeting various assumptions. These assumptions included variable type, linearity, independence and normality of residuals, homoscedasticity, and collinearity (Field, 2013). Variable type was met for this analysis as all independent variables were continuous and career agency was ordinal. Linearity of data was also met as all data were scattered along the regression line. Additionally, no multicollinearity exists. Though variables of SES and gender were correlated as well as variables of SES and classism, none of these independent correlated variables were above 0.80. The assumption of independence of residuals was also met as Durbin-Watson was 2.049 and within the 1.5-2.5 range. Regarding homoscedasticity, Levene’s value was not significant and thus equal variances could be assumed.

**Hypothesis 3**

Hypothesis 3 stated that a moderate amount of the variance in career agency among undergraduate students, as measured by the CFI-R, would be accounted for by perceived classism, age, gender, SES, and race. To test this hypothesis, five independent variables were entered into a regression analysis with one ordinal dependent variable (Table 9).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>Durbin-Watson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.296a</td>
<td>.088</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>.552</td>
<td>2.049</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Combined EWCS Total, Asian American, Native American, Age, Latino, Multiracial, Female, Working Poor, Non-Binary, Lower, Working, African American, Middle Class; b. Dependent Variable: Combined Career Agency Total
The five independent variables included age, race, perceived classism reported, social class status (through asking students’ reported parental SES), and gender. The statistical formula for this regression is \( \hat{Y}_{\text{Career Agency}} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Perceived Classism}) + \beta_2(\text{Gender}) + \beta_3(\text{SES}) + \beta_4(\text{Race}) + \beta_5(\text{Age}) + \epsilon \). Age and perceived classism were innately ordinal in nature; however, race, social class status, and gender were dummy coded in SPSS to create referent groups and for regression compatibility.

The dummy coded referent groups were White American, Upper Class, and Male. The regression then had 14 factors or independent variables. The independent-variable standardized coefficients were analyzed in relation to their predictive nature of career agency (Table 10). The hypothesis which guided this analysis was Hypothesis 3, which stated that a moderate amount of the variance in career agency among undergraduate students, as measured by the CFI-R, would be accounted for by perceived classism, age, gender, SES, and race. With results showing only 8.8% of the variance in career agency being attributed to “Working Poor” and “Female,” I cannot reject the null hypothesis.

Though the null hypothesis is not rejected, salience exists when looking at the two independent variables which did predict a small portion of career agency. Of the predictors in the model, approximately 9% of the variance in career agency (i.e., the dependent variable) is accounted for by the predictors of “Working Poor” and “Female.” These results indicate that for every increase in each, “Working Poor” and “Female” (X), we would expect the outcome of career agency (Y) to increase. Variance attributed to “Female” would be positive given the above beta value (Table 10) and negative for “Working Poor.”
Table 10: Coefficient Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Collinearity Tolerance</th>
<th>VIF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (Constant)</td>
<td>3.875</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>11.082</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>-.032</td>
<td>.099</td>
<td>-.026</td>
<td>-3.26</td>
<td>.745</td>
<td>.742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>.116</td>
<td>.205</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>.566</td>
<td>.572</td>
<td>.945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>-.130</td>
<td>.358</td>
<td>-.016</td>
<td>-2.33</td>
<td>.166</td>
<td>.982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>-.199</td>
<td>.149</td>
<td>-.099</td>
<td>-1.33</td>
<td>.184</td>
<td>.880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>.056</td>
<td>.150</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>.373</td>
<td>.709</td>
<td>.865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Poor</td>
<td>-.517</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td>-.258</td>
<td>-2.442</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working</td>
<td>-.120</td>
<td>.193</td>
<td>-.075</td>
<td>-.622</td>
<td>.535</td>
<td>.330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
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<td>.195</td>
<td>-.171</td>
<td>-1.63</td>
<td>.120</td>
<td>.407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Class</td>
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<td>.160</td>
<td>-.135</td>
<td>-.955</td>
<td>.341</td>
<td>.244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.167</td>
<td>.083</td>
<td>.146</td>
<td>.205</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>.920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Binary</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.573</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.998</td>
<td>.932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>1.108</td>
<td>.269</td>
<td>.976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined FWCS Total</td>
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<td>.062</td>
<td>-.025</td>
<td>-3.325</td>
<td>.746</td>
<td>.826</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Combined Career Agency Total

Summary

The data in this chapter provided answers to this study’s research questions. The results of the data analysis for exploration of perceived classism and career agency, specifically the relationship between perceived classism and career agency; gender and career agency; and perceived classism, gender, race, age, and SES and career agency, were presented in this chapter. Three research hypotheses were tested, and these results were presented. Hypotheses 1, which was perceived classism is related to career agency, is not supported. Hypothesis 2, that a difference in mean level of reported career agency between males and females would exist, is supported. Hypothesis 3, which was that a moderate amount of variance in career agency among undergraduate students, as measured by the CFI-R, would be accounted for by perceived classism, age, gender, SES, and race, is not supported.

In Chapter 5, a discussion of the results, limitations, implications counseling practice, counselor education, and recommendations for future research is presented.
CHAPTER 5
OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

In this final chapter, an overview of this study is featured, potential limitations are presented, and results from Chapter 4 are discussed. Implications and recommendations for counselors and counselor educators and future researchers are also provided. This study was designed to explore the relationships between a) classism and career agency, b) gender and career agency, and c) the relationship between perceived classism, gender, SES, race, and age with career agency. The results of this study were explored by three primary research questions, hypotheses, and analyses. The results of these research questions, hypotheses, and analyses are also described below.

Summary of Results

The first hypothesis of this study was that a statistically significant relationship between perceived classism and career agency exists. A Pearson product-moment correlation was used to assess this relationship. Results from this correlation indicate that there was not a statistically significant relationship between classism and career agency. The second hypothesis of this study involved examining any gender mean differences regarding level of career agency. Results from this study revealed that women do report a slightly higher level of career agency than men. The third hypothesis of this study involved exploring if there was a moderate amount of variance in career agency as accounted for by perceived classism, age, gender, SES, and race. Results from this correlation indicate that there was not a moderate amount of variance (but instead was only about 9% of variance) in career agency attributed to the factors of perceived classism, SES, age, gender and race. Though not all variables were highly predictive in this third hypothesis, two
factors that were significantly correlated with career agency were participants identifying as “Female” and identifying as “Working Poor.”

**Limitations**

This study’s limitations include contextual and statistical limitations. Quantitative data, which guide the design of this study, do not capture the entire context (i.e., the why questions) of students’ descriptions of their perceived classism or of their anticipated career agency (Creswell, 2014). This survey design method may not entirely capture all the reasons or contexts regarding classism in higher education or decision making related to undergraduate students’ career agency. The primary goal of this study is not for complete particularization, but rather broad generalization for macro-scale understanding. Macro-scale findings through statistical patterns may help counselors better understand larger trends related to classism as well as provide empirical support for future funding requests for added exploration of the topics of classism and career.

A second potential limitation of this study includes that this study’s participants were limited only to students deciding on careers in one university and in counseling courses, career counseling courses, psychology courses, or rehabilitation-service-related courses. This sample of students may produce a skewed sample, as these students have already been accepted into college, are pursuing a university degree, and seemingly have enough self-forethought and personal agency to take a course related to self (i.e., such as a counseling course) or career (i.e., career counseling courses). Though this participant sample is valuable for added construct validity of classism in higher education, much of what this study describes could involve people not yet in higher education. Classism may be a larger barrier for past high school students who do not enter or are not accepted into college (Thompson & Subich, 2012).
The constructs of race and gender being asked with preset answer choices may have also provoked added limitations to this study. Despite various social constructive theorists’ knowledge that both gender and race are constructs on a continuum, this study presents pre-identified choices for students for statistical generalization purposes (Creswell, 2014). For the sake of pure statistical analyses, students in the gender continuum are represented by the pre-identified answer choices of “male,” “female,” “non-binary,” or “other.” Along with gender, additional variables in this study are operationally defined and thus may not match the phenomenological identity of specific or “outlier” students (Liu, 2013).

Another potential contextual limitation regarding skewness of the data is the possibility of social desirability bias or the Hawthorne effect (Nishishiba et al., 2014). Due to the length of this questionnaire (survey) in its entirety or because of potential impression management to this administrator, students may have answered in a way that they think a researcher would like them to answer (Creswell, 2014). Students may have also opted to answer “neutral” in one of the administered instruments due to this being a choice in the 6-point Likert scale of the EWC-SF. To further mitigate any survey response bias including students reporting their answers for desirability or to be marked as choice “neutral,” this study’s informed consent (Appendix A) stated for participants to “please answer honestly and please remember that your submission will remain anonymous to this researcher.”

Discussion of Hypotheses

This study’s results did not provide support for Hypotheses 1 or 3. The results did however, support Hypothesis 2. The results of all hypotheses are discussed in this section.
Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis was that a statistically significant relationship between perceived classism and career agency exists. A Pearson product-moment correlation was used to assess this relationship. Results from this correlation indicate that there was not a statistically significant relationship between classism and career agency. Though no relationship was found between perceived classism and career agency, my study did show an unfortunate occurrence of students experiencing perceived classism in higher education when looking at the frequency of perceived classism. Particularly, 85% of students in my study experienced some level of perceived classism. Of all the students who reported perceived classism, participants who identified as African American males and as “working poor” experienced the most perceived classism. My study’s finding of the unfortunate prevalence of perceived classism is hoped to substantiate reason for exploration in this area. My research findings are also meaningful as these are the first, to my knowledge, of any research findings that explored both perceived classism and career agency together. Implications and recommendations from my finding about the prevalence of students’ reported perceived classism will be described later in this chapter.

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis of my study involved examining any gender mean differences regarding level of students’ reported career agency. Results from this study revealed that women do have a slightly higher, statistically significant and practically significant, level of career agency than men. My Hypothesis 2 results fit with current and past research in the area of gender, career attitudes, and career behavior (Naff, 2018; Rhodes, 2015). Partially reinforcing my Hypothesis 2 findings, women also scored highest on the last question on the CFI-R, which
was “I feel in control of my career” (Rottinghaus et al., 2012, 2017). This question was rated much higher for women than men in my study almost unanimously.

The results of this study’s second hypothesis finding reflect that women may have overcome various psychological and traditional career barriers and now report being more agentic in pursuing their careers in higher education than their male peers. This study’s results imply that career agency is less of a barrier for women; however, implications about physical societal barriers such as current potential sexism in careers and the existence of gendered pay gaps are not answered by my study. Implications about why and how women still feel agentic in their careers despite still-existent inequality in many careers related to gender are not drawn from my study.

**Hypothesis 3**

Hypothesis 3 proposed that a moderate amount of variance in career agency would be accounted for by perceived classism, SES, race, age, and gender. The third hypothesis was analyzed using a multiple regression analysis. This hypothesis was not supported, as only about 9% of the variance in career agency was attributed to the factors of perceived classism, SES, race, age, and gender. The third hypothesis that a moderate among of career agency would be attributed to the predictor factors was not supported. Contrary to the overall low amount of prediction among most of my independent factors in the multiple regression analysis, factors of being “female” and identifying as “working poor” were significantly correlated to the level of a student’s reported career agency.

Overall non-significance for this third hypothesis may be attributed to over half of my sample of students being in their junior and senior college years and being women. Supporting my findings of low prediction between the factors I assessed and potentially instead related to
year in school, related research asserts that students in their later university years may have increased self-awareness and increased reported career agency merely due to added wisdom, experience, and emotional, mental, and physical growth (Fisher, 1980; French & Oreopoulos, 2017; Lee & Waithaka, 2017; Piaget, 1966). Reports of perceived classism and career agency from younger students in my sample may or may not have altered the findings regarding the relationship between career agency and predictor variables including perceived classism, SES, race, and age.

Similar to my findings for Hypothesis 1, implications exist that most students reported some level of perceived classism as well as a high level of career agency. Though relationships between these variables were not highly correlated, the high prevalence of perceived classism reported by students as well as students’ reported high levels of career agency are important inferences. Questions about why and how almost all students are still experiencing perceived classism, as well as how and why they are inversely feeling more agentic in their careers, are catalyzed from my findings and remain to be studied.

**Ancillary Analyses**

In addition to my study’s main hypotheses, this study’s findings also provoked discussion regarding some of my ancillary results. A salient and related finding to my main hypotheses in this study included the ancillary finding of a statistically significant relationship of SES and perceived classism. This finding that SES may predict perceived classism is interesting and is similar to recent similar research. For example, my study’s ancillary finding of SES and perceived classism is similar the Gilmore’s and Harris’s (2008) finding that students from lower social class statuses (as operationally defined by their SES) face much more negative stereotyping than their wealthier peers. Consideration of my three research findings and ancillary
findings catalyzes further exploration regarding what factors such as continued questions about SES are or are not related to students’ experiences for perceived classism and career agency.

Another less directly related but still interesting highlight of this study’s ancillary findings includes a correlation that career agency is significantly related to students’ reports of support and work-life balance. This finding is similar to current literature that has described that support is paramount for mental health and career satisfaction (Granfield, 1991; Tach & Edin, 2017) and that support serves as a buffer for experienced classism (Lent et al., 2001; Liu, 2013; Thompson, 2008). Another finding, not positively correlated, is the ancillary finding that negative career outlook is negatively related to career agency.

**Discussion of Major Findings**

My study is the first study to explore perceived classism in relation to career agency. Most importantly, however, is my study’s finding of the unfortunate reality of students still currently experiencing classism in higher education despite some research and efforts to buffer inequities and inequalities in higher education. Students’ experiences of perceived classism are not only disheartening but may also present barriers to their confidence and agency in academia and in careers depending on different times in their life. Little to no research about the current versus historical prevalence of classism students faced in college and how these may be related to career agency existed until my study. Though statistically, of the three hypotheses explored, only Hypothesis 2 was supported, the awareness of almost all students still facing classism in higher education and other major themes was still generated from this study.

The major themes from my study involve: a) there is a need to continue to explore the occurrences of classism in higher education as unfortunately, perceived classism was reported by almost all students; b) students who reported experiencing the most perceived classism included
African American male students who also identified as “working poor;” c) despite the high prevalence of perceived classism reported, most students also reported with high career agencies, with women reporting the highest career agencies of both genders. These three major themes also present implications for counselors and counselor educators. Implications from my study’s major themes are discussed below.

**Implications for Counselors and Counselor Educators**

This study revealed findings of high career agency reported by undergraduate students but unfortunately with a concurrent existence of perceived classism also reported by almost all students. Though this study showed no statistically significant relationship between perceived classism and career agency, prevalence of perceived classism reported by students is disheartening, problematic, and warrants further clinical and research considerations.

My study’s finding that 85% of students’ reported perceived classism reinforces that though American society has physically grown more diverse, discrimination is still occurring even in spaces that seem most progressive, such as higher education arenas. This study specifically described that discrimination is still occurring in association with a student’s identified social class. Reasons why almost all students shared that they still perceived classism as well as students who identified as “working poor” having the lowest career agency and highest perceived classism reported are questions generated from my findings.

As I have described in this section, this study revealed findings of high career agency reported by undergraduate students but unfortunately with a concurrent existence of perceived classism also reported by students. This study’s implications that students are still experiencing perceived classism but also are feeling agentic in their careers may provide insight as well as questions for counselors to explore current and new counseling interventions to best address
these students. Specifically, recommendations for counselors to facilitate students facing current perceived classism and to continue to foster high career agency are discussed below. Additional recommendations for counselors, counselor educators, and researchers about students experiencing classism or career-related issues are also discussed in the below section.

**Recommendations**

This section will present various recommended interventions for counselors and counselor educators to help clients facing classism and career-related issues in higher education. Recommendations include both theoretical and applicable recommendations as well as both clinical and academic interventions. Last, recommendations for future research are also presented in this section.

**Recommendations for Counselors**

The results of this study have many implications for recommendations for counselors who work with students in higher education. As a licensed counselor with experience working with students in higher education and with my study’s findings of students’ expressions of prevalent classism and career agency experienced, I recommend various interventions best suited for clients with class and career issues. Interventions recommended based on my study include a) for counselors to incorporate intake paperwork with sentences asking about a client’s social class, classism, career, and career agency, and b) for counselors to incorporate open-ended questions for empathic inquiry regarding a client’s social class or career identity.

Along direct intake questions and open-ended questions, I also recommend that counselors incorporate validation techniques and externalization techniques for clients who share that they present with class or career-related issues. Counselors must use validation and additive empathy for clients who may share these issues, as from my study, these students are still feeling
discrimination and may be experiencing stigma due to their social class or career status. Along with my study and recommendations, past researchers have also recommended direct intake questions, open-ended questions, validation and additive empathy, and externalization for clients experiencing class-related issues (Diestelmann, 2017; East et al., 2016; Rottinghaus et al., 2012, 2017).

A theoretical recommendation from my study includes that counselors need to remember that clients identify within intersectional and phenomenological frameworks. Considering that clients are intersectional, I suggest that we as counselors remember that clients may feel oppressed in relation to not only their social class or career alone but also to potential multiple identity intersections. Past researchers have shared that the different forms of discrimination including classism and racism are often conflated because people of color may often experience both classism and racism concurrently (Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005; Eshelman & Rottinghaus, 2015; Hau, 2012; Liu et al., 2007, 2013). Oppression related to multiple identities is seen in my study especially as students who identified as male African Americans and in the “working poor” class reported the most perceived classism experienced. A helpful recommendation which addresses clients’ experiences of multilayered discrimination includes for counselors to inquire about each “ism” and not conflate varying forms of oppression as this may invalidate the intensity of the varying potential injustices our clients are experiencing. Inquiry should be inclusive and intentional but not overly abundant. For example, counselors should not bombard clients with questions, but rather actively listen and understand that the client’s story may be intersectionally and phenomenologically conceptualized. Counselors play a dialectical role of not interrogating or tokening clients based on their varying intersectional identities, but rather being actively invested in continued cross-cultural awareness outside of and
inside of sessions and genuinely inviting an openness for clients to share about one or multiple forms of discrimination experienced, if needed. Clinical collaboration about a client’s identity and injustices faced may not only allow counselors to better understand clients’ related presenting issues to their identity and potential “isms” experienced but may also help clients gain trust and connection to their counselor.

Along with recommendations for counselors’ intentional empathic inquiry about a client’s identity and awareness of clients’ intersectional beings, I also recommend for counselors to use contemporary and efficacious cross-cultural approaches and models. Models that are currently deemed useful in working with clients specifically facing classism, and potentially career issues, include the I-CARE model (East, Powers, Hyatt, Wright, & May, 2016; Foss & Generali, 2012) and the social class worldview model (SCWM; Liu, 2011). The I-CARE model and SCW model both empathize intentional and culturally inclusive inquiry, understanding, and additive empathy for clients. Researchers focused on the application of the I-CARE model and SCWM with clients in poverty or identifying in lower classes have described that extended empathy is especially significant for these clients, as in these studies clients (before beginning counseling using the I-CARE or SCWM) have reported fear of potential shame or stigma from the counselor or others. My study along with past research recommends using these inclusive models as in these models counselors have been rated by clients to be more validating and inclusive, as necessary, than in various past clinical models generalized and specialized to clients with class or career-related issues.

Stemming from the prevalence of classism reported from most students in my study, I also recommend that counselors not only inquire with clients, facilitate clients’ intersectional identities, and validate clients but also advocate with these clients and for these clients. I
encourage all counselors to help clients learn to self-advocate when they need resources both psychologically and physically. In addition to helping clients self-advocate, we counselors must also advocate and confront status quo oppression including, but not limited to, classism. Counselors are recommended to continue to address historical and new oppression, such as by addressing current higher education classism that many students are experiencing.

**Recommendations for Counselor Educators**

The findings of this study imply that college-based counselors will work with increasingly diverse clients and with clients who are still facing classism even in higher education. A recommendation for counselor educators based on my study is to teach clinicians to continue to become aware of and to reduce any potential cognitive distancing or biases they may be experiencing toward people of different social classes or in different careers. My recommendation of fostering counselors’ self-insight of cognitive distancing and other biases is also similar to the recommendation of past theorists who have recommended self-insight and cross-cultural teaching for counselors working with clients of varying social classes (Clark, Moe, & Hays, 2017; Liu, 2011; Lott, 2002; Russell, 1996).

Along with teaching counselors about added self-awareness and to confront various biases for more effective genuine and cross-cultural counseling, another recommendation from this study is for counselor educators to increase the perceived humanity (i.e., versus perceived stereotypes portrayed in mainstream media) of people from all social classes. Accurate and empathic representation of clients in varying classes is imperative, in part as currently little representation of people in different class statuses exists in counselor education textbooks. Along with my recommendation for counselors to use a theoretical framework based on intersectionality and phenomenology of identity, I believe counselor educators need to
increasingly teach counselors about clients from a phenomenological and intersectionally related perspective. A concrete, practical, and logistical recommendation for counselor educators includes adding the intersection of social class and career into vignettes and course readings.

Vignettes are an easy way that counselor educators may add teaching about the intersection of social class or career into many of their classes. Particular useful vignettes may include less dramatized, tokened, or stereotyped vignettes of people in real life and likely multiple intersections. Some less stereotypical but nonetheless realistically representative vignettes may include a) the representation of clients of color in upper class statuses, b) vignettes of confident women in male-dominated careers, who may be experiencing sexism or classism, and c) vignettes of people who are poor without mental illness or addiction and are employed. Teaching about confronting societal mainstream stereotypes and status quo oppression will not only better help counselors and counseling students but will ultimately help clients facing multiple “isms.”

Recommendations for counselor educators’ humanization and more inclusive representation of people of varying social class statuses and career statuses extend outside of counselor education teaching materials as well. Moreover, I strongly recommend that counselor educators provide counselors with knowledge that media portrayal of people in varying social classes is often inaccurate. Counselor educators should teach counselors that in media people of lower class statuses are oftentimes falsely represented and are stigmatized as lazy or addicted, while people of upper classes are often also misrepresented and stigmatized as arrogant or entitled. Counselor educators should teach counselors to also advocate to their families, friends, and clients about the inaccuracy of some of the mainstream stereotypes about people from varying classes or in varying careers.
Similar to confronting false stereotypes and generalizations, I also recommend that counselor educators teach counselors that people from all statuses may face different types of classism. For example, 85% of all of the students in my study who faced classism included students in upper class statuses, among others. I recommend that counselor educators teach classism by describing that individuals may face any classism type, including downward, lateral, upper, or internalized classism (Liu, 2011, 2013; Thompson & Subich, 2011, 2012). Though downward classism in the most prevalent classism experienced, other classism types do still unfortunately occur. These discrimination types should be described and taught to counselors so that clients experiencing lesser known discrimination, such as upward classism, may be better understood and facilitated as well.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

In addition to recommendations for counselors and counselor educators, recommendations for future research also emerge from my study. Recommendations for researchers from this study include to construct and create a comprehensive, succinct, and valid operational definition of social class. This study explored some of the varying dimensions of social class, which included students’ reported classism and parental income (SES). My study’s findings also presented some information about the multidimensionality of social class, but this study’s findings are only a beginning and, after retrospective review, are insufficient to fully understand the multidimensional and still equivocal social class status. Added research is encouraged to incorporate all dimensions of a person’s social class as well as operationally define social class as a cohesively agreed-upon and valid construct. Various researchers have also suggested this need and have proposed to create a quantitative instrument which combines scores or ratings to constitute a social class definition (Diestelmann, 2017; Rubin et al., 2014).
My study’s findings support the need to create a quantitative measure. Such measurement will be beneficial as researchers can then hypothesis and analyze for larger generalizations and findings of information about students of varying social classes. Macro-scale quantitative findings can then leverage larger patterns and directions for clinical interventions which can then be published and can thereafter guide counselor educators academically and counselors clinically.

Though I initially suggest for researchers to most importantly quantify social class, I also suggest continued qualitative measures be created and mixed-methods research about social class and career to be conducted. Quantitative measures may add larger understanding of patterns in our knowledge of social class and career statuses while continued qualitative studies may replicate already-credible research about these subjects. When considering composition of a quantitative instrument to define social class, a limitation from my study and other past studies attempting to define social class includes a lack of multidimensionality. For example, in my study, I used a student’s reported parental income as the main definition of SES, which also accounted for my students’ social class status. This definition used in my study does not completely suffice for the multidimensional definition of social class. Income, SES, or any other one-dimensional factors are not sufficient alone to define social class. I recommend that researchers combine various measurements such as from my study and other studies to more comprehensively and accurately define, measure, and understand social class.

Another research recommendation from my study includes exploring the social class and career agencies of all students, especially students who have not yet attended college. I encourage added research for studies of all students regarding each and both, classism experienced and career agency, as I speculate that many students do feel classism in their high-school years and this may or may not affect their career or college dreams.
Conclusion

A total of 202 students participated in this study which explored the relationship between reported perceived classism and reported career agency. Prevalence of each construct, perceived classism and career agency, as well as their relations to other variables, was explored. The relationship between perceived classism and career agency was explored as well as the relationship between gender and career agency. Additionally, the proportion of variance in career agency explained by perceived classism, race, age, SES, and gender was investigated. The results indicated that perceived classism does not have a statistically significant relationship with career agency. Similarly, perceived classism among other factors including race, age, SES, and gender did not account for a moderate or large variance of students’ reports of career agency. Results did show a statistical significance between the mean differences of men’s and women’s reports of career agency. Women reported higher career agency then men in this study. Additionally, overall, almost all students in this study reported minimal to moderate perceived classism and moderate to high career agency.

This study contributes to knowledge about university students, including students who identify as underrepresented and as African American or in the working-poor social class statuses. This study presented a deeper understanding about the factors that relate to the classism students experience as well as the prevalence of the classism they experience. Despite classism experienced, the theme of students feeling agentic in their career goals is also described in this study. Retention of underrepresented students, including students of racial or financial minority statuses, has declined in higher education. With this disheartening trend, knowing the needs of these students is necessary. As suggested from the recommendations sections in this chapter,
supporting these students from an intersectional and cross-cultural paradigm is a professional and moral duty for all helpers in higher education. Advocacy for these students is also crucial.

This study provides empirical evidence of the prevalence of perceived classism to further substantiate the need to help students mitigate against oppression they experience as well as challenge varying educational norms that may intentionally or unintentionally contribute to the current inequities these students face in higher education. From this study, it is hoped that additional research will be conducted to further understand, advocate, and help students, especially students in minority statuses in higher education, to achieve their desired careers and ultimately fulfill their own unique American Dreams.
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APPENDIX A

Informed Consent and Recruitment Script

Examination of the Relationship between Classism and Career Agency
Primary Investigator: Lucy Parker, MA, LPC, NCC, Doctoral Candidate

INFORMED CONSENT

Invitation to Participate/Study Description: This survey is being administered by doctoral candidate, Lucy Parker, MA, LPC, NCC, at Northern Illinois University. The main purpose of this survey study is to explore the relationship between perceived classism and career agency. Your voluntary participation in this study will involve completing one brief questionnaire related to classism and career agency. These questionnaires should take about 20 minutes to complete. It is hoped that aggregated data from anonymous scores will be used in promotion of adaptive teaching and counseling initiatives after dissertation publication, from these data.

Confidentiality: Please again note, your responses and questionnaire are anonymous. I do not ask for your name or any identifying information. All of your responses will also be kept confidential and will only be available to researchers.

Risks: There are no anticipated risks associated with this study and your participation is completely anonymous and confidential. You may choose to withdraw your participation at any point. This research project has also been approved by Northern Illinois University’s Institutional Review Board Human Subjects Committee.

Voluntary Consent: If you decide to participate in this survey, you will be asked to consent to this by clicking the Agree Button, below. By consenting to this survey, you are stating that you understand the nature of this research and that you are able to take and respond to this survey.

Other Questions: If you have any questions or concerns, please email this researcher, Lucy Parker, MA, LPC, NCC at lparker2@niu.edu or call at: 1-217-553-9555.
If you agree to complete this survey, please answer the questions on the following pages.

Instructions: Please answer this survey as best you can remember for your experiences as a student in higher education. This survey asks various questions about the constructs of classism as these relate to students. Your responses will be aggregated and anonymous.

Q3 Please write your age: ____

Q4 Please circle your gender:  Male  Female  Non-binary  Other

Q5 Please indicate your racial identity:  Note: Circle all that apply.
African American/Black  Caucasian/White  Asian American  Latino/Hispanic
Multiracial/Other  Native American

Q6 Please indicate your parents' socioeconomic status:  (Circle One)
Working Poor Class  Working Class  Lower Class  Middle Class  Upper Class

Q7 Do you consider yourself a first-generation college student?  Circle One:  Yes  No

Q8 Please specify your college major:  (Circle One):
  • Science Related Major
  • Art Related Major
  • Math Related Major
  • Education Related Major
  • Communications or English Related Major
  • Political Studies Related Major

Q9 Please specify your student status:  (Circle One)
Freshman  Sophomore  Junior  Senior

Q10 Please specify the undergraduate course where you heard about this survey:  (Circle One)
Career Counseling  Introduction to Counseling  Rehabilitation Counseling
Psychology  Other
APPENDIX B

EXPERIENCES WITH CLASSISM SCALE--SHORT FORM
(Thompson & Subich, 2012)

Instructions: As you answer the questions below, think about the PAST YEAR. For each question, please circle the number that best captures the things that have happened to you.

Check Choice 1=If this has NEVER happened to you
Check Choice 2=If this has happened ONCE IN A WHILE (less than 10% of the time) to you
Check Choice 3=If this has happened SOMETIMES (10%-25% of the time) to you
Check Choice 4=If this has happened A LOT (26%-49% of the time) to you
Check Choice 5= If this has happened MOST OF THE TIME (50%-70% of the time) to you
Check Choice 6=If this has happened ALMOST ALWAYS (more than 70% of the time) to you

Q12 How many times have you been treated unfairly in the past year by teachers and professionals because of your social class?

☐ 1 NEVER  ☐ 2 OCCASIONALLY  ☐ 3 SOMETIMES  ☐ 4 ALOT  ☐ 5 MOST TIMES  ☐ 6 ALMOST ALWAYS

Q13 How many times have you been treated unfairly by your employers, bosses, and supervisors in the past year because of your social class?

☐ 1 NEVER  ☐ 2 OCCASIONALLY  ☐ 3 SOMETIMES  ☐ 4 ALOT  ☐ 5 MOST TIMES  ☐ 6 ALMOST ALWAYS

Q14 How many times have you been treated unfairly by your co-workers, fellow students, and colleagues in the past year because of your social class?

☐ 1 NEVER  ☐ 2 OCCASIONALLY  ☐ 3 SOMETIMES  ☐ 4 ALOT  ☐ 5 MOST TIMES  ☐ 6 ALMOST ALWAYS

Q15 How many times have you been treated unfairly by people in service jobs (store clerks, waiters, bartenders, bank tellers, and others) in the past year because of your social class?

☐ 1 NEVER  ☐ 2 OCCASIONALLY  ☐ 3 SOMETIMES  ☐ 4 ALOT  ☐ 5 MOST TIMES  ☐ 6 ALMOST ALWAYS

Q16 How many times have you been treated unfairly in the past year by strangers because of your social class?

☐ 1 NEVER  ☐ 2 OCCASIONALLY  ☐ 3 SOMETIMES  ☐ 4 ALOT  ☐ 5 MOST TIMES  ☐ 6 ALMOST ALWAYS

Q17 How many times have you been treated unfairly in the past year by people in helping jobs (doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, case workers, dentists, school counselors, therapists, social workers, and others) because of your social class?

☐ 1 NEVER  ☐ 2 OCCASIONALLY  ☐ 3 SOMETIMES  ☐ 4 ALOT  ☐ 5 MOST TIMES  ☐ 6 ALMOST ALWAYS

Q18 How many times have you been treated unfairly in the past year by neighbors because of your social class?

☐ 1 NEVER  ☐ 2 OCCASIONALLY  ☐ 3 SOMETIMES  ☐ 4 ALOT  ☐ 5 MOST TIMES  ☐ 6 ALMOST ALWAYS
Q19 How many times have you been treated unfairly in the past year by institutions (schools, universities, law firms, the police, the courts, the Department of Social Services, the Unemployment Office, and others) because of your social class?

1 NEVER  2 OCCASIONALLY  3 SOMETIMES  4 ALOT  5 MOST TIMES  6 ALMOST ALWAYS

Q20 How many times have you been treated unfairly in the past year by people you thought were your friends because of your social class?

1 NEVER  2 OCCASIONALLY  3 SOMETIMES  4 ALOT  5 MOST TIMES  6 ALMOST ALWAYS

Q21 How many times have you been accused or suspected of doing something wrong (such as stealing, cheating, not doing your share of the work, or breaking the law) in the past year because of your social class?

1 NEVER  2 OCCASIONALLY  3 SOMETIMES  4 ALOT  5 MOST TIMES  6 ALMOST ALWAYS

Q22 How many times in the past year have people misunderstood your intentions and motives because of your social class?

1 NEVER  2 OCCASIONALLY  3 SOMETIMES  4 ALOT  5 MOST TIMES  6 ALMOST ALWAYS

Q23 How many times did you want to tell someone off for being classist, but did not say anything in the past year?

1 NEVER  2 OCCASIONALLY  3 SOMETIMES  4 ALOT  5 MOST TIMES  6 ALMOST ALWAYS

Q24 How many times have you been really angry about something classist that was done to you in the past year?

1 NEVER  2 OCCASIONALLY  3 SOMETIMES  4 ALOT  5 MOST TIMES  6 ALMOST ALWAYS

Q25 How many times were you forced to take drastic steps (such as filing a grievance, filing a lawsuit, quitting your job, moving away, or other actions) to deal with some classist thing that was done to you in the past year?

1 NEVER  2 OCCASIONALLY  3 SOMETIMES  4 ALOT  5 MOST TIMES  6 ALMOST ALWAYS

Q26 How many times have you been called a name like poor, welfare recipient, hobo, poor white trash, ghetto, or other names in the past year?

1 NEVER  2 OCCASIONALLY  3 SOMETIMES  4 ALOT  5 MOST TIMES  6 ALMOST ALWAYS

Q27 How many times have you gotten into an argument or a fight about something classist that was done to you or done to somebody else in the past year?

1 NEVER  2 OCCASIONALLY  3 SOMETIMES  4 ALOT  5 MOST TIMES  6 ALMOST ALWAYS

Q28 How many times have you been made fun of, picked on, pushed, shoved, hit, or threatened with harm because of your social class in the past year?

1 NEVER  2 OCCASIONALLY  3 SOMETIMES  4 ALOT  5 MOST TIMES  6 ALMOST ALWAYS

Q29 How often do you feel like you have been treated differently in the past year based on your physical appearance (clothing, type of bag/purse you carried, and shoes)?

1 NEVER  2 OCCASIONALLY  3 SOMETIMES  4 ALOT  5 MOST TIMES  6 ALMOST ALWAYS
Q30 How often, in the past year, do you feel like you have had service persons (e.g. waiters/waitresses, cashiers, etc.) treat you differently when paying your bill based on what you purchased?

1 NEVER  2 OCCASIONALLY  3 SOMETIMES  4 ALOT  5 MOST TIMES  6 ALMOST ALWAYS

Q31 How many times have you been treated differently in the past year by your friends because of your social class?

1 NEVER  2 OCCASIONALLY  3 SOMETIMES  4 ALOT  5 MOST TIMES  6 ALMOST ALWAYS

Q32 How often in the past year have you had difficulty getting everything you needed for school in place because you were waiting for financial aid to provide you with your check (e.g. you were unable to buy used books at the bookstore because by the time your financial aid check came, all of the used copies were sold out)?

1 NEVER  2 OCCASIONALLY  3 SOMETIMES  4 ALOT  5 MOST TIMES  6 ALMOST ALWAYS

Q33 How often in the past year have you been frustrated with all of the steps that you had to take with the financial aid office or banks in order to have access to money for school?

1 NEVER  2 OCCASIONALLY  3 SOMETIMES  4 ALOT  5 MOST TIMES  6 ALMOST ALWAYS

Q34 How often in the past year have you felt that your social class was easily identifiable because of steps you were required to take on campus (e.g. having to stand in a separate line for those needing financial aid or waiting for financial aid checks or paying dues required to be involved in a sorority or fraternity on campus)?

1 NEVER  2 OCCASIONALLY  3 SOMETIMES  4 ALOT  5 MOST TIMES  6 ALMOST ALWAYS

Q35 How often in the past year did you feel that friends, roommates, and/or classmates “showed off” their ability to buy nice things, go on vacations, and drive nice cars?

1 NEVER  2 OCCASIONALLY  3 SOMETIMES  4 ALOT  5 MOST TIMES  6 ALMOST ALWAYS

Q36 How often in the past year did you feel that you were treated differently because you brought your lunch to school/work rather than buying it?

1 NEVER  2 OCCASIONALLY  3 SOMETIMES  4 ALOT  5 MOST TIMES  6 ALMOST ALWAYS
APPENDIX C
CAREER FUTURES INVENTORY--REVISED
(Rottinghaus et al., 2017)

Instructions: This second questionnaire assesses critical factors for people considering career transitions. You will be asked questions regarding your current thoughts and feelings about how you plan your career. There are no right or wrong answers. Read each statement carefully, then use the following scale to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement:

Q38 I can perform a successful job search
☐ 1=Strongly Disagree  ☐ 2=Disagree  ☐ 3=Neutral  ☐ 4=Agree  ☐ 5= Strongly Agree

Q39 I doubt my career will turn out well in the future
☐ 1=Strongly Disagree  ☐ 2=Disagree  ☐ 3=Neutral  ☐ 4=Agree  ☐ 5= Strongly Agree

Q40 I can establish a plan for my future career
☐ 1=Strongly Disagree  ☐ 2=Disagree  ☐ 3=Neutral  ☐ 4=Agree  ☐ 5= Strongly Agree

Q41 Others in my life are very supportive of my career
☐ 1=Strongly Disagree  ☐ 2=Disagree  ☐ 3=Neutral  ☐ 4=Agree  ☐ 5= Strongly Agree

Q42 I understand how economic trends affect career opportunities available to me
☐ 1=Strongly Disagree  ☐ 2=Disagree  ☐ 3=Neutral  ☐ 4=Agree  ☐ 5= Strongly Agree

Q43 I am aware of priorities in my life
☐ 1=Strongly Disagree  ☐ 2=Disagree  ☐ 3=Neutral  ☐ 4=Agree  ☐ 5= Strongly Agree

Q44 I am good at understanding job market trends
☐ 1=Strongly Disagree  ☐ 2=Disagree  ☐ 3=Neutral  ☐ 4=Agree  ☐ 5= Strongly Agree

Q45 Thinking about my career frustrates me
☐ 1=Strongly Disagree  ☐ 2=Disagree  ☐ 3=Neutral  ☐ 4=Agree  ☐ 5= Strongly Agree

Q46 I can easily manage my needs and those of other important people in my life
☐ 1=Strongly Disagree  ☐ 2=Disagree  ☐ 3=Neutral  ☐ 4=Agree  ☐ 5= Strongly Agree

Q47 I can overcome potential barriers that may exist in my career
☐ 1=Strongly Disagree  ☐ 2=Disagree  ☐ 3=Neutral  ☐ 4=Agree  ☐ 5= Strongly Agree

Q48 I lack the energy to pursue my career goals
☐ 1=Strongly Disagree  ☐ 2=Disagree  ☐ 3=Neutral  ☐ 4=Agree  ☐ 5= Strongly Agree

Q49 Balancing work and family responsibilities is manageable
☐ 1=Strongly Disagree  ☐ 2=Disagree  ☐ 3=Neutral  ☐ 4=Agree  ☐ 5= Strongly Agree
Q50 My family is there to help me through career challenges

1=Strongly Disagree  2=Disagree  3=Neutral  4=Agree  5= Strongly Agree

Q51 I can adapt to change in the world of work

1=Strongly Disagree  2=Disagree  3=Neutral  4=Agree  5= Strongly Agree

Q52 I do not understand job market trends

1=Strongly Disagree  2=Disagree  3=Neutral  4=Agree  5= Strongly Agree

Q53 I am aware of my strengths

1=Strongly Disagree  2=Disagree  3=Neutral  4=Agree  5= Strongly Agree

Q54 I keep up with trends in at least one occupation or industry of interest to me

1=Strongly Disagree  2=Disagree  3=Neutral  4=Agree  5= Strongly Agree

Q55 I receive encouragement from others to meet my career goals

1=Strongly Disagree  2=Disagree  3=Neutral  4=Agree  5= Strongly Agree

Q56 I understand my work-related interests

1=Strongly Disagree  2=Disagree  3=Neutral  4=Agree  5= Strongly Agree

Q57 I am very strategic when it comes to balancing my work and personal lives

1=Strongly Disagree  2=Disagree  3=Neutral  4=Agree  5= Strongly Agree

Q58 I keep current with job market trends

1=Strongly Disagree  2=Disagree  3=Neutral  4=Agree  5= Strongly Agree

Q59 I understand my work-related values

1=Strongly Disagree  2=Disagree  3=Neutral  4=Agree  5= Strongly Agree

Q60 Friends are available to offer support in my career transition

1=Strongly Disagree  2=Disagree  3=Neutral  4=Agree  5= Strongly Agree

Q61 I am good at balancing multiple life roles such as worker, family member, or friend

1=Strongly Disagree  2=Disagree  3=Neutral  4=Agree  5= Strongly Agree

Q62 It is unlikely that good things will happen in my career

1=Strongly Disagree  2=Disagree  3=Neutral  4=Agree  5= Strongly Agree

Q63 I will successfully manage my present career transition process

1=Strongly Disagree  2=Disagree  3=Neutral  4=Agree  5= Strongly Agree

Q64 I keep current with changes in technology

1=Strongly Disagree  2=Disagree  3=Neutral  4=Agree  5= Strongly Agree

Q65 I am in control of my career

1=Strongly Disagree  2=Disagree  3=Neutral  4=Agree  5= Strongly Agree

Thank you for your participation! For entry into this survey’s drawing, please email this researcher at lparker2@niu.edu. Please remember your email is not required, but optional.
APPENDIX D

EMAIL CONFIRMATIONS FOR INSTRUMENTS

Mindi Thompson

to me, Isubich

Dear Lucy,
Thank you for your email and for your interest in the EWCSI! You are more than welcome to use the measure for your research. You will find the items and scoring instructions in the attached manuscript. Best wishes with your dissertation! Warmly,
Mindi

Mindi N. Thompson, Ph.D., HSP
Associate Professor, Department of Counseling Psychology
University of Wisconsin-Madison
1000 Bascom Mall
mrthompson@wisc.edu
g08-265-4760

Rottinghaus, Patrick J. <rottinghaus@missouri.edu>
to me ...

Dear Lucy,

Thanks for your interest in using the CFI and CFI-R. You have permission to use the CFI-R for your research or practice purposes free of charge. The CFI-R is good for evaluating outcomes of counseling interventions as well as for use with individual clients.

The attached files include the original CFI and the CFI-R with scoring keys, and a recent 2017 JEVG article. This study offers normative data that could be used for comparison purposes. It involves an analysis of the CFI-R factor structure and counseling outcomes in a sample actual career counseling clients. I am pleased to provide additional information on the assessment in the future if you would like more details. We are refining interpretation materials. I welcome any comments you may have on your experience with the measure. It is important for me to keep track of studies involving the CFI and CFI-R. So if I would appreciate a brief summary of your study upon completion of the project.

Best regards,

Patrick

Patrick J. Rottinghaus, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Counseling Psychology
Dept. of Educational, School, and Counseling Psychology
University of Missouri—Columbia
rottinghaus@missouri.edu
APPENDIX E

ANALYSES GRAPHS

Pearson Correlation (r) between perceived classism and career agency

Perceived Classism ↔ Level of Career Agency

-1 < r < 1

T-Test with mean comparisons of career agency reports for each gender

Gender

Male → Level of Career Agency
Female

H₀ : \bar{x}_1 = \bar{x}_2

MLR with Perceived Classism as Main IV and Career Agency as Main DV

\hat{Y} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(X) + \beta_2(Gender) + \beta_3 (SES) + \beta_4 (Race) + \beta_5 (Age) + \epsilon

\hat{Y}(Career Agency) = \beta_0 + \beta_1(Perceived Classism) + \beta_2(Gender) + \beta_3 (SES) + \beta_4 (Race) + \beta_5 (Age) + \epsilon
APPENDIX F

IRB APPROVAL NOTICE

Exempt Determination

26-Apr-2018
Lucy Parker
Counseling, Adult and Higher Education

RE: Protocol #HS18-0121 "Examination of the Relationship between Classism and Career Agency"

Dear Lucy Parker,

Your application for institutional review of research involving human subjects was reviewed by Institutional Review Board #1 on 26-Apr-2018 and it was determined that it meets the criteria for exemption.

Although this research is exempt, you have responsibilities for the ethical conduct of the research and must comply with the following:

Amendments: You are responsible for reporting any amendments or changes to your research protocol that may affect the determination of exemption and/or the specific category. This may result in your research no longer being eligible for the exemption that has been granted.

Record Keeping: You are responsible for maintaining a copy of all research related records in a secure location, in the event future verification is necessary. At a minimum these documents include: the research protocol, all questionnaires, survey instruments, interview questions and/or data collection instruments associated with this research protocol, recruiting or advertising materials, any consent forms or information sheets given to participants, all correspondence to or from the IRB, and any other pertinent documents.

Please include the protocol number (HS18-0121) on any documents or correspondence sent to the IRB about this study.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact the Office of Research Compliance and Integrity at 815-753-8588.
APPENDIX G

Lucy Parker, PhD, MA, LPC, NCC

Education

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY | DEFENDED: AUG 7, 2018 | NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
  · Dissertation Title: Examination of the Relationship between Classism and Career Agency

MASTER OF ARTS | MAY 2014 | UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SPRINGFIELD
  · CACREP Accreditation: Emphasis in Clinical Mental Health Counseling

BACHELOR OF ARTS | MAY 2011 | UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SPRINGFIELD
  · Major: Psychology; Supplemented By: Associates in Biology; Earned: 2009

Licensure and Certification

LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR
  (LPC) #178.011468: Illinois LPC Anticipated: September 1st, 2018

NATIONALLY CERTIFIED COUNSELOR
  (NCC) #342756

Teaching Experience

2018-2019
  La Salle University: PCMF 601: Grief, Loss, and Trauma Counseling: Instructor of Record
  La Salle University: PCC 501: Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice: Instructor of Record
  La Salle University: PCMF 500: Introduction to Counseling and Psychotherapy: Instructor of Record
  Northwestern University: COUNS 415: Psychopathology in Counseling: Instructor of Record
  Northwestern University: COUNS 416: Theories of Counseling: Instructor of Record (4 sections)

2016-2017
  Northwestern University: COUNS 416: Theories of Counseling: Instructor of Record (2 sections)
  Northern Illinois University: CAHC 567: Substance Abuse Issues in Counseling: Co-Teacher
  Northern Illinois University: CAHE 523: Advocacy in Student Affairs: Co-Instructor of Record
  Northern Illinois University: CAHC 400: Guest Instructor: Taught About Crisis Counseling
  Northern Illinois University: CAHC 211: Undergraduate Career Counseling: Instructor of Record
  Northern Illinois University: CAHA 562: Counseling Skills in Student Affairs: Instructor of Record
  Northern Illinois University: CAHC 567: Substance Abuse Issues in Counseling: Co-Teacher
  Northern Illinois University: CAHC 593: Introduction to Crisis Counseling: Co-Teacher
  Northern Illinois University: CAHC 540: Group Counseling: Instructor of Record
  Northern Illinois University: CAHC 400: Guest Instructor Taught About Crisis Counseling

2014-2015
  Northern Illinois University: CAHC 530: Theories of Counseling: Co-Teacher
  Northern Illinois University: CAHC 784: Theories of Marriage and Family Counseling: Co-Teacher
  Northern Illinois University: CAHC 550: Counseling Practicum: Co-Teacher
  Northern Illinois University: CAHC 550: Counseling Practicum: Co-Facilitator
  Northern Illinois University: CAHC 593: Introduction to Crisis Counseling: Guest Instructor
  Northern Illinois University: CAHC 400: Introduction to Counseling: Guest Instructor
  Northern Illinois University: CAHC 525: Basic Skills in Counseling: Co-Facilitator
  Northern Illinois University: CAHC 550: Counseling Practicum: Guest Instructor
  Northern Illinois University: CAHC 400: Introduction to Counseling: Guest Instructor
Lucy Parker, PhD, MA, LPC, NCC

Supervision Experience

2016-2018
Northwestern University: Reflective Practicum Supervision Experience: Primary Supervisor
Northwestern University: Reflective Group Immersion: Primary Group Supervisor
Northern Illinois University: CAHC 540: Group Counseling Practicum: Primary Supervisor
Northern Illinois University: CAHC 525: Basic Skills Pre-Practicum: Co-Supervisor

2015
Northern Illinois University: CAHC 550: Counseling Practicum: Primary Supervisor
Northern Illinois University: CAHC 550: Counseling Practicum: Co-Supervisor
Northern Illinois University: CAHC 525: Basic Skills Pre-Practicum: Co-Supervisor

Counseling Experience

2014-2018
Counselor at NIU Counseling and Consultation Services
Northern Illinois University: Dekalb, IL: Duties: Individual and crisis counseling provided for both nontraditional and traditional students at Northern Illinois University: Specialization: Working with students with marginalized intersectionalities

Counselor at NIU Community Counseling Training Center
Northern Illinois University: Dekalb, IL: Duties: Individual counseling and facilitated a trauma focused group for students identifying as within the LGBTQIA+ Community

2011-2014
Counselor-In-Training and Counselor at Christian County Mental Health Association
Interned under Dr. Ann McCaughan and Licensed Counselor, Ms. Sue Paso: Taylorville, IL: Duties: Crisis counseling provided for both severe and long-term client issues, mental health assessment composition

Awards and Honors

2014-2018
Illinois Association for Adult Development and Aging Distinguished Service Award
Northern Illinois University GSRC LGBTQ+ Ally Award
Northern Illinois University Graduate Student Woman Honoree
University of Illinois Lavender Graduation Invitee
University of Illinois at Springfield Master’s Counseling Student Marshal
Lucy Parker, PhD, MA, LPC, NCC

Publications

2015-2018 Refereed


2015-2018 Non-Refereed


Lucy Parker, PhD, MA, LPC, NCC

Refereed Presentations

2018


2017

Parker, L. (February 2017). Teaching Group Counseling through Culturally Competent and Creative Strategies. Poster to be presented at the 2017 Annual Association for Specialists in Group Work Conference


2016

Parker, L. (November 2016). Ways to creatively connect members in group or in the counseling classroom: using contemporary narrative techniques to teach counselors-in-training about group counseling. Poster Presented at the 2016 Illinois Counseling Association Annual Conference

Wise, S., McMillion, P., & Parker, L. (October 2016) Innovative ways for standardizing and quantifying the graduate admissions process for counseling programs. Presentation Session at the 2016 North Central Association for Counselor Education and Supervision National Conference

Refereed Presentations Continued

2016

Parker, L. (September 2016) *Ways to creatively connect group members in the group or classroom setting.* Roundtable Session at the 2016 Annual Association of Creativity in Counseling National Conference.


2015

Parker, L., & Morring, A. (November 2015) *Using creativity to further one’s understanding of his or her individual counselor and/or counselor educator identity.* Presentation Session at the 2015 Annual Illinois Counseling Association Conference


Mika, K., Cox, S., Wise, S., McMillion, P., Moody, A, & Parker, L. (October 2015) *Standardizing and quantifying the graduate admissions process for counseling programs.* Presentation Session at the 2015 Annual Counselor Education and Supervision Association National Conference

Lucy Parker, PhD, MA, LPC, NCC

Student Affairs Experience

2016-2018

Student Affairs Outreach
Northern Illinois University Counseling and Consultation Services: Division of Student Affairs
Duties included outreach in psychoeducation and counseling form to students at NIU and:
- Provided stress management outreach to undergraduate and graduate students
- Co-facilitated groups titled Transpire for students identifying as transgender
- Taught resident hall staff about suicidal assessment and mental health wellness
- Provided therapy dog outreach every second Monday in Fall 2017 to students
- Provided information about NEDAwareness during NIU NEDAwareness Week
- Provided depression screening services
- Assisted at NIU mental health outreach titled How the Health are You?
- Co-facilitated NIU CCS international student event titled Chai Chat

2015

CAHE Academic Advisor Hiring Committee: Graduate Assistant Representative
Counseling, Adult, and Higher Education Department
Duties included:
- Evaluated candidates for potential hire as academic advisor for CAHE Department
- Interviewed candidates for potential hire as academic advisor for CAHE Department
- Collaborated about candidate competence to potentially participate in Departmental and interdisciplinary education

Interim Academic Advisor
Counseling, Adult, and Higher Education Department:
Duties included:
- Explained CAHE Program and advised new and current CAHE graduate students
- Provided outreach to undergraduate students about graduate programs in counseling and higher education
- Interviewed and collaborated on committee for hire of the full-time current Academic Advisor

Higher Education Experience

2016-2018

Graduate Teaching Assistant for Dr. Brooke Ruxton
Northern Illinois University: Counseling, Adult, and Higher Education Department: Duties:
Taught masters student affairs professional course and did university outreach including administering a needs assessment evaluation for 2017 NIU Garrett Lee Smith Campus Suicide Prevention Grant application and administration
Lucy Parker, PhD, MA, LPC, NCC

Professional Service

2018

*Illinois Association for Adult Development and Aging Newsletter Editor and Mentor*

2017

*Illinois Association for Adult Development and Aging Newsletter Editor and Mentor*

Northern Illinois University Undocumented Student Ally Training

Annual ISERVIC/IAADA Professional Development Retreat: Organized and hosted

Nominated and Received: Florence E. Doyle Memorial Fund

Nominated and Received: Wesley I. Schmidt Scholarship

Nominated Thesis Reviewer: For master's candidate/counselor-in-training, Frida Uribe

Voluntary Tutor for Teaching English as a Second Language: For Naif Jabil

2016

*Illinois Counseling Association Volunteer*: Duties: Workshop Monitor

*Northern Illinois University Dean’s Search Committee*: Graduate Student Representative

2015

*Northern Illinois University Regional P20 Conference*: Workshop Monitor and Host

*Northern Illinois University Teaching Orientation Seminar*: Workshop Training

*Northern Illinois University Faculty Technology Training*: Workshop Training

*Northern Illinois University Graduate Student Advisory Committee*: COE Representative

2014

*Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (ANCRA)*: Workshop Training

*Brain Development and the Effects of Early Deprivation*: Online Workshop Training

*Illinois Counseling Association Volunteer*: Duties: Workshop Monitor

*Signs of Abuse and Reporting Requirements for Early Childhood*: Workshop Training

*Stress Management for Child Care Providers*: Online Workshop Training

*University of Illinois Safe Zone Fundamentals Training*: Workshop Training

2013

*Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (ANCRA)*: Workshop Training

*Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Completion*

*Understanding Infant Adoption Awareness*: Workshop Training

*University of Illinois Safe Zone Fundamentals Training*: Workshop Training

2012

*Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (ANCRA)*: Workshop Training

*Illinois Counseling Association Volunteer*: Duties: Workshop Monitor