THE EFFECTS OF THE CONNECT TO SUCCESS ACADEMY ON ADOLESCENTS' CAREER DECISION SELF-EFFICACY AND ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SCIENCES

COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

BY

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DENTON, TX

MAY, 2015

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY
DENTON, TEXAS

April 2, 2015

To the Dean of the Graduate School:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Milagros Magaly Lozano entitled "The Effects of the Connect to Success Academy on Adolescents' Career Decision Self-Efficacy and Achievement Motivation." I have examined this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with a major in Child Development.

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We have read this dissertation and recommend acceptance:

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Accepted:

Dean of the Graduate School

DEDICATION

For my #1 fan, my mom, who without her none of this would be possible. My mom has always been important in my success, because she always made me believe in myself. "Mama, gracias por todo tu apoyo durante toda mi vida…doy gracias a Dios que estas aqui para presenciar tus esfuerzos en mi carrera. Sin ti madre, tu comprension y tus esfuerzos en empujarme, nada de esto hubiese sido possible. Gracias madre!! Que Dios siempre te de muchisima salud y vida. Sin tus palabras de inspiracion, la verdad no creo que hubiese yo llegado tan alto..dedico esta tesis a ti madrecita de mi alma, te dedico esta tesis, porque en ella he puesto mi Alma, Corazon, y Vida".

Doy gracias a mi abuelita…mi Mama Feli. Mi eterna luz de apoyo. Toda mi vida yo ya me sentia como doctora por ti MamaFeli. En tus ojos, yo ya era esa doctora. Toda mi vida tu ya tenias orgullo de mi. Todo lo que yo hacia lo mirabas con maravilla. Tu me apoyabas incondicionalmente sin reproche. Tu me querias porque era yo. A la misma vez mi amiga, a la misma vez mi abuela….te quiero y extrano Mamafeli. Esta tesis lo dedico a ti, mi viejita linda. Te recuerdo todos los dias.

I would like to thank to my father Adolph Lozano who I know is watching me from up above. "Daddy, I remember how education was so important for you and those long nights at Texas Instruments where you and your colleagues taught and showed me the meaning of diligence over an Algebra problem. I just wished you would have seen me now….thank you daddy, I know school was so important for you!!!!I miss you so much and thank you for the life you gave me as a child. I will always remember that you

would never let anything stand in the way of what I'm capable of, not even my mistakes. You would always tell me to "try your best next time mija", never scorning me for NOT being able to do something. You inspired hope and tenacity in me daddy, thank you for your wisdom and patience.

For my sister Yelitza, my "segunda"…you been there for me in more ways than one. I am so blessed to have a sister like you "Nanis" thank you for being there when I most needed you and thank you for giving me four of the most beautiful nieces and nephews I could ask for!! Thank you to my sister Elaine, who has always been supportive. This thought leads to my nieces and nephews…I want to thank you Marco, Kayla, Alex, Hailey, Hanna, Jiovanni, Julian, Harrison, Roseglori and Amelia for being patient with my absence in your lives six years ago. Six years when I set out to start my PhD I was more available to you….I enjoyed going to your games , plays, movies, museums, carnivals or just going out to eat. As I started dedicating more time to my dissertation, I became less and less available and present in your lives due to my academic engagements. You taught me the joy of understanding "child development" and taught me theories and concepts experientially. You taught me firsthand how children evolve throughout the lifespan. Thank you my babies for that immeasurable lesson and I promise…now that I accomplished my ultimate academic goal…Aunt Me is back!!!

I want to dedicated my work to my brothers Andy, Rusty and Dinky. I am proud to call you my brothers and admire what great fathers you have become. Thank you for

your words of encouragement. I love you guys and always look forward to the camaraderie when we get a chance. Rusty I know you can do it, finish your PhD, the world is waiting for your additional contribution as a scholar!!

And lastly I want to thank my dearest friend and also a fellow TWU Pioneer sister who has witnessed my frustrations in acquiring my PhD. Thanks Cynthia "Cyndi" H. Favela. Thank you for being at my side during those long grueling hours of writing my dissertation. Thank you for spending long hours at the Buzz Café, Starbucks or Denny's. You of all people know how I love coffee and how happy coffee makes me. Thank you for being there for me always. It meant a lot to me. More than words!!! Te quiero amiga!! ☺

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My journey leading to the completion of my dissertation holds, struggle, dedication, many nights of coffee, many excuses of "sorry, no I cannot go tonight to that function, I'm doing research", traffic tickets, flat tires, untraveled needed vacations, and herniated discs in my back from carrying too many book bags. I also acknowledge that I did not travel on this journey alone. I had many people along my voyage that have traveled alongside me.

My first inspiration began with my kindergarten teacher, Ms. Winnie Weaver, who understood the importance of evening the playing field. I was a Spanish speaking 6-year-old when I entered her kindergarten classroom. You never gave up on me albeit the language barrier. I was the only student in the classroom who spoke Spanish. Because I only spoke Spanish, I had no friends, I was not included in peer games, I was mocked, but you did something that made me want to work with children that were different. You handed me the bronze universe statue in front of my wide-eyed peers. That kind gesture made me believe in myself no matter how different I was. I want to thank you Dr. Weaver and am honored to follow a fellow Pioneer sister's steps. Thank you!

In my professional endeavors, I would first and foremost like to thank the one person that was a beacon for me through all of my doctoral process. Dr. Lin Moore. Dr. Moore, thank you for all of your support and being a true leader. You inspired me in conducting research. You taught me to understand research and how to love it. Your

mentorship has meant so much to me during this process. I learned many things from you. I have learned persistence, compassion, understanding, diligence, and being true to your students and research. Thank you for your support. I will always remember your support and will carry this lesson towards others. I will "pay it forward". Thank you!

I would also like to thank the other members of my dissertation committee: Dr. Arminta Jacobson, Dr. Joyce Armstrong and Dr. David Marshall. Dr. Jacobson: you were that first inspiration for me during my Masters defense at the University of North Texas. Thank you for your immeasurable guidance and love you have taught me for parents and children. I respect and admire you. I will never forget how you and Grant supported me when I walked that day at UNT…the last one to walk that stage to be exact!!

I would also like to thank my dissertation committee members: Dr. Joyce Armstrong and Dr. David Marshall for providing insight and suggestions. Dr. Armstrong you taught my first class in Adolescence in this program and gave me vision. I knew when I took your class; I was in the right place. Dr. Armstrong you taught me that sophistication and eloquence can go hand in hand with Academia. I would also like to thank Dr. Larry Leflore for your encouragement while I was in the program. You are one of a kind and I am grateful to have you as a mentor, Dr. Leflore. Keep inspiring people in that "tower of power", you belong to the masses. I would like to thank Carroll Nelson, Dorcyle McClure and all staff at the Family Sciences department for their academic support. Thank you for guiding me in this meticulous process.

I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to Yvonne Booker for being available and sharing in that passion that we both have to serve underprivileged families. Yvonne our mutual vision, your provisions of the necessary materials, tools, and venue gave me the necessary flexibility to be creative with my approach in the Academy. Thank you Yvonne!! I would also like to thank Bill Booker for your immeasurable knowledge in the workshops in the Academy. Bill you are a natural and your inspiration as a professor is contagious.

Furthermore, I would like to express my deepest thanks to Dr. Roxanne Del Rio, Associate Dean of Denton County Campuses and Jessica DeRoche, North Central Texas College campus director for offering North Central Texas College as a venue for the Academy those Saturday mornings. Your willingness to open up your Flower Mound Campus has definitely changed young people's lives and your community. Thank you!

I would also like to thank Father Robert Maguire, Dr. Michelle Chin, Chia-Jung Yeh, Akhtari Chowdhury, Elizabeth Tamez, Sonya Sneed, Richard Toney, Charlondria Sanders, Tesia Wells, Sandra Morales, Sara Keramati, Salwa Saeed Al-Harbi, Karen Morrison-my colleagues in this process that encouraged my endeavors and understood the challenges I was facing. Thank you to the Connect to Success instructors, volunteers, the students and parents. Your dedication to this effort has really inspired me to continue fighting for education accessibility for students who otherwise would not have had that access.

Gracias a los instructors, padres, y estudiantes de la academia que luchan diariamente para que haya oportunidad de obtener una vida major por medio de la adquisicion de educacion. Sus esfuerzos son admirables y agradezco su participacion. Me da tanto gusto que hay padres (que igual que los mios) que apoyan a sus hijos para que continuen estudiando para ser mejores personas en este mundo. Acuerdance que "SI SE PUEDE" Y "ADELANTE" con sus "SUEÑOS"!

I would like to thank my many friends for their patience with me. Throughout the last few years I have not been as available as I usually am due to my being busy with assignments and papers and such. The old phrase "hurry up and finish" have been so engraved in my memory during these years and the disappointment of RSVPing with "will not attend" have been many but I'm done now!!! Let's sing some karaoke!!

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family for their understanding. There have been many times I have not been able to make a Lozano or Matos family event or reunion. Thank you for your patience my aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews. I adore you! Again, A special thank you goes out to my dad Adolph, my mom Rosa, Elaine, Dinky, Yelitza, Andy, Rusty, and my numerous nieces and nephews. I love you and without you I know I would not have achieved my dreams and goals. Thank you for your support and encouragement. My family has shaped me throughout my life and my dear family…….THIS ONE'S FOR YOU!! A Ph-inish-D dissertation!!!

ABSTRACT

MILAGROS MAGALY LOZANO, B.A., M.A., M.S.

THE EFFECTS OF THE CONNECT TO SUCCESS ACADEMY ON ADOLESCENTS' CAREER DECISION SELF-EFFICACY AND ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION

MAY 2015

The purpose of this study was to study the effects of the Connect to Success Academy on high school student's achievement motivation and career decision self-efficacy. Differences between male and female student were explored as well as predicators that may explain achievement motivation and career decision self-efficacy for high school students. Variables such as genders, ages, ethnicities, home languages, types of households, education levels, and household incomes were explored. Bandura's Self-efficacy theory and Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological Systems Theory were incorporated to better understand adolescent motivation and self-efficacy as it relates to the Connect to Success pre-college intervention program.

Participants included 54 students and their parents from a North Texas school district. Achievement motivation, career decision self-efficacy, student understanding of college process and the parent's understanding of the college process were assessed using the Achievement Motivation Profile (Mandel, Friedland, & Marcus, 1996), the Career Decision Self-efficacy Scale (Taylor and Betz, 1983) and the Connect to Success Student

Questionnaire (Booker, 2008) and the Connect to Success Parent Questionnaire (Booker, 2008).

The results indicated increased positive significant differences in the Inner Resources, Interpersonal Strengths, and Work Habits subscales on the Achievement Motivation Profile and increased positive significant differences in the Planning subscale of the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale. No gender differences were ascertained for the Achievement Motivation Profile (Mandel, Friedland, & Marcus, 1996) and Planning increased for females in the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale (Taylor and Betz, 1983).

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is no surprise that access to higher education by lower socio-economic status high school students is a dilemma in the United States. Much research has focused on the need for higher education and the call for action to improve opportunities for underrepresented lower socio-economic high school students (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000; Cooper, 2002; McLoyd, 1998; Perna, 2002; Renick, 2006; White, 1982). These experts have acknowledged that there is a need to address the under-representation of these high school students in higher education. Higher education can bring positive effects to this disadvantaged group's schools, families and communities (Durlak et. al, 2007).

Students with high socio-economic status have been linked to higher education access and positive academic development and additionally are found to possess hope, life-satisfaction and worth, a sense of personal control and self-esteem (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008; Marques, Pais-Ribeiro & Lopez, 2011; Ross & Broh, 2000). Unfortunately, detrimental effects for students of lower socio-economic backgrounds have been associated with unfavorable dynamics such as slow academic development and lack of academic resources for academic success (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008; Hillemeier and colleagues, 2009; Renick, 2006).

Due to these disparities and needs, many organizations have created programs to help support adolescents with programs that give access to information about higher education attainment via pre-college readiness programs.

One example of such a program is in the North Texas area and sponsored by Christian Community Action. The Connect to Success Academy was created to help educate high school students and their parents about the college process and to prepare for students' life after high school. The Connect to Success Academy uses career clusters as a program in which students are divided into groups by career choices such as computers and technology, law and government, communications, or arts, entertainment and fashion. Students are also involved in hands-on career related activities and college tours to expose students to campus life and culture. The Connect to Success Academy also offers courses throughout the year targeting such topics as goal setting, career planning, interview training, dressing for success training, tips on how to choose the right college, and training on researching careers. Students are introduced to job shadowing where community professionals provide half day tours of their work places. This component provides students with first-hand exposure to careers hence giving students a glimpse of real world work activities.

Statement of the Problem

Adolescence is a critical period in the lives of young people. Many of the things young people learn during this time will shape their perspectives of life choices. It is a time when adolescents make choices about their identities and the career paths they will

choose after high school (Muuss, 1996). Unfortunately, for students from impoverished backgrounds, there are barriers to the availability of higher education (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2010; Renick, 2006).

Many organizations have recognized the importance of youth development intervention programs targeting high school students (Bobek, Zaft, Li, & Lerner, 2009; Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonezak & Hawkins, 2004; Cooper, 2002; Durlak et al., 2007; Marques, Pais-Ribeiro, & Lopez, 2011; Park, 2009). Other organizations have acknowledged the socio-economic disparities in higher education and the need for educational comprehensive intervention programs (CIP) in order to help engage and inform the high school students in making education choices related to college entry (O'Brien, Bikos, Epstein, Flores, Dukstein, & Kamatuka, 2000; Weiher, Kaplan, Howard, 2006). Perna & Swail (2001) acknowledged the benefits that can stem from pre-college intervention programs such as "… economic growth associated with enhanced productivity of labor…reduced crime, reduced dependency on public welfare, increased volunteerism, greater voting rates, increased civic involvement…intergenerational manifestations" (p. 99) These programs alone have not guaranteed that adolescents will become motivated and possess adequate self-efficacy to prepare for college. Therefore, it is important to evaluate how college readiness programs affect students' choices, motivational factors, and self-efficacy.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of students' participation in the Connect to Success Academy. This evaluation included measures of achievement motivation and career-decision self-efficacy before and after the program intervention, as well as impact questionnaires from students and their parents.

Research Questions

The following questions will guided this study:

RQ1: Is there a difference in academic achievement motivation of students as measured by the Achievement Motivation Profile, when comparing pretest and posttest scores?

RQ2: Is there a difference in the self-efficacy of students as measured by the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale when comparing pretest and posttest scores?

RQ3: Is there a difference in the Connect to Success Academy Parent Questionnaire domains when comparing pretest and posttest scores?

Rq4: Is there a difference in the Connect to Success Academy Student Questionnaire domains when comparing pretest and posttest scores?

Importance of the Study

The study served to inform policymakers at the local and federal level of the importance of pre-college readiness programs like this. It also helped to inform agencies and non-profit organizations that are creating programs to understand the various conceptual elements that help these programs become successful. This study also assisted professional educators to become familiar with this program in order to help their

students. An evaluation of this program helped inform parents who are looking for pre-college programs to help them become informed about the college process. Ultimately this study helped inform immediate participants of programs (students) and assisted them in understanding the necessity of participating in a program like this to help them gain the needed knowledge and make informed decisions about life after high school.

Limitations

The following were limitations of this study:

1. All participants were volunteers who applied and were accepted to the Connect to Success Academy. Student participants and their parents may be different from high school students who did not volunteer.
2. Data was collected during one academic year. The limited time frame did not include data collection to determine which students graduated from high school and progressed to college entry.

Delimitations

Eligibility for participation in the Connect to Success Academy was determined by the Christian Community Action Agency (CCA), a non-profit agency of Christians that minister to lower income families in the North Texas area. Participation was limited to 9th -12th grade students between the ages of 13-18. Participation of the program was limited to low socio-economic students whose parents did not attend college. Participants included students from the eight school districts located in the CCA service area. These school districts included Argyle, Coppell, and Denton County portion

schools in Carrollton-Farmers Branch, Frisco, Lake Dallas, Lewisville, Little Elm, and Northwest.

Definition of Terms

A definition of term gave an understanding of constructs included in this study. Definition of terms served as a foundation for evaluating how the author liked these constructs to be considered for this study.

Adolescence. The Connect to Success Academy defined the perimeters of the age of the population for this study. Ages of participants in the Connect to Success Academy will include students from ages 13-18 years of age.

Socio-economic status (SES). For purposes of this study, the author will define the SES as that of the economically disadvantaged as defined by the Connect to Success Academy. Eligibility is determined by income and education status of the parents. Low income is generally assumed to meet the school district definitions for "economically disadvantaged." The percentages of economically disadvantaged students enrolled in these eight districts ranges from 9.7% to 52.98%. The average for the CCA service area is 23.41%.

Self-efficacy. Schunk (2009) defined self-efficacy as a "…personal judgment of person's capability to organize and implement behaviors in specific situations" (p. 48). Bandura (1982) defines perceived self-efficacy as"…judgments of how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations"

Achievement motivation. Achievement motivation occurs when a student's sense of self-efficacy is enriched (Schunk, 1989). For purposes of this study, achievement motivation will be related to self-efficacy motivational outcomes in a school setting (Schunk, 1991).

Academy. For purposes of this study, academy is an extracurricular program to help students and their parents develop knowledge in the college process. The Academy is offered the second Saturday of the month at the North Texas Central College in Flower Mound, Texas throughout the determined duration of the Academy.

Summary

Students, their families and communities of lower socio-economics, need access to information about higher education. These populations are the most vulnerable and affected by the lack of higher education. The lower socio economic populations are surrounded in contextual environments where resources such as college readiness programs are not readily available. College readiness intervention programs are important because they provide adolescent and their families with the necessary tools to succeed after high school and make informed decisions about higher education.

Higher education is beneficial on many levels and for many reasons. Studies involving college readiness programs like the Connect to Success Academy can give insight on what variables in a program can build career decision self-efficacy and achievement motivation. This study will examine if the Connect to Success Academy

affects (1) achievement motivation adolescent participants and (2) career decision self-efficacy.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

During the high school years, students must begin to make decisions about their lives after high school. For many students, life after high school means preparing for higher academia in a college setting. Unfortunately, the route to this opportunity is not as clear and information is scarce and how to negotiate this transition is not readily available for lower SES students with lower economic resources such as parental support, academic preparation, financial access (Renick, 2006; Tierney, 1980).

Socio-economic status has been a definitive indicator and pejorative factor in students seeking higher education as students from lower socio-economic backgrounds encounter hurdles to higher education access (Renick, 2006). Hillemeier and colleagues (2009) established a clear link between students of low socio-economic status (SES) and their communities and its influence on slow academic development. On the contrary, students with positive academic development were found to possess hope, life-satisfaction and worth (Marques, Pais-Ribeiro & Lopez, 2011) and a sense of personal control and self-esteem (Ross & Broh, 2000). Studies have also shown that students living in lower socioeconomic neighborhoods are deprived of academic resources that can help them become academically successful in class subjects such as reading (Aikens

& Barbarin, 2008). Cabrera and La Nasa (2000) postulated that fewer resources are available to lower income families then their higher SES counterparts. But most importantly, students from low socioeconomic status background are affected academically and are at an academic disadvantage (McLoyd, 1998; White, 1982). Challenges such as lack of academic preparation, lack of clear information about the college process, support for parents, financial barriers and lack of support are some challenges faced by impoverished students. There is less recourse for disadvantaged students and an urgent need to address this disparity. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, the drop-out rates of 16 to 24-year-olds are among the highest among low-income level students. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013)

The need for programs which encourage character development and college enrollment in adolescents is critical. In a meta-analytic review, Durlak and his colleagues (2007) recognized that the majority of youth development programs start within the confines of the school, family and community level. Many educators and institutions have created programs to fill the educational void encountered by many families and students of lower SES which educate, cultivate and develop young people during the high school years. As evidenced by research studies, many benefits can come from programs such as these. Pittman and Richmond (2007) found school intervention programs to have cultivated a sense of belonging. Other youth intervention programs promoted academic persistence (Caldwell & Siwatu, 2003), helped cultivate specific target areas of college majors such as business (Ghazzawi & Jagannathan, 2011), promoted youth development

constructs such as competence, self-efficacy and prosocial norms (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonezak, & Hawkins, 2004), increased pre-college preparedness in reading and math (Cabrera, Deil-Amen, Prabhu, Terenzini, Lee & Franklin Jr. 2006), cultivated civic engagement (Bobek, Zaft, Li, & Lerner, 2009) and increased environmental awareness (Stern, Powell & Ardoin, 2011).

In a longitudinal study conducted by Marques, Pais-Ribeiro & Lopez (2011), academic achievement was associated with positive psychological constructs. Researchers measured hope, satisfaction with life, self-worth and mental health in 367 middle-school students enrolled in 6th-8th grades from seven different schools in Portugal. Correlation analyses indicated a robust correlation between mental health and positive psychology concepts. Hierarchical regression analysis revealed increased measures of life satisfaction, hope, and self-worth.

Studies have shown that young people have developed in a variety of ways through an array of programs. Some programs help build character, knowledge in certain areas and disciplines such as environmental awareness and civic duty awareness. Other programs familiarize the student with college academic processes. While other intervention programs helped build skills in order to prepare students with necessary skills to be successful and mindful of pre-college process. If these programs help augment young people in many aspects, it may be important to understand other ways programs can shape young individuals who are developing, growing and learning about paths they will take in life.

Theoretical Framework

Before going into the literature, it is important to frame how a study will be understood. For purposes of this study, the researcher will look at the literature and research in the context in which intervention programs occurs. There is a critical need for pre-college intervention programs in communities where there is great disparity, void and necessity. Dynamics such as federal and local policy, community, schools, neighborhoods, socio-economic status and other demographic characters explain elements of these type programs. The researcher will use Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory (1977) to frame this study. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory inquiry uses these complex encounters to better explain individual lives, contextual experiences, societal settings, culture and environmental events that can help explain behavior.

Bandura's self-efficacy theory will be another lens that that will help explain how behavior and decisions occur. Bandura uses self-efficacy to explain how psychological change occurs (1977). According to Bandura, cognition guides behavior which in turn guides outcomes. The researcher will use this theory to interpret achievement motivation and academic career decision self-efficacy surrounding the Connect to Success Academy.

Self-efficacy and achievement motivations shape many of the decisions that adolescents make in life. However, in order to better understand these processes in adolescents, one must understand the context within which they occur and factors that may impede or enhance these decisions. Many researchers ascribe to a theoretical perspective to interpret the research at hand. For purposes of this study, the researcher

will use Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1977) and Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological Systems Theory (1977) to better understand adolescent motivation and self-efficacy as it relates to the Connect to Success pre-college intervention program and the contextual environment it occurs in.

Bandura's Self Efficacy Theory

Bandura's self-efficacy theory is grounded in Social Cognitive Theory (2001). The interaction between environment and thought, cognition, behaviors and contextual factors shape human achievement. Social Cognitive Theory has led the way to an agentic perspective about behavior, that is, the belief that humans have the capability of controlling their personal outcomes. Self-efficacy is foundational for many dynamics related to an individual's positive sense of purpose. Self-efficacy is important because it executes a person's sense of efficacy expectations. Bandura's seminal work on self-efficacy and its relationship with human agency (1982, 2001) provides an explanation for how behavioral change occurs. Bandura defines efficacy as "…a generative capability in which component cognitive, social, and behavioral skills must be organized into an integrated course of action to serve innumerable purposes" (1982, p. 122). According to Bandura, people acquire self-efficacy through self-performance, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological indices (Bandura, 1977, 1982). Through multiple experiences and engagements within the environment, people create perceived judgments about their abilities to possess initiative and pursuit.

Bandura defined self-efficacy as perception and belief in one's abilities. Bandura (1994) ascertained that one's perception of abilities and human agency shape one's endeavors to achieve. Self-efficacy contains many dimensions and is dependent on the person's cognitions (Bandura, 1982). Individuals set goals and expect certain outcomes and accordingly create actions to obtain their desired outcomes. Individuals' forethought also shapes self-efficacy and their beliefs that those goals can be obtained (Bandura & Pastorelli, 2001). Activities are hence guided by self–efficacy.

Perceived self-efficacy governs the motivational effects of goal systems (Bandura and Cervone, 1983). Bandura (1977) described perceived self-efficacy as:

> people's choice of activities and behavioral settings, how much effort they expend, and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles and aversive experiences. The stronger the perceived self-efficacy, the more active the coping efforts. Those who persist in the subjectively threatening activities will eventually eliminate their inhibitions through corrective experience, whereas those who avoid what they fear, or who cease their coping efforts prematurely, will retain their self-debilitating expectations and defensive behavior (p. 288).

Individuals with self-efficacy are able to motivate themselves, choose a path or goal for themselves, anticipate outcomes and create a plan of execution (Bandura, 1994). A high sense of self-efficacy can contribute to a sense of occupation and career consideration, hence allowing consideration of options that would not be considered otherwise (Bandura, 2001).

A low level sense of self-efficacy can lead to depression and anxiety (Bandura, 1994). This can occur because like self-efficacy, depression finds its roots in cognition. Hence individuals who deem certain goals unattainable can develop a low sense of worth. On the contrary, people who possess a sense of self-efficacy develop relationships that allow them to reach their self-identified goals.

Self-efficacy provides an in-depth understanding of the cognitive processes that occur and affect behavior and goals. The researcher will use this theoretical perspective to explain how students' cognitive elements change once exposed to a pre-college readiness program like the Connect to Success Academy. Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory can explain the execution of behavior and how that may be critical in motivating adolescents to pursue higher education after participating in a college-readiness program.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model

It is impossible to understand the interplay between self-efficacy and achievement motivation in an intervention program without considering the contextual elements. In order to understand how contextual elements affect individuals, it is important to be aware that there are different levels of context that may be occurring at the same time. Bronfenbrenner's (1986) Ecological Model reveals the dynamism of all the different levels surrounding adolescents and how the levels are related to a deeper understanding of dynamics within those contextual interactions surrounding individuals. Achievement motivation and career decision self-efficacy of adolescents occur in different contexts and occur at different levels.

Bronfenbrenner considered human development in the context of the levels of environment in which they occur. Humans are products of their contextual immediate surroundings and are influenced by each level of ecological environment which are consequently interdependent on each other and ever changing (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The four systems in Bronfenbrenner's ecological system include the micro-system, the meso-system, exo-system, and the macro-system. These four levels of system interact with adolescents in different ways thus shaping and influencing the dynamics of adolescents in relation to the factors in that system.

According to Bronfenbrenner (1986), the micro-system is the closest identification people have to themselves in relation to society. It includes functions that people may have in common with their "world" such as the role of the parent, adolescent, student, brother, or sister. Many of the features, identifications, and influences people have may be cultural or may be part of the individuals' natural make-ups. Aspects such as individuals' cognitions, religion, intelligence, and experience incorporate the individuals in the micro-system. Adolescents in the micro-system can be influenced by those in the adolescents' immediate world such as friends, parents, teachers, pastors, coaches and mentors.

In this research study, the micro-system would be centered around adolescents. The micro-system is influenced of adolescents' features. Adolescents' personal traits affect how they interact with the Connect to Success Academy. Adolescents' personal traits affect the interaction they may have with the Connect to Success Academy. Levels

of career self-efficacy and achievement motivation are affected by personal features. Dynamics such as socio-economic status and acculturation status may affect how adolescents react towards a pre-college intervention program. Other dynamics which may affect how adolescents react to a pre-college intervention program may is their intelligence level, whether they are male or female, and other experiences in their lives such as parental histories, opportunities and non-normative developmental experiences in life.

The individual's meso-system is the existing relationship between the person in the micro-system and another individual's micro-system as it relates to the contextual setting (Brofenbrenner, 1977, 1986). These interacting interpersonal relationships are shaped by organizational and institutional factors in adolescents' environments. These social roles overlap and occur at the same time and are contingent on the surroundings. Bronfenbrenner argued that bi-directional transformation occurs in the interactions of the developing adolescent. Bronfenbrenner also argues that the richer the medium of communication, the more influence. High school pre-college intervention programs have shown to positively affect adolescents' decision about college or higher education after high school (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonezak, & Hawkins, 2004; Cooper, 2002; Gruber, 2011; Jones, 2011; Kenny, Walsh-Blair, Blustein, Bempechat, & Seltzer, 2010; Marques, Pais-Ribeiro & Lopez, 2011; Nelson, 2007; Weiher, Hughes, Kaplan & Howard, 2006). On the contrary, lack of rich environments has also demonstrated the development of inequalities in education (Bronfenbrenner, 1967; Smokowski, 1998). If

adolescents' parents are supportive, adolescents' chances of pursuing higher education also improve. Adolescents participate in the different systems and these contextual environments shape adolescents' roles in society.

The exo-system is an invisible entity that influences the micro and meso-system. The greater social system has direct and indirect consequences on the lives of adolescents. According to Muuss (1996), the three most influential relationships on development are the relationship between one or both of the parents and their place of employment, the parents' circle of friends, and the neighborhood or community influences. Other entities that affect adolescents include the local boards of education, local governments, local transportation systems, and their parents' employers.

Demographics and the government can also affect adolescents. If adolescents' families participate in their communities, the social support may influence adolescents in externalization or internalization of acculturation problems. If there is no cultural community or social support, adolescents may find the social support in other groups of people thus shaping their micro-system (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

The macro-system is the outermost layer of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. This outer tier is encompassed by indirect influences embedded in the national mass media, religious traditions, federal government, and the constitution (Bronfenbrenner, 1976, 1977, 1986). These theoretical concepts guide the behavior of the micro-, exo- and meso-systems. The culture of the external level will determine adolescents' acclimation to mainstream society. The fluidity of the macro-system guides the other systems.

All of these levels interact with each other simultaneously. All of the levels are interacting with each other from different directions. Outer levels affect the reaction of the inner level. For example, organizations and communities establish protocols for societal norms which shape the reactions and behaviors of the micro-systems. Inside-out effects are also possible in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1986). A good example of this is when the micro-system affects the outer levels in individuals' dynamics and personal decisions which in turn affect the higher levels, thus shifting outer paradigms based on personal inner goals. All of these levels are simultaneous, fluid, and significant in shaping the ecology of culture on all levels.

Economic growth associated with enhanced productivity of labor may result when there are higher levels of educational attainment. Neighborhood effects are another societal benefit. These include reduced crime, reduced dependency on public welfare and Medicaid, increased volunteerism, greater voting rates, and increased levels of civic involvement. "The single most important effect of higher education may well be intergenerational-manifested…in increased educational attainment of one's children" (p. 99).

Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective will allow the researcher to describe the context within which college readiness programs occur. The theoretical framework lens chosen by the researcher can help the researcher interpret the dynamics surrounding college preparedness and programs. Evidence from research studies has shown how pre-college programs affect all contextual levels. Perna and Swail (2001) recognize the

benefits individuals achieve at different ecological levels when higher levels of education are reached. In contrast, all levels are affected when pre-college programs are available for adolescents. Policies, communities, organizations, schools, neighborhoods and the family all affect the availability of pre-college readiness programs.

Self-efficacy and Academic Motivation

Schunk (1981, 1984, 2001, 2009) researched motivational processes of perceived self-efficacy to investigate how they are related to academic achievement. Schunk (2009) defined self-efficacy as a "…personal judgment of person's capability to organize and implement behaviors in specific situations" (p. 48). Beliefs about self-efficacy and behavior can influence the choices made, the persistence of belief in abilities to accomplish tasks, and how persons feel about themselves (Pajares & Schunk, 2002).

Cognitions therefore aid in cognitive engagement and affect individuals' earliest sense of personal agency. Motivation and self-efficacy can be affected by important cognitive processes such as goal setting which can be nurtured by feedback (Bandura & Cervone, 1983). Cognitive feedback known as cognitive appraisal is defined as

> inferential process in which person weigh and combine the contributions of such personal and situational factors as their perceived ability, the difficulty of the task, amount of effort expended, amount of external assistance received, task outcomes, patterns of successes and failures, perceived similarity to models, and persuader credibility (Schunk, 1989, p. 15.)

Consequently, cognitive skill learning can occur when people feel competent in their abilities regardless of content difficulty. When students possess beliefs of self-efficacy or motivation, self-imposed strategies and approaches are implemented to achieve better performance (Schunk, 1995). The development of self-efficacy hence occurs in contextual environment where self-efficacy is trained (Bandura, 2001, Schunk, 1989). Schunk (1995) ascertains that the more skillful students become, the more motivation and self-efficacy they possess. Research conducted by Schunk (1981) found that perceived self-efficacy was instrumental in math achievement. Multiple regression analysis on a reported sample of 56 children from five elementary schools indicated that perceived self-efficacy was an accurate predictor of performance in mathematics.

Self-efficacy was found to be correlated to predictions of academic performance and perceived career options. In a study of 105 college freshman and sophomore students registered in a career educational planning course, the authors assessed areas of educational planning post-intervention (Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1986). Assessment tools used included Self-Efficacy for Technical/Scientific Fields measure, Career Decision Scale, Self-esteem Scale were used to measure expressed vocational interest and range of perceived vocational options. Information on the students' rankings and scores on aptitude college entrance tests, grades, and declarations of major were also collected from the university records. Descriptive statistics and hierarchical regression analyses revealed a strong relationship between self-efficacy and academic performance behavior,

vocational interests, and perceived career options. Measures were significantly related to specific past achievement rather than a universal sense of self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy and Achievement and Goal Setting

Goal setting is important in cultivating the sense of self-efficacy and motivation. Change occurs when students begin to engage in activities. As students' experiences and undertakings increase, they begin to become shaped by the feedback they receive (Schunk & Pajares, 2001). Self-judgments and goal setting are then affected by feedback which gives way to goal systems. Exposure and activity experiences create a familiarity and confidence which in turn lead students to engage in personal goal settings. Furthermore, research has shown when perceived self-efficacy is higher, goal attainment is higher (Bandura & Cervone, 1983).

Self-efficacy and goal setting are shaped by students' own observations of their performance. As students self-observe, self-judge and self-react through experiences in their learned activities, they begin to determine if they can approximate a goal set which contributes to their sense of self-efficacy and motivation (Schunk, 1990).

Bandura and Schunk (1981) determined that competence, self-efficacy and intrinsic interest were nurtured through tangible and proximal motivation "Motivational benefits of goals depend on their properties: proximity, specificity, and difficulty" (Schunk, 1991, p. 213).

Another motivating factor for students is the level of difficulty of goals. Students who encountered difficult tasks in mathematics were more inclined to be motivated to

become competent in math tasks at hand if they possessed self-efficacy and had the task at hand (Schunk, 1983).

When students begin to develop skills that approximate them to their goals, a sense of self-efficacy begins to develop (Schunk, 2009). Environmental influences can affect this sense of self-efficacy via approximations of those goals. Approximation of goals can occur through goal commitment or setting goals which endorse self-efficacy (Schunk, 1989). Another source of self-efficacy can be found in teacher and peer modeling which foster belief and self-efficacy in one's own abilities (Schunk, 1989). These self-efficacy dynamics give way to the motivation to achieve and succeed.

Academic Self-efficacy beliefs

Many dynamics affect academic achievement and self-monitoring in young people. Favorable reactions occur when young people possess a sense of self-efficacy and motivation. Goal setting, self-efficacy and self-evaluation are instrumental in forming young people's ideas, strategies about life, and choices they make. Behavior can be shaped through the proximity of goals and explain behavior. Contextual environments can also shape students' sense of achievement through learning but should be done in a social environmental setting. "The social cognitive view of self-regulation emphasizes the importance of self-efficacy beliefs, causal attributions, and goal setting in regulating behavior directed at accomplishing a task or activity. Once children engage in a task, they must monitor their behavior, judge its outcomes, and react to those outcomes to regulate what they do" (Eccles, Wigfield, and Schiefele, 1998. p. 1019).

Zimmerman, Bandura, and Martinez Pons (1992) reported a correlation between self-efficacy beliefs, personal goal setting and self-motivation for academic achievement. In a study of 116 ninth and tenth graders from two high schools on the east coast, Zimmerman and his colleagues administered two efficacy subscales from the Children's Multidimensional Self-Efficacy Scale (self-efficacy for self-regulated learning and self-efficacy for academic achievement). Path analysis procedures were used to determine how measures of self-regulatory efficacy and goal factors impacted students' academic achievement. Scales determined that students were able to obtain committed self-set goals. High levels of self-efficacy were correlated with high levels of achievement of those self-set goals.

In a two year longitudinal study involving 367 Portuguese adolescents ages ten to fifteen years, Marques, Pais-Ribeiro, and Lopez (2011) found evidence of the development of positive psychology constructs. The authors implemented measures of hope through the Children's Hope Scale, self-worth in the Self-Worth Scale and life-satisfaction in the Mental Health Inventory-5 Scale and academic achievement through the student's achievement reports. Repeated measures of ANOVA and hierarchical regression analysis showed strong correlations between hope, life satisfaction, and self-worth, and academic achievement.

Elliot and Church (1997) conducted a research study to investigate intrinsic motivation and performance. A total of 204 participants from an undergraduate psychology course at the University of Rochester in New York were administered the

Achievement Motivation scale, Fear of Failure scale, Competence Expectancy Scale, and Achievement Goals questionnaire to measure students' motivation as it relates to actual performance. Factor analysis through varimax rotation, descriptive statistics, and path analysis indicated that the mastery of goals were related to students' sense of competency expectations and achievement motivation. Students who possessed a fear of failure and low capability expectations tended to avoid goals. Students who possessed performance approach goals were grounded in achievement motivation, fear of failure, and high competence expectations. Likewise performance-avoidance goals were related to students' fear and motivation to one's mastery of goals. A sense of low competency and fear of failure was linked to avoidance of performance goals and the high competence beliefs and expectations were linked to fear of failure. Consequently, competence was nurtured by an internal sense of motivation which resulted in achievement of goals.

Similarly, in an ex-post facto designed research study of 450 secondary schools, students from 10 schools in Nigeria were found to possess high levels of motivation correlated with achievement in mathematics (Tella, 2007). Measures administered to students included Motivation for Academic Performance Questionnaire, Preference Scale, and the Motivation for Academic Study Scale by their math teachers. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests and t-tests found robust results correlating motivation to better outcomes in learning and academic achievement.

Contextual Factors

Many factors such as gender, socio-economic status, and environment play prominent roles in adolescents' involvement in the community, programs, and higher education. Park (2009) noted that good character can be fostered through family and positive dynamics found in the academic setting which promoted good character development. This cultivation can be helpful in safeguard young people against pejorative effects of negative life experiences as well as help decrease the probability of harmful habits such as smoking and drinking.

Ainsworth (2002) found many contextual variables correlated to educational attainment such neighborhood characteristics high socio-economic status, residential stability, racial/ethnic diversity, family characteristics such as SES, single-parent household, step-parent household, number of siblings, school discussions with parents, and parental involvement in school.

Intervention Programs

Many research studies have supported the importance in developing programs to nurture and develop positive constructs in young people. In a meta-analysis of various program interventions with young people, Durlak and his colleagues (2007) found that the majority of the interventions focused efforts at the school, family, and community levels. They also determined that youth development intervention programs have more impact at the micro-level. Pittman and Richmond (2007) discovered that participation and having a sense of belonging in high school through academic and psychological

adjustment have spillover effects into college academia. The authors measured demographics, school belongingness, relationships with parents and friends, academic success, work orientation, self-worth, perceived scholastic competence, and problem behaviors. Descriptive statistics indicated a significant relationship between scholastic competence and self-worth when there was a positive orientation towards a sense of belonging.

Park (2009) noted the importance of recognizing character development in young people and moreover the importance of measuring character strengths through The Values in Action Inventory of Strengths for Youth (VIA) to assess for optimal development in youths ages 10-17. The survey which was made available online helped a young person identify their "signature strengths." Frequency measures indicated that positive outcomes of character strengths were strongly correlated with happiness, well-being, and fulfillment. "Strengths of character consistently related to life satisfaction are gratitude; hope, zest, curiosity, and most importantly love" (p. 44). These findings recognized the importance of helping young people develop good character through parenting and education.

Bobek, Zaff, Li, and Lerner (2009) recognized the importance influence a civic engagement program can have on adolescents. Participation at a young age can lead to beneficial engagements and participations in society. The sample for this study included 547 eighth grade students from 35 schools in 24 states who had participated in a 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development program. The author operationalized Civic

Identity/Civic Engagement (CICE) in a questionnaire and measured adolescents during four waves. Positive youth development of competence, confidence, character, connection, caring and contribution provided the basis for the CICE 48 item questionnaire. Factor analysis and regression analyses of this longitudinal study of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth development revealed a positive growth in five of the six constructs of civic engagement.

Stern, Powell, and Ardoin (2011) found positive correlations between environmental education and urban and non-urban students in northeastern Maryland. The sample for this research study included 7,000 students from Maryland schools of which 80% were African American and 79% were eligible for federal reduced lunch programs. Measures of the Environmental Responsibility Index and Character Development, Leadership Index and the Attitudes toward School Index were administered pre and post intervention. Confirmatory factor analysis showed a short term correlation with the students' experiences with the program and resonance of the program's goals which included environmental responsibility, character development and leadership, and attitudes toward school.

Texas Based Pre-college Intervention Programs

Many educators at the local, state and federal levels, local organizations and non-profit agencies have engaged in the development of programs that help under-served students develop college-readiness skills and preparation. Many of these underserved students and their families do not have access to pre-college preparation programs that

can enhance pursuit of higher academia after high school. As the population of Texas diversifies, there is a growing need to address the low number of students who are college-ready in Texas. Recognizing this disparity, the Texas Education Agency began efforts in attempts to ensure college readiness for students in the state of Texas. In December 2010, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board set out a strategic action plan report to Submitted to the 82nd Texas Legislature, Legislative Budget Board and Governor's Office to address the Texas college readiness issue (Texas Education Agency and Texas Higher Education Progress Report on P-16 College Readiness and Success Strategic Plan, 2010). Objectives included

1) Define standards and expectations for college readiness for the state that address what students must know and be able to do to succeed in entry-level college/university courses and the skilled workforce. 2) Align exit-level assessments of public education with entry-level expectations of higher education and the skilled workforce. 3) Infuse prekindergarten, elementary, middle, and high school curricula with appropriate rigor to academically prepare students, including those with special needs, for success in college/university courses and career pursuits. 4) Establish sound accountability measures for college readiness in public education and for persistence and timely graduation in higher education. 5) Create a college going culture in every public prekindergarten, elementary, middle and high school in Texas.

6) Prepare education professionals in public and higher education, from P through 16, to assist students, including those with special needs, in meeting college readiness and skilled workforce expectations and standards. 7) Coordinate college readiness and success plan objectives with strategies for persistence and timely graduation included in the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's. *Closing the Gaps Plan.* 8) Provide greater access to student academic preparation programs, including challenging advanced academic courses and programs, in all public high schools in Texas. (pp. 1-8).

Pre-college readiness programs that have recognized the gap in college readiness have set out to achieve the same goal of increasing college readiness to at-risk students in the state of Texas. This section will provide an overview of some pre-college programs locally that have set out to provide programs with the same goals. These programs offer a variety of interventions with purposes of one goal, to increase enrollment of high school students in higher academia.

The Texas GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is a federally funded program created to increase the high school college readiness in students from seventh grade through high school (Texas Gear up: Making college a dream and the dream a reality, September, 19, 2013). Designed to increase the Texas student's accessibility of college through training, awareness and accessibility, the GEAR UP program consists of four intervention strategy areas: information availability for students and their families, academic opportunities for

progress, quality training for educators and community and family help. GEAR UP also offers college readiness website which offers grade level appropriate materials, discussion guides for parents, fact sheets for students and parents, discussion and educational forums for parents regarding the college process as well as information on how to support their student. State conferences are also offered providing networking opportunity between state and local organizations, universities and businesses. College scholarships are also provided to low-income students

The Advancement via Individual Determination program (AVID), began in 1980 in San Diego, California. The program originated from the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) which used Comprehensive School Reform grants to address the inequalities in college access (U.S. Department of Education, September 19, 2013).

The Advancement via Individualized Determination (AVID) program has been in Texas for 15 years finding its beginnings in found 1997 and is the second largest AVID program in the United States. During the 2012-2103 the AVID program was implemented in over 880 and 126 school districts (Avid, Decades of College Dreams: Advancement Via Individual Determination Texas State Office, September 18, 2013). Advancement via Individualized Determination (AVID) is designed to equip high School students with the necessary skills to become successful and college ready. Students are taught habits and critical thinking skills that will help students succeed in college. Skills needed to succeed in college include the development of study habits such as "…organization and study habit, effective questioning and active learning,

class participation, and the ability to synthesize information" (Nelson, 2007, p. 73). Approaches used in class to develop these skills include tutoring from their peers, engagement in Socratic seminars and building confidence such as engaging in public speaking. Eleven essentials that guide the AVID program include selecting student who would benefit from AVID support, voluntary involvement by teachers and students, a district willing to engage the AVID model in their school district, a demanding curriculum, writing, reading, participation in AVID classrooms, accessibility to tutoring via peers or professional volunteers, tracking of student's progress and an active group of professionals overseeing the evolution of the program (CREATE: Center for Research, Evaluation, and Training in Education, the Magnificent Eight: AVID Best Practices Study Final Report, September 18, 2013).

In a study of Texas high schools in Texas conducted by Watt, Powell, Mediola and Cossio (2006) , the participation in AVID was linked with positive effects in underrepresented population of high school students. In a sample of 10 high schools using AVID within the same geographic region were compared with non-AVID participating schools. Comparison of reports revealed higher graduation percentages and advanced placement for students in the districts that participated in the AVID program.

In a study by Jones (2011) the effectiveness of a local college readiness program on educational achievement and attainment was examined. The Dallas Model (DM) is a program that is operated by a non-profit organization, Education Is Freedom (EIF). The author compared the treatment and control groups. The sample included high school

seniors from three campuses in the Dallas Independent School District. The intervention involved an open door policy relationship with a Higher Education Advisor (HEA) who had established a continuous counseling and mentoring relationship with the students since they were in 9th grade. Engagement and support via volunteering and tutoring by prior DM alumni, organizations, parents and community leaders. The program also included motivational speeches by the aforementioned as well as support in areas like fairs and tutoring services. A requirement included students' preservation of grade standards for continued participation and engagement in grade appropriate life skill courses followed by a Q & A. Ninth and tenth grade themes for the life skills included personal self-management, decision making, communication skills, drug resistance and conflict resolution. Eleventh graders were trained on visualization and prioritization. Twelfth graders were exposed to the college culture and received personal help from their HEA's on college application, financial aid, scholarship application and workshops on college essays and application proofreading. When compared with students of non-model schools, students outperformed their counterparts in math scores, grade point average, school attendance and graduation rates.

Achieve Texas is a program that is fabricated into the curriculum of Texas student from prekindergarten to high school designed to prepare students with information needed to make informed post-high school decisions about higher education and careers (http://www.achievetexas.org/). The program which is designed to help parents and their student the much need information about career education incorporate technical

education and experiential learning allowing the student to develop knowledge and application of that acquired career knowledge. This Texas education initiative is designed around sixteen federally defined career clusters that are actualized within the student's curriculum. The career clusters are focused around the five basic foundations of education areas of Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Cross-Disciplinary. The sixteen career clusters include: Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources Career Cluster, Architecture & Construction Career Cluster, Arts, A/V Technology & Communications Career Cluster, Business Management & Administration Career Cluster, Education & Training Career Cluster, Finance Career Cluster, Health Science Career Cluster, Hospitality & Tourism Career Cluster, Human Services Career Cluster, Information Technology Career Cluster, Law, Public, Corrections & Security Career Cluster, Marketing Career Cluster, Manufacturing Career Cluster, Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics Career Cluster, Transportation, and the Distribution, & Logistics Career Cluster. Texas educators have developed study areas surrounding these clusters.

There are many factors that can promote young people's motivation and self-efficacy for planning for life after high school. Through familiarity and appropriate guidance, adolescents can begin to use self-determination in choices for life after high school. Young people's self-efficacy can be shaped through a mindset that can be encouraged through goal-setting and proximity of those goals. In other words, if the one can implement strategies to aid in developing a sense of self-efficacy and familiarity to

higher education and the higher education process in a program, an adolescent is more likely to be more informed and feel more efficacious in making choices and planning.

Programs can develop a young person in many ways. Some programs are goal specific but do not achieve their objectives via the same routes. Research has shown that concise programs have concise goals such as the research on positive youth construct enhancement. Some programs that aim at developing certain specific knowledge such as college readiness have developed a variety of means to reach the same goals. Programs in the state of Texas have demonstrated that pre-college intervention programs do help young people acquire the information and develop the skills necessary to make qualities decision for life after high school.

Theory gives explanation on how adolescents accomplish goal setting and engage in programs that help develop college readiness. Cognitive factors, academic self-efficacy beliefs, self-efficacy achievement, goal setting and contextual factors help develop young peoples' skills and have been linked to academic motivation. These theoretical approaches explain what factors can be helpful in pre-college readiness programs as well as explain how change occurs in adolescents participating in these programs.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Christian Community Action (CCA), a non-profit outreach organization, has delivered assistance to impoverished families since 1973 in Lewisville, Texas. A more recent goal has focused on promoting the higher education of adolescent students. Christian Community Action received a foundation grant in 2010 to develop an extracurricular program to inform economically disadvantaged high school students and their parents about post high school academic options and college readiness.

The Connect to Success Academy is held the first Saturday of each month during the duration of the academy from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Connect to Success Academy is held at the North Central Texas College in Flower Mound, Texas. The Connect to Success Academy is a voluntary extracurricular program offered to the students who have been referred to the program.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the achievement motivation and career decision self-efficacy of students who are enrolled in the Connect to Success Academy 2013-2014 to determine whether changes occur over the duration of the program. Comparisons by gender were examined by exploring the differences for female and male students. In addition, the perceptions of the parents and students concerning the effectiveness of the program were examined.

Research Design

This study used a one group pre-post design with an intervention. It used convenience sampling with volunteers who agree to participate in the research and evaluation component of the program. Students' achievement motivation and career decision self-efficacy were assessed at the beginning and at the conclusion of the Connect for Success Academy program. In addition, parents were provide information related to parental involvement, college readiness, funding for college, and students' high school success.

Population

The population of eligible students included those enrolled in high school, grades 9-12, in the eight school districts located in the CCA service area. These school districts included Argyle, Coppell, Denton County portion schools in Carrollton-Farmers Branch, Frisco, Lake Dallas, Lewisville, Little Elm, and Northwest. Eligibility was determined by income and education status of the parents. Low income was generally assumed to meet the school district definitions for "economically disadvantaged." The percentages of economically disadvantaged students enrolled in these eight districts ranged from 9.7% to 52.98%. The average for the CCA service area was 23.41%. Eligible students lived in families where neither parent had earned a bachelor's degree. Therefore, the student population was considered "first generation college students." The estimated number of Connect to Success Academy for 2013-2014 was 125 students and their parents.

Sample

The sample for study were adolescents from ages 13-18 years old who applied and were accepted in the Connect to Success Academy for the 2013-2014 class. Participants for this study came from those students in the Academy who volunteered. Parents of the students provided demographic information describing background information of the students and families. In addition, parents and students responded to surveys concerning the effects of the program.

Research Setting

Connect to Success Academy

The Connect to Success Academy is a monthly intervention which will take approximately 9 months from commencement to graduation ceremony of the CCA Academy. The Connect to Success Academy was held the second Saturday of every month starting in October 12, 2013 and ending on June 14, 2014. The Connect to Success Academy was held at the North Central Texas College in Flower Mound, Texas. There were a total of nine days of course training for the students and parents held from 9 am-1 pm.

Goals of the Academy. The Academy provided opportunities for participants to succeed in high school, developed a plan for life after high school, and earn scholarship dollars toward higher education or vocational training. The academy consisted of several specific programs to meet these objectives.

Anticipated outcomes. The Connect to Success Academy supported students, grades 9-12, who were attending high school and preparing to enter college. Anticipated outcomes for the students in Connect Success Academy were the following: consistent attendance in course sessions, increased college and workforce readiness, promotion to their next grade level, enrollment in higher education upon high school graduation. Parents were expected to acquire skills to better support students' success in high school and college.

Research questions used to guide this study included:

RQ1: Is there a difference in academic achievement motivation of students as measured by the Achievement Motivation Profile, when comparing pretest and posttest scores?

RQ2: Is there a difference in the self-efficacy of students as measured by the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale when comparing pretest and posttest scores?

RQ3: Is there a difference in the Connect to Success Academy Parent Questionnaire domains when comparing pretest and posttest scores?

Rq4: Is there a difference in the Connect to Success Academy Student Questionnaire domains when comparing pretest and posttest scores?

Recruitment for the Academy. Recruitment for participants of the Academy included:

- Introductory letters that were mailed to all families meeting the requirements of the targeted population
- Recruitment by Christian Community Action caseworkers during their new client interviews with youths that met target criteria
- Advertisement flyers that were displayed in the most frequented areas of Christian Community Action headquarters at 200 South Mill Street location
- Emails which were sent to all counselors in the school districts in surrounding areas.

Letters were sent out to the families informing them of their acceptance to the academy and dates for the first day of the academy. Recruitment began at the beginning of the September 2013 and continued until the first day of the program began in October of 2013.

Recruitment for the research study. Recruitment for the research study occurred on the first day of the Connect to Success Academy which was held at the North Central Texas College campus in Flower mound, Texas. Connect to Success personnel administered the *Connect to Success Academy Parent Questionnaire* and *Connect to Success Student Questionnaire* in mid-September 2013 at the North Central Texas College. Volunteers met with parents and students to explain the research. Packets with consent and assent forms were passed to students and parents for signature permission to

participate in the study. Demographic Questionnaires were also passed out and filled out by parents and students. Pretests for students were administered to the students that agreed to participate in the research study. Research tools that were administered included the Achievement Motivation profile and the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale in January 2014. All administration of the research tools and collection of the consent forms and demographic questionnaires were held at the Connect to Success Academy which was held at the North Central Texas College in Flower Mound, Texas.

Program activities. The specific development activities that were used to reach these goals included tutoring, counseling, mentoring, cultural enrichment, and financial counseling services. Topics addressed in the academy were targeted to increase the students' knowledge of college preparation, career development, test taking strategies, preparation for the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), and career readiness.

The Connect to Success Academy sought out to reach these goals by providing the students with specific experiences used to increase their knowledge of the college readiness and the college choice process. The Connect to Success Academy placed the students in career clusters of their choice which engaged them in experiential activities. Career clusters included: computers and technology; law and government; communications; arts, entertainment, and fashion. Students also participated in "college tours" allowing the students opportunities for exposure to different campuses and academic life. Workshops for the students addressed subjects such as goal setting, career planning, development of interview skills, dressing for success, how to research colleges

and best careers. The Connect to Success also gave the business community opportunities to expose the Connect to Success participants to tours of local community businesses and workplaces through exposure to a variety of contexts of employment. Once enrolled in the Academy, students attended the courses that best fit their interests.

Intervention

Entities such as the Princeton Review, Avance and Christian Community Action volunteers, NCTC Staff, Independent School District Counselors offered a comprehensive training on the college process for students and the parents of the participating students. Students were trained in nine monthly sessions held on the second Saturday of the chosen dates. Along with this informative training, the Connect to Success Program granted scholarships to some of the high school seniors upon graduation. In order to graduate from the Academy and to become eligible for scholarship, students needed to fulfill all requirements. Requirements that students needed to fulfill included 100 hours total of educational development activities. Activities expected to be completed included:

- 36 hours of direct instructor led classes
- 36 hours of group activities (i.e. Career Clusters, Job Shadowing, College Tours)
- 28 hours of community service (students were encouraged to initiate community service projects or connect with existing ones)

Some courses were mandatory for all parents. Courses that were offered within the 2013-2014 Academy included:

- Demystifying the Post-Secondary Experience for 1st Generation Families
- A Parent's Role in Preventing School Drop-out
- Financial Aid and FAFSA
- Admission Process
- Financial Management
- Paying for College
- Engaging in My Child's School

Some courses were mandatory for all students. Courses that were offered within the 2013-2014 Academy included:

- Understanding the Benefits of Post-secondary Education
- SAT Boot Camp (Juniors and Seniors)
- PSAT Boot Camp (Freshman and Sophomores)
- Becoming College Ready
- Career Planning
- Resume Development for High School Youth
- Financial Management
- SAT Practice Exam (Juniors & Seniors)
- PSAT Practice Exam (Freshman & Sophomores)
- Seven Habits of Highly Successful Teens
- Writing Essays
- Critical Thinking
- Open Forum/ Colleges and Universities

Some courses were tailored and personalized to the educational and developmental needs of the student. Courses that were offered within the 2013-2014 Academy included:

- For the 9th graders-"Understanding High School"
- For 10th graders- "the College Path"
- For 11th graders- "The College Admission Process"
- For 12th graders- "Decision Time"

Protection of Human Subjects

Careful considerations were taken to ensure that all protocol was followed in accordance to the guidelines of the Texas Woman's University International Review Board (IRB). The researcher submitted an application for approval by the International Review Board (Appendix A). All attempts were made to ensure confidentiality and protection of all human subjects participating in this study. Persons privy to research data included the researcher's advisor, research assistants and the researcher. Volunteer participants were educated on the possible risks that may be encountered and given consent forms for the parents and assent forms for the students.

Instrumentation

A questionnaire provided demographics of the participants and 4 research were used to measure the effects of the intervention. The research tools: the Connect to Success Parent Questionnaire, the Connect to Success Student Questionnaire, the Achievement Motivation profile (Mandel, Friedland, & Marcus, 1996) and the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale (Taylor and Betz, 1983) were administered to comprehend the effects of the Connect to Success Academy. The pretest and posttest scores were entered into an SPSS, a software package used for statistical analysis and weighted to better understand the intervention and its possible effects.

Connect to Success Academy Parent Questionnaire

The Connect to Success Academy Parent Questionnaire (Booker, 2008) is a scale used to assess the parent's knowledge (Appendix D). The domains for the Connect to

Success Academy Parent Questionnaire include four domains: Parental Involvement, College Readiness Knowledge, Funding Knowledge and Educational Beliefs. Scoring for the Connect to Success Parent Questionnaire consisted of 19 questions for 4 domains with questions ranging from "not true at all" to "very true for me" on a 4-point scale.

Connect to Success Academy Student Questionnaire

The Connect to Success Academy Parent Questionnaire (Booker, 2008) is a scale used to assess the student's knowledge in various areas of knowledge (Appendix E). The domains for the Connect to Success Academy Student Questionnaire included four domains: Workforce Readiness, College Readiness, Funding Knowledge and High School Graduation beliefs. The Connect to Success Student Questionnaire contains 20 questions with a 4 point Likert Scale ranging from "not true at all" to "very true for me".

Achievement Motivation Profile (AMP)

The Achievement Motivation Profile (Mandel, Friedland, & Marcus, 1996) is a scale used to assess a student's levels of motivation. It is a 140 question profile with a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "always true" to "always false." The self-report measure contained brief, simply stated items appropriate for use by adolescents and young adults. The AMP provided scores in 5 domains that served as scales. The Response Style scale included the sub-areas Inconsistent Responding, Self-Enhancement, and Self-Critical. These sub-areas provide measure of validity by indicating a pattern of intentional faking. The Motivation for Achievement scale contained the sub-areas Achiever, Motivation, Competitiveness, and Goal Orientation. The Inner Resources scale contained the sub-

areas Relaxed Style, Happiness, Patience, and Self-Confidence. The Interpersonal Strengths included the sub-areas Assertiveness, Personal Diplomacy, Extroversion and Cooperativeness. The Work Habits scale included the sub-areas Planning and Organization, Initiative, and Team Player.

Mandel, Friedland and Marcus' (1996), Achievement Motivation Profile (AMP) is a hand scored instrument. The AMP used a scoring grid to determine certain scores via shaded areas on a scoring grid. Upon completion of the profile by the student, the scores then added for a total for each of the fifteen subareas for a total raw score for each subarea of the scales. The raw scores were then converted to T-scores and percentile ranks via a table and then placed in the corresponding columns for each of the scales. The authors of the AMP also provided insight into the student's interest into some traditional areas of interest through analysis of certain areas of answers. The total sum of the points of the answers to those questions were placed in the corresponding box areas for Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional career interest areas. The Inconsistent Responding (INC) scores were used to understand if the paired scores were inconsistent. After the items were located absolute values were determined via a scoring grid page and the difference was calculated. If the absolute value is greater than one then the scorer checks the box and considers this pair as inconsistent. T-scores and percentiles were then plotted according to the scores which were circled and then connected to the circled scores that corresponded to the raw scores that were matched to the scales. The authors reported evidence of construct validity through comparisons with

other instruments measuring similar constructs. Concurrent validity was determined by measures of outcomes such as GPA and teachers' ratings. Discriminant validity was reported following studies with students identified as underachievers and others who were gifted (Mandel, Friedland, & Marcus, 1996).

Reliability was reported by the authors as attained through test-retest methods, resulting in a correlation of 0.83. Internal consistency was reported as 0.75. These values indicated an acceptable range of reliability for the instrument (Mandel, Friedland, & Marcus, 1996).

Career Decision Self-efficacy Scale (CDSE)

Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale of Taylor and Betz (1983) is a scale used to assess a student's degree of confidence in the completion of tasks that are vital in making career decisions. It is a 50 item scale with a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "no confidence at all" to "complete confidence". Five subscales for this scale included Accurate Self-Appraisal, Gathering Occupational Information, Goal Selection, and Making Plans for the Future and Problem Solving.

This measure was consistently reliable with coefficients ranging from 0.86 to 0.89 for the five subscales aforementioned and 0.97 for the total measure. Prior measures of this scale also reported stability in test and retest of this measure. Researchers for this scale also demonstrated content validity through various prior research construct on this scales measurement of self-efficacy. Studies have indicated that the subscales and overall

short and long form can be used to identify areas of intervention focus and identifying vulnerable students.

Taylor and Betz (1983) reported widespread indications of content, concurrent and construct validity confirmed through previous research. The authors cited that in order to develop domains which address self-efficacy behavior, a well-established theory had to be used in establishing the five-structured scale. Scores were validated through various studies that used factor analysis to establish criterion through theoretical consistency as well as statistical methods of factor analysis.

Taylor and Betz (1983) indicated that various studies have not only provided strong evidence for construct validity. The authors also acknowledged the existence of a strong relationship of career decision self-efficacy with other variables in various studies. According to Taylor and Betz, a common variable that is most consistent with career decision self-efficacy career indecision include attitudes related to this construct. Other criterion-related variables that studies have shown a strong relationship with career self-efficacy include career exploratory behaviors, movement towards vocation, preferred and career goal selection. Some research has cited gender and ethnic differences within career self-efficacy decision. Other studies have found other background variables to career decision self-efficacy. Variables related to parental education, profession related to parents, scholastic aptitude tests relations, grade point average, age, career aspirations and grades were studied in relation to career decision self-efficacy. Some research has

demonstrated self-efficacy to have a spillover effects which in turn are generalizable to other areas such as math abilities.

Data Collection

The Achievement Motivation Profile and Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale were administered by the researcher and a research assistant after assent and consent forms were signed. Demographic questionnaires were handed out to the parents of the students who agreed to participate in the pre-intervention phase (Appendix B & Appendix C). The Achievement Motivation Profile (AMP) and the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale were administered to student participants on two occasions, before the intervention and three times after the intervention. The AMP and the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale were administered at the Connect to Success Academy which was held at the North Central Texas College.

Data Analysis and Findings

The results of the data analysis were analyzed quantifiably after the data was collected and then processed in response to the problems posed in chapter 1 of this dissertation. The goals of the researchers were to understand how a college readiness program affected high school participants by administering the Achievement Motivation Profile, the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale, The Connect to Success Parent Questionnaire and the Connect to Success Student Questionnaire. This was achieved through coding and analyzing through the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 19.0 for Windows.* Demographic information was reported using frequencies and percentages. Paired *t*-tests

were used with the Achievement Motivation Profile (AMP), the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale, the Connect to Success Parent Questionnaire, and the Connect to Success Student Questionnaire.

Table 1

Summary of Research Analysis

Research Questions	Instrument	Variables	Statistical Tests	Display
RQ1 Is there a difference in academic achievement motivation students as measured by the Achievement Motivation Profile, when comparing posttest and pretest scores?	Achievement Motivation Profile (AMP)	Posttest and pretest T-score means for 15 subscales	Paired *t*-tests	Tables and graphs
RQ2 Is there a difference in the self-efficacy of students as measured by the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale, when comparing posttest and pretest scores?	Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale (CDSE)	Posttest and pretest means for 5 subscales	Paired *t*-tests	Tables and graphs
RQ3 Is there a difference in the parents' beliefs, as measured by the Parent Connect to Success Academy Questionnaire when comparing posttest and pretest scores?	Connect to Success Academy Parent Questionnaire	Posttest and pretest means for 4 domains	Paired *t*-tests	Tables and graphs
RQ4 Is there a difference in the Student Connect to Success Academy Questionnaires when comparing posttest and pretest scores?	Connect to Success Academy Student Questionnaire	Posttest and pretest means for 4 domains	Paired *t*-tests	Tables and graphs

Summary

The goal of this research study was to study student career decision self-efficacy variables and achievement motivation in the Connect to Success Academy. The methodologies that were implemented have been outlined in this chapter. Description of the research design, research setting, instrumentation, data collection and analysis of the data were provided. Research issues regarding ethics have also been outlined. Ethical considerations included the preservation of confidentiality, consent and assent forms, and the protection of human participants.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the impacts of participation in the Connect to Success Academy (CSA) on student's achievement motivation and career decision self-efficacy. In addition, comparisons were calculated for possible differences between female and male students. This study also analyzed the posttest and pretest scores for the Connect to Success Academy Parent Questionnaire and the Connect to Success Academy Student Questionnaire. The description of the participants was followed by the findings related to the research questions.

Description of the Sample

Students

The Connect to Success Academy was offered to students from grades nine through twelve in nine public school districts and three private schools in North Texas. The Student Demographic Questionnaire queried students on demographic information such as grade level, age, ethnicity, and hours spent at work in child care, employment and dual credit earning participation (Appendix X) .The sample of 54 students included 7 ninth graders, 14 tenth graders, 15 eleventh graders, and 17 twelfth graders. One student did not report grade level. Ethnic backgrounds reported by the students included 16.7 % Asian American, 16.7 % Black or African American, 16.7 % White or Caucasian, 38.9 %

Hispanic or Latino, and 11.1% Other (Figure 1). "Other" ethnicities included Native American, Bi-racial, Caribbean, and East Asian.

Students' primary languages included 61.7% English, 6.4% Spanish, 25.5% both Spanish and English, and 6.4% other languages.

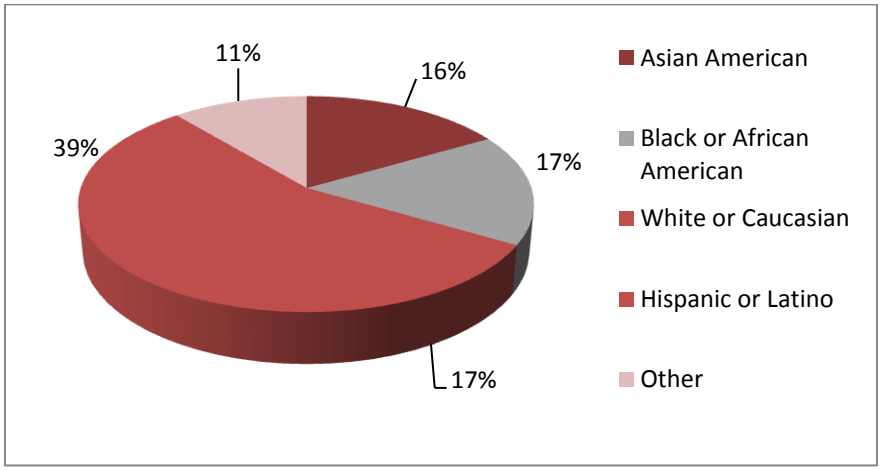

Figure 1. Ethnicity of students.

Students' ages ranged from 13-18 years old. The sample included 23 (42.6%) females and 31 (57.4%) males, displayed in Figure 2.

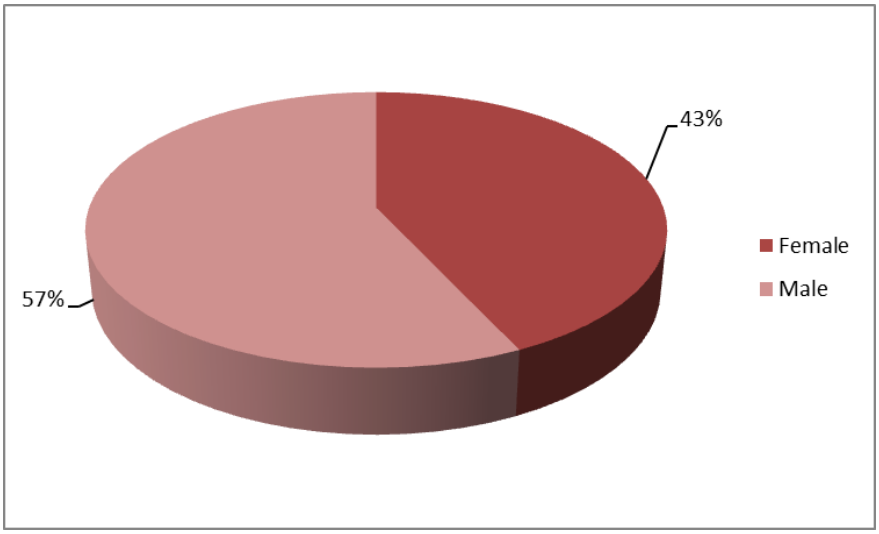

Figure 2. Genders of students.

Students were requested to provide information about home and work responsibilities. Responses from 44 students indicated that 13.6 % helped with a family business, while 25% were employed outside of their home or family. Students reported working from three to 25 hours per week, with a mean of 13.5 hours. In addition, 54.5% of the students helped care for younger children in the family. Replies from 44 students showed that 21 (47.7%) of students were enrolled in dual credit courses and 9 (20.5%) were enrolled in a Career Preparation Program in their high schools.

Parents

Demographic information provided in the Parent Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix X) included type of household, age, household income, ethnicity, home language, and education level. The surveys were completed by 40 mothers and 10 fathers. Ages of mothers ranged from under 25 to 65, with 92% in the categories from 36 to 55 years. Ages of fathers were similar, with 84.6% in the categories from 36-55 years.

Ethnicities reported by parents were predominantly Hispanic. The frequencies and percentages are displayed in the following table.

Table 2

Ethnicities of Parents

	Mothers (n = 50)		Fathers (n = 42)	
	f	%	*f*	%
Asian-American	2	4.0	2	4.8
African-American	11	22.0	7	16.7
Caucasian	10	20.0	10	23.8
Hispanic or Latino	24	48.0	21	50.0
Multi-ethnic	1	2.0	0	0.0
Other	2	4.0	2	4.8

Primary languages of the parents reflected less prevalence in English speaking than that reported by students. Table 2 displays the frequencies and percentages reported by parents.

Table 3

Primary Languages of Parents

	Mothers (n = 50)		Fathers (n = 40)	
Languages	*f*	%	*f*	%
English	26	52.0	19	47.5
Spanish	15	30.0	12	30.0
Both English and Spanish	6	12.0	6	15.0
Other	3	6.0	3	7.5

Types of household reported in the parents' demographic questionnaire included seven (14%) single parent households, 40 (80%) two-parent family households, and three (6.0%) extended family households. The educational attainment levels of the parents

varied from elementary school to graduate degrees. Table 3 displays the frequencies and percentages for mothers and fathers.

Table 4

Education Levels of Parents

	Mothers (n = 49)		Fathers (n = 40)	
Levels of Education	*f*	%	*f*	%
Elementary School	4	8.2	3	7.5
Some High School Courses	8	16.3	7	17.5
High School Diploma/GED	12	24.5	8	20.0
Some College	11	22.4	9	22.5
Associates Degree	1	2.0	2	5.0
Bachelor's Degree	9	18.4	3	7.5
Masters or Doctoral Degree	4	8.2	1	2.5

Fifty families reported household incomes, selecting categories that ranged from $0-$19,999 to $90,000 or more. Table 4 displays the frequencies and percentages for the various household incomes.

Table 5

Total Household Income

Household Income (n = 50)	*f*	%
$0-$19,999	9	22
$20,000-$39,999	9	64
$40,000-$69,000	16	176
$70,000-$89,000	10	168
$90,000 or more	6	194

Research Questions

The research study examined the impacts of the Connect to Success Academy program on student's achievement motivation and career decision self-efficacy. Differences between the pretest and posttest scores were used to determine any changes in students' attitudes and perceptions. Gender differences were compared at the post-test level.

Research Question One: Achievement Motivation Profile

Is there a difference in academic achievement motivation of students as measured by the Achievement Motivation Profile (Mandel, Friedland, & Marcus, 1996) when comparing pretest and posttest?

The Achievement Motivation Profile (AMP) was administered in the spring of 2014 and again in the summer at the conclusion of the program. The AMP measured attributes that influence students' motivation to achieve. Students responded by rating 140 items on a scale of 1-5, from "Always True" to "Always False." Reverse coding was calculated for items that were labeled "R" in the AMP manual by authors Mandel, Friedland, and Marcus (1996). Mean substitutions were used for ratings in missing items.

The AMP was composed of four scales, each with three or four subscales. The Motivation for Achievement Scale included subscales identified as Achiever, Motivation, Competitiveness, and Goal Orientation. The Achiever subscale reflected the level of beliefs the student had about their ability to achieve academically. The Achiever subscale contained questions such as "When I take on new responsibilities, I follow through and

complete them" (Mandel, Friedland, & Marcus, 1996, p. 20). This subscale was correlated with academic achievement.

The Motivation subscale contained 11 items that reflected a student's need to achieve. Factors that may have influenced motivation were incorporated in the items such as routine, drive, determination and positivity.

The Competitiveness subscale reflected the level of the student's need to be contend with others and achieve higher than others. Students who score high on this 15 item scale reflect tend to attain higher levels of accomplishments whereas students that reflect lower on this item do not.

The Goal Orientation subscale demonstrated the student's sense of direction and goals. Students in this subscale have an understanding of their life objective. Items in this category included items such as "I am 'right on course' in attaining my career goals" (Mandel, Friedland, & Marcus, 1996, p. 21).

The Inner Resource Scale included subscales identified as Relaxed Style, Happiness, Patience, and Self-confidence. This Scale possessed subscales that described inner assets a student may utilize to overcome obstacles to achievement.

The Relaxed subscale contained 12 items subscale that measured a student's perception of their ability to remain calm and tranquil. Students who rated neither too high nor too low demonstrated a student who was able to gauge his skills in relaxation. Questions in this subscale include "I get so nervous I can hardly function" (Mandel, Friedland, & Marcus, 1996, p. 21).

The Happiness scale reflected a student's perception of happiness or sadness. Moderate scores on these scales reflected a balanced individual and scales at the high level or low level reflected an exaggerated level of happiness.

The 13-item Patience subscale reflected a student's perception of their ability to patiently persist in obtaining a goal. Student's high in this category also possessed forethought on consequences for their actions and tenacity when confronted with difficult tasks.

The Self-Confidence subscale measured the perceived amount of self-confidence of the student. Scores on this subscale can be affected by situational factors which can falsely inflate or deflate a student's perception security. An example of an item in this category include items such as "I worry about what I am going to do with the rest of my life" (Mandel, Friedland, & Marcus, 1996, p. 21).

The Interpersonal Strengths Scale included subscales identified as Assertiveness, Personal Diplomacy, Extroversion, and Cooperativeness. The student's qualities that affect their interfaces in school and the in general are reflected in these various scales.

The Assertiveness subscale contained items which measured a student's perception of their confidence in a social context. There were eight items in this category. A score in the moderate range of assertiveness indicated an optimal level of confidence. Assertiveness levels too high or too low on this subscale indicated difficulties in flexibility or not enough levels of decisiveness which may be

disadvantageous. The Assertiveness scale identified the student's perceived level of confidence in their decisiveness.

Personal Diplomacy subscale contained 14 items that measure the student's ability to act diplomatic and conciliatory in interpersonal encounters. The social strategies and skill a student uses when dealing with others are included in this subscale. Too high or too low of a score in this category indicated difficulties in the student's adeptness in social exchange with others.

The Extroversion subscale measured a student's level of congeniality with others on a 10 item scale. Student who scored high in this item tended to demonstrate an outward interest towards external objects and situations while students who score inward tend to be satisfied with their own considerations. Others may perceive students in the high scoring range as personable while perceiving students in the low range as introverted or unsociable. An example of an item in this category is "I work well with others" (Mandel, Friedland, & Marcus, 1996, p. 21). Optimal scores for this category were in the moderate range.

The Cooperativeness scale contained measures of the student's ability to work collaboratively with others. The 10 items in this level measured an optimal score in the moderate range. Scores excessively high may demonstrate a student's inability to find additional avenues when working in partnership with others. Low scores in this category indicated a resistant student.

The Work Habits Scale included subscales identified as Planning and Organization, Initiative, and Team Player. The student's qualities that affect their success are included in the subscales.

The Planning and Organization is an 8 item measure which reflected a student's prudence, determination and diligence in completing tasks. Students who scored high in this category were related to academic achievement. Scores on the polar extremes of this category reflected a rigid work habit style or a person with low levels of determination in work habits.

The Initiative subscale contained 14 items which measured the student's drive to complete tasks in a variety of situations. Students in this category reflected a dynamism and leadership in taking initiative and action. Scores on the high range of this category indicated a student who is extreme in their sense of duty to completing a task and students in the low range indicated a student who is indifferent in completing tasks.

The Team Player subscale contained 10 items which reflected a student's perceptions of their abilities to collaborate with others efficiently as a group. Students who scored high in this subscale demonstrated competence in working with others and students scoring low in this scale demonstrated a deficiency in collaborative efforts. An example of an item in this category was "I trust others" (Mandel, Friedland, & Marcus, 1996, p. 22).

Internal consistency reliability coefficients for the posttest sample results were calculated for each subscale. The standardized Cronbach alpha values are presented in

the table, ranging from a low of 0.06 to a high of 0.85. The results differed considerably from the values reported by the authors, with only three of the subscales demonstrating reliability values above 0.70.

Table 6

Reliability Values for AMP Subscales

	Number of Items	Alpha
Motivation for Achievement		
Achiever	13	0.37
Motivation	11	0.09
Competitiveness	15	0.03
Goal Orientation	7	0.25
Inner Resources		
Relaxed Style	12	0.28
Happiness	9	-0.81
Patience	12	0.85
Self-Confidence	11	0.57
Interpersonal Strengths		
Assertiveness	8	0.26
Personal Diplomacy	14	0.28
Extroversion	10	-0.18
Cooperativeness	10	0.64
Work Habits		
Planning & Organization	7	0.06
Initiative	14	0.63
Team Player	10	0.79

All subscales were calculated by adding the items in each subscale to determine the raw scores. These raw subscale scores were converted to T-scores based on the table provided on the AMP Profile Form (Friedland, Marcus, & Mandel, 1996). T-scores range from 20 to 80 with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10.

Paired *t*-tests were conducted to analyze the differences between posttest and pretest scores for each of the AMP subscales. While 54 students participated in the

Connect to Success Academy, matching pretest and posttest AMP scores were available for only 24 students. In the Inner Resources Scale, students scored significantly higher on the posttest in the Relaxed Style and Self-Confidence subscales. In the Interpersonal Strengths Scale, students' scores were significantly higher on the Extroversion subscale. In the Work Habits Scale, students demonstrated significant gains on the Team Player subscale. On the other hand, in the Motivation for Achievement, students' posttest scores in Achiever, Competitiveness, and Goal Orientation were significantly lower than pretest scores. The Personal Diplomacy subscale in the Interpersonal Strengths Scale also revealed a significant decline. The results are displayed in Table 7.

Table 7

AMP Subscales Compared By Posttest and Pretest Scores

	Post		Pre				
Scales & Subscales	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
Motivation for Achievement							
Achiever	29.9	9.40	48.0	7.11	-6.58	23	0.000***
Motivation	37.5	10.46	40.7	7.02	-1.32	23	0.20
Competitiveness	27.7	7.58	43.8	7.75	-6.61	23	0.000***
Goal Orientation	33.9	8.70	48.4	8.91	-5.44	23	0.000***
Inner Resources							
Relaxed Style	45.3	7.43	37.9	7.63	3.33	23	0.003**
Happiness	40.9	3.48	41.5	3.12	-0.80	23	0.43
Patience	55.4	14.17	56.2	13.98	-0.38	23	0.71
Self-Confidence	45.8	6.10	40.7	6.50	3.13	23	0.005**
Interpersonal Strengths							
Assertiveness	43.0	9.38	45.9	7.49	-1.51	23	0.15
Personal Diplomacy	34.5	11.81	42.2	9.27	-3.18	23	0.004**
Extroversion	42.5	5.82	30.6	5.21	6.23	23	0.000***
Cooperativeness	53.7	11.54	53.9	13.58	-0.09	23	0.93
Work Habits							
Planning & Organization	35.0	7.10	33.5	6.81	1.16	23	0.26
Initiative	28.4	7.94	28.7	6.26	-0.20	23	0.85
Team Player	46.2	11.02	23.8	5.57	7.35	23	0.000***

Note: $^{**}p \leq 0.01$, $^{***}p \leq 0.001$

The following figures display the means for the posttest and pretest AMP Scales. The T-scores generally fall below the mean of 50 in comparison to the normed population reported by the authors of the instrument.

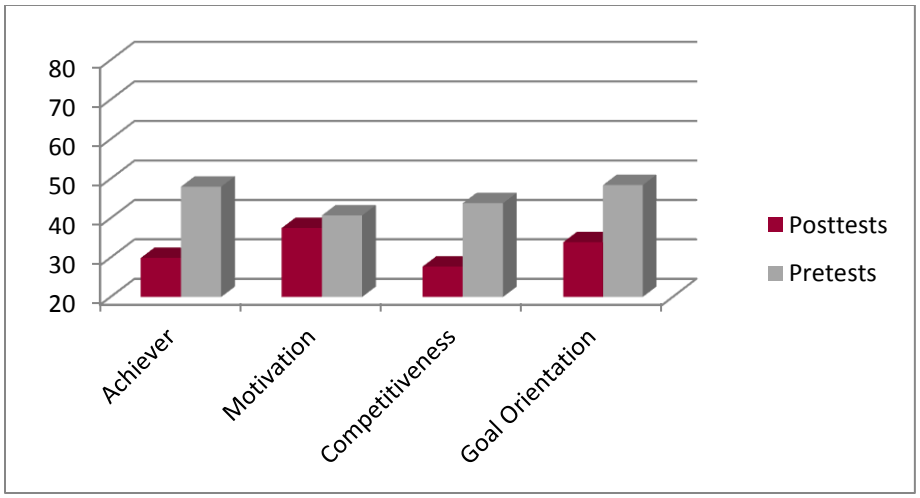

Figure 3. Motivation for achievement subscales.

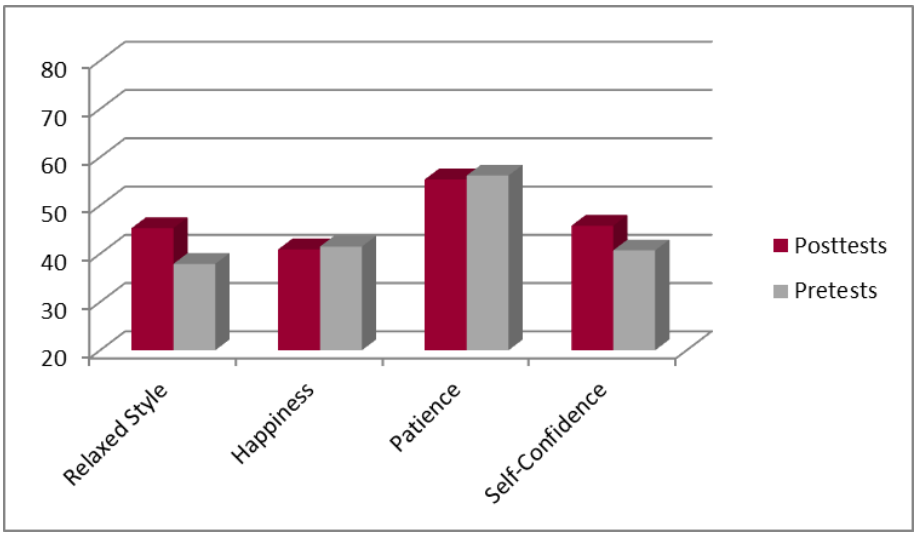

Figure 4. Inner resources subscales.

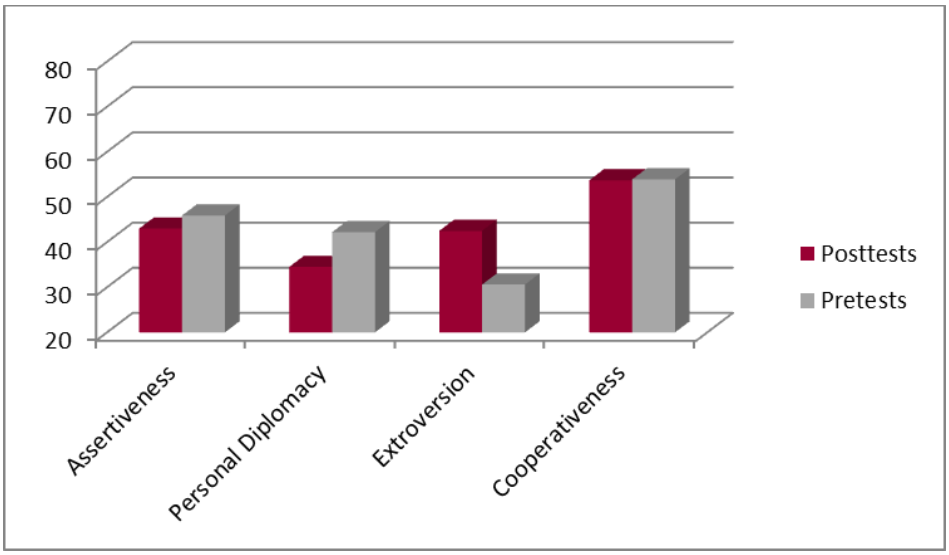

Figure 5. Interpersonal strengths subscales.

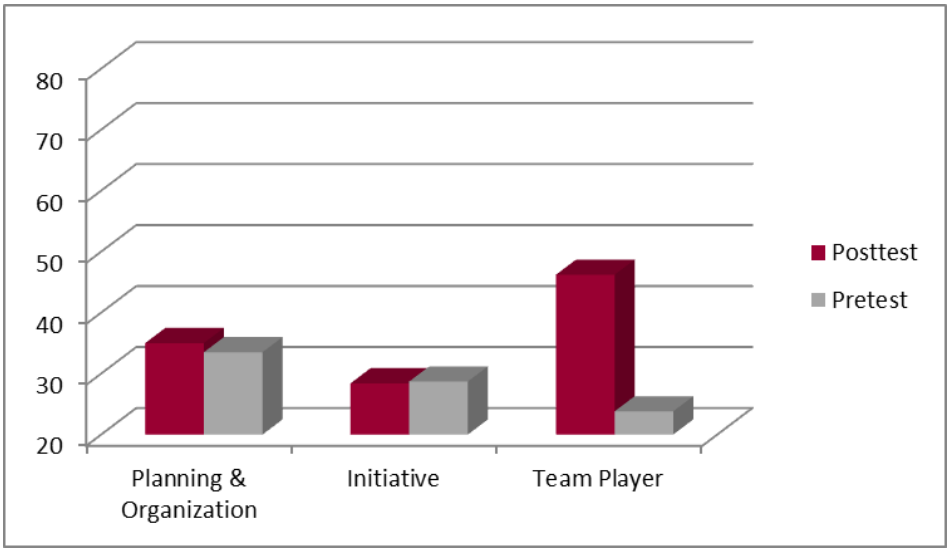

Figure 6. Work habits subscales.

Independent *t*-tests were calculated to determine whether females and males responded to the AMP Scales differently on the posttest scores. The sample included results for 37 students. No significant differences were found and there were no

consistent patterns by gender. Means and standard deviations are displayed with the *t* values, degrees of freedom, and probabilities.

Table 8

Comparisons of T-Scores for AMP Subscales by Gender

	Females (n = 16)		Males (n = 21)				
Scales & Subscales	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
Motivation for Achievement							
Achiever	29.3	8.08	33.5	10.66	-1.30	35	0.20
Motivation	38.3	7.34	37.6	10.75	0.20	35	0.84
Competitiveness	26.8	5.64	30.3	11.40	-1.13	35	0.27
Goal Orientation	33.7	9.15	36.4	9.78	-0.85	35	0.40
Inner Resources							
Relaxed Style	45.8	6.69	45.5	6.53	0.15	35	0.88
Happiness	40.9	4.40	41.9	3.11	-0.84	35	0.41
Patience	55.2	13.13	56.2	13.53	-0.23	35	0.82
Self-Confidence	46.4	7.27	46.3	8.65	0.06	35	0.96
Interpersonal Strengths							
Assertiveness	44.4	10.01	41.8	8.88	0.82	35	0.42
Personal Diplomacy	34.9	13.76	35.0	9.18	-0.05	35	0.96
Extroversion	42.6	4.49	40.9	6.18	0.94	35	0.35
Cooperativeness	56.1	10.63	51.3	11.05	1.34	35	0.19
Work Habits							
Planning & Organization	34.4	6.79	36.8	9.68	-0.84	35	0.40
Initiative	27.2	5.88	31.1	11.99	-1.20	35	0.24
Team Player	45.7	12.62	43.2	9.89	0.66	35	0.51

Research Question Two: Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale

Is there a difference in the self-efficacy of students as measured by the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale (Taylor & Betz, 1983), when comparing pretest and posttest scores?

The Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale (CDSE) is a 50 item instrument that measures the students' confidence levels on a rating scale of 1-5 in their capacity to complete tasks in making career decisions. The ratings ranged from "No Confidence at All" to "Complete Confidence." The instrument was administered in the spring of 2014 and again in the summer, resulting in pretest and posttest scores.

The subscales include Self-Appraisal, Occupational Information, Goal Selection, Planning, and Problem-Solving. The Self-Appraisal subscale measured students' assessment of their abilities for career areas. Items in this subscale included questions such as "Decide what you value most in an occupation" (Taylor & Betz, 1983, p. 34).

The Occupational Information subscale measures the beliefs about the student's aptitudes in understanding information related to careers. Items in this subscale included question such as "Describe the job duties of the career/occupation you would like to pursue (Taylor & Betz, 1983, p. 34).

Subscale scores were calculated by adding the ratings and dividing by the number of items in each scale which provided mean scores on the 1-5 scale. Higher scores indicated higher levels of confidence and lower scores indicated lower levels of confidence.

Reliability estimates were calculated on the posttest scores to determine Cronbach alpha values for the CDSE subscales. The results for the Connect to Success Academy sample of students compared favorably with the values reported by the authors.

Table 9

Reliability Values for CDSE Subscales

Subscales	Number of Items	Alpha
Self-Appraisal	9	0.77
Occupational Information	10	0.87
Goal Selection	10	0.82
Planning	10	0.87
Problem Solving	10	0.80

The research question was addressed by conducting paired *t*-tests to compare the posttest scores with the pretest scores for each of the CDSE subscales. Matching scores were available for 24 of the 54 students. The posttest scores were higher than the pretest scores for every subscale of the CDSE, indicating reports of higher confidence. The gains were significant in the Planning subscale. The results are displayed in Table 10 and in Figure 7.

Table 10

CDSE Subscale Scores by Posttest and Pretest

	Posttest		Pretest				
Scales & Subscales	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
Self-Appraisal	4.1	0.74	3.9	0.67	1.33	23	0.20
Occupational Information	4.0	0.60	3.8	0.72	1.38	23	0.18
Goal Selection	4.0	0.65	3.6	0.70	1.33	23	0.20
Planning	3.9	0.67	3.5	0.68	2.40	23	0.03*
Problem Solving	3.6	0.61	3.5	0.68	1.23	23	0.23

Note: $*p \leq 0.05$

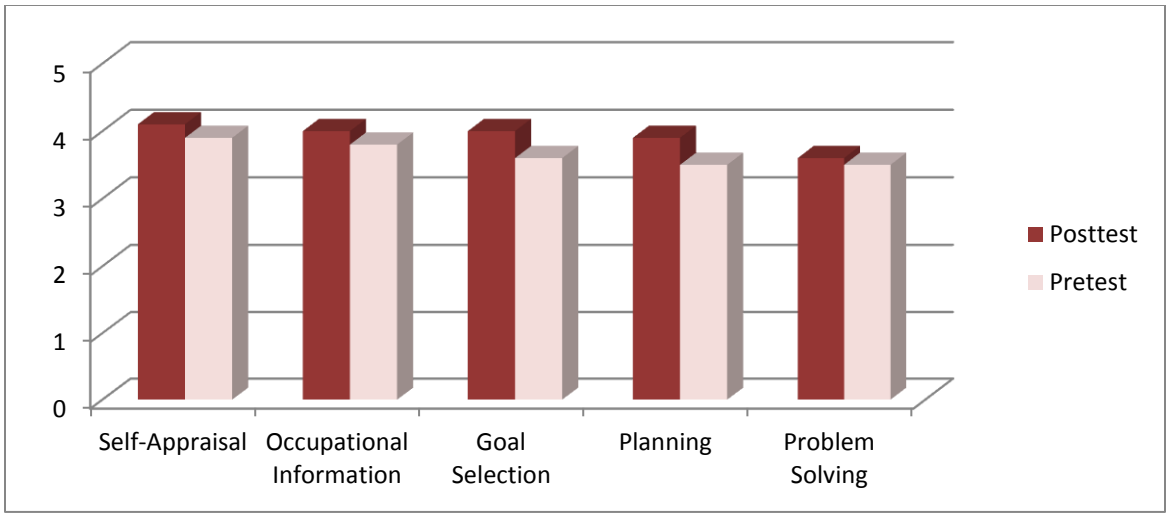

Figure 7. CDSE subscale mean scores.

The posttest means and standard deviations of the CDSE scores for the five subscales were compared by female and male students. The mean scores for the 16 females were consistently higher than the 21 males, with a significant difference in the Problem Solving subscale. Table 11 displays the results of the independent *t*-tests.

Table 11

Comparisons of CDSE Posttest Scores by Gender

	Female (n = 16)		Male (n = 21)				
Scales	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
Self-Appraisal	4.0	0.62	4.0	0.71	0.33	35	0.74
Occupational Information	3.9	0.71	3.8	0.60	0.55	35	0.59
Goal Selection	4.1	0.59	3.8	0.54	1.70	35	0.09
Planning	3.9	0.71	3.8	0.51	0.83	35	0.41
Problem Solving	3.9	0.70	3.4	0.41	2.86	35	0.007**

Note: **$p \leq 0.05$

Research Question Three: Connect to Success Academy Parent Questionnaire

Is there a difference in the Connect to Success Academy Parent Questionnaire domains when comparing pretest and posttest scores?

The Connect to Success Academy Parent Questionnaire was administered to the parents of the students in the spring of 2014 and again in the summer. The Connect to Success Academy Questionnaire measured parents' beliefs by rating 19 items on a 1 to 4 scale, from "Not true at all" to "Very true for me." Domains included Parental Involvement, College Readiness Knowledge, Funding Knowledge, and Educational Beliefs. A sample of the questionnaire is included in Appendix D.

Reliability for the CSA Parent Questionnaire posttest was determined using inter-item correlations for the 18 items. The Cronbach alpha value was 0.88, indicating an acceptable level of reliability for the questionnaire.

Pretest surveys were available from 12 parents while 40 parents responded to the posttest questionnaire. Table 12 displays the means and standard deviations for the parent sample.

Table 12

Connect to Success Academy Parent Questionnaire Means and Standard Deviations

CSA Subscales	Posttest			Pretests		
	n	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Parental Involvement	40	3.1	0.69	12	3.3	0.78
College Readiness Knowledge	40	3.4	0.50	12	3.4	0.49
Funding Knowledge	40	2.5	0.81	12	2.6	0.95
Educational Beliefs	39	3.9	0.24	11	3.5	0.34

A paired *t*-test compared the posttest scores with the pretests for a limited number of parents with matching questionnaires. A significant increase was found in the domain measuring Educational Beliefs about their children's success in high school. The results are displayed in the table below.

Table 13

Connect to Success Parent Questionnaire by Posttest and Pretest

	Posttests		Pretests				
Domains	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
Parental Involvement	3.1	0.59	3.2	0.88	-0.14	8	0.89
College Readiness Knowledge	3.6	0.37	3.4	0.38	0.59	8	0.57
Funding Knowledge	2.2	0.71	2.7	0.91	-1.46	8	0.18
Educational Beliefs	3.9	0.19	3.5	0.40	3.47	7	0.01**

Note: $^{**}p \leq 0.01$

Research Question Four: Connect to Success Academy Student Questionnaire

Is there a difference in the Connect to Success Academy Student Questionnaire domains when comparing posttest and pretest scores?

Students completed the Connect to Success Academy Student Questionnaire in the spring of 2014 and again in the summer. Student's beliefs were measured in four different domains on a scale of 1 to 4, from "Not true at all" to "Very true for me." The student questionnaire was composed of 20 items in the following domains: Workforce Readiness, College Readiness, Funding, and High School Graduation. Appendix E contains a sample of the CSA Student Questionnaire.

Reliability for the sample of 30 students was computed using inter-item correlations for the posttest data. The Cronbach alpha value was 0.91 for the 20-item questionnaire, indicating an acceptable level.

Pretests were available for 23 students, while 30 students responded to the posttest questionnaire. Table 14 displays the means and standard deviations for the CSA Student Questionnaire.

Table 14

Means and Standard Deviations for Connect to Success Student Questionnaire

CSA Subscales	Posttests			Pretests		
	n	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Workforce Readiness	30	2.96	0.89	23	3.26	0.62
College Readiness	30	3.63	0.49	23	3.82	.387
Funding Knowledge	30	2.93	0.87	23	3.17	.716
High School Graduation	30	3.13	0.77	23	3.60	0.58

Comparisons between posttest and pretest scores were calculated using paired *t*-tests with matching scores for only nine to eleven students. Results indicated that students' beliefs about High School Graduation were consistently positive for this sample. There were no significant changes in any of the domains.

Table 15

Connect to Success Student Questionnaire by Posttest and Pretest

	Posttests		Pretests				
Domains	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
Workforce Readiness	3.2	0.56	3.4	0.42	-0.72	11	0.49
College Readiness	3.5	0.40	3.6	0.31	-0.66	11	0.53
Funding Knowledge	2.7	0.74	3.0	0.63	-1.08	9	0.31
High School Graduation	3.7	0.27	3.8	0.28	-0.63	9	0.55

Summary

A description of participants in this chapter included students and parents. The sample of 54 student participants included high school students from nine public districts and three private schools in the Dallas area. Demographic data for students and parents were collected from the *Student Demographic Questionnaire* (Booker, 2008) and *Parent Demographic Questionnaires* (Booker, 2008). The impact of the Connect to Success Academy on student's motivation achievement and career decision were measured via the Achievement Motivation Profile (Mandel, Friedland, & Marcus, 1996) and the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale (Taylor & Betz, 1983). These instruments were used to measure the student's attributes that influenced their motivation to achieve and the student's confidence in completing task in making career decisions.

Major scales included in the 140 item Achievement Motivation Profile (Mandel, Friedland, & Marcus, 1996) included the Response Style, Motivation for Achievement, Inner Resources, Interpersonal Strengths and Work Habits scale. Major scales included

in 40 item the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale (Taylor & Betz, 1983) included the Self-Appraisal, Occupational Information, Goal Selection, Planning, and Problem Solving scale. Reliabilities were reported on the various scales. Comparisons between pretest and posttest using paired t-tests were used to address the research questions and comparisons by gender using independent t-tests were conducted.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Higher education and access to higher education has been a prevalent topic of address among many professionals in the education field. The disparities and lack of access to higher education has also been a topic of conversation. Some studies have highlighted these inequalities and acknowledged the under-representation of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds in higher education (Cabrera & LaNasa, 2000; Cooper, 2002; McLoyd, 1998; Perna, 2002; Renick, 2006; White, 1982). The lack of resources in impoverished communities has resulted in negative dynamics among this population such as lack of resources for academic success and slower academic progress (Aikens & Barbarin; Hillemeir and colleagues, 2009; Renick, 2006). Much research has focused on the need for intervention programs for students in impoverished communities (Durlak et. al, 2007). Some programs have produced positive outcomes for students (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008; Marques, Pais-Ribeiro & Lopez, 2011; Ross and Broh, 2000). Therefore, this current study investigated the effects of an extracurricular program on students' achievement motivation and career decision self-efficacy. Bandura's self-efficacy theory and Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological Systems theory were used to frame this study. A summary of the study, discussion of the findings, conclusions, and limitations of the research will be discussed. Future considerations and implications of the research study will be included.

Overview of Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate achievement motivation and career decision self-efficacy in high school students from grades nine through twelve who participated in the Connect to Success Academy in North Central Texas. The intervention was delivered as an extracurricular series of courses over nine months for students and parents. The Saturday sessions focused on preparation for college, including topics such as financial aid, career planning, and SAT practice. In addition, students participated in community service activities.

The data for this study were drawn from 54 high school students enrolled in the Connect to Success Academy during the 2013-2014 year. The students' assessments included the *Achievement Motivation Profile* (Mandel, Friedland and Marcus, 1996) and the *Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale* (Taylor and Betz, 1983). Beliefs of the parents and students were collected using the *Connect to Success Academy Parent Questionnaire* (Booker, 2008) and the *Connect to Success Academy Student Questionnaire* (Booker, 2008). The description of the sample of parents was collected via the *Parental Demographic Questionnaires* and the description of the sample of students was collected via the *Student Demographic Questionnaires.*

Discussion of Findings

Research Question One

Is there a difference in academic achievement motivation of students as measured by the Achievement Motivation Profile, when comparing pretest and posttest scores?

This study found that there were significant gains in the students' levels of motivation when the pretest mean scores of Relaxed Style, Self-Confidence, Extroversion, and Team Player subscales were compared to the posttest mean scores. On the other hand, the post test scores on the Achiever, Competitiveness, Goal Orientation and Personal Diplomacy subscales were significantly lower than the pretest scores. There were no significant differences for the remainder of the subscales. No significant differences were found when comparing the AMP subscales by gender. This study found that students relied more on their Inner Resources for motivation. Also important to note are the students' increased scores on their reactions with their environment as measured through the Extroversion subscale and their perceptions of collaboration with others as measured by the Team Player subscale.

Results of this study indicated an increase in Self-Confidence subscale and Relaxed Style subscale increased after participating in the Connect to Success Academy. When students engaged in the Academy, the student's perceived level of confidence in their abilities increased and their tension decreased. Bandura and Cervone (1983) ascertained that increased belief systems about one's abilities are aided by cognitive

engagement. When students received course training in the Connect to Success Academy, a student's perceptions about their abilities to accomplish tasks increased.

A second study also revealed similar results linking familiarity with the development of self-efficacy and motivation. Schunk (1995) found correlations between familiarity and exposure via experiences to increased motivation and self-efficacy. Measures of Self-Confidence and Extroversion increased after participation in the Connect to Success Academy. When students became exposed to information about college processes, their acquired skills positively influenced their level of perception of their abilities. Students' levels of interactions with the environment also increased suggesting same evidences that familiarity leads to student's engagement in activities which in turn can lead to personal goal setting (Schunk & Pajares, 2001).

Several studies have revealed the importance of goal setting for the cultivation of self-efficacy and motivation (Bandura & Cervone, 1983; Schunk & Pajares, 2001; Zimmerman, Bandura, and Martinez Pons, 1992). When students engaged in the Connect to Success Academy, familiarity, perceptions and goal setting increased, creating an increased sense of adeptness in finding solutions to tasks that may have been perceived as difficult. Students experience in the Connect to Success Academy positively increased the student's perceptions of their aptitudes resulting in increased confidence about their abilities to reach their goals. Measures on the Self-Confidence subscale increased from pretest to posttest after students were exposed to college process experiences through the

Academy. Student's Academy experience led to a perceived confidence in motivation and attitudes towards college.

Levels of Planning and Organization increased for students exposed to the Academy. Students' perceptions of their abilities to plan for the future and application of those efforts increased after they were exposed to the Academy. Bandura (2001) and Schunk (1989) found that development of self-efficacy occurs in a contextual environment. Repeated experiential training and exposure occurs in settings where the targeted strategy is taught regardless of the difficulty. Student's strategies and organization increased when exposed to the college process in the Connect to Success Academy.

This research study found significant positive measures on the Team Player subscale after participation in the Connect to Success Academy. Sense of cooperation in students increased indicating an increased sense of collaboration when working with others. Bobek, Zaff, Li, and Lerner (2009) found that a sense of empathy and connection and civic engagement also increased after participating in the Positive Youth Development Program. Similarly, Pittman and Richmond (2007) found an increased sense of belonging and willingness to engage in the college process when they participated in high school intervention program. Participation in programs created a collaborative work orientation and self- worth that inspired a spirit of unity with others in a common college seeking endeavors. Students were more likely to develop a sense of connection with others after participating in programs.

Research Question Two

Is there a difference in the self-efficacy of students as measured by the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale, when comparing pretest and posttest scores?

This study found significant differences on the Planning Subscale of the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale (Taylor & Betz, 1983). This indicated a significant gain in confidence related to career planning. While no significant differences were found in Self-Appraisal, Occupational Information, Goal Selection, and Problem Solving, all subscale means increased. Students reported higher levels of confidence in the completion of tasks when making decisions about strategies, intentions, and methods when making decisions about their future careers. Gender comparison revealed that females scored higher than males in Problem Solving.

Schunk (1995) ascertained a correlation between a young person's self-perception of competency and self-efficacy. Students who participated in the Connect to Success Academy increased in all areas of the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale demonstrating an increase in their feeling of their capabilities after exposure. Pajares and Schunk (2002) also found a correlation between self-efficacy and an individual's abilities to complete their tasks.

The Self-appraisal subscale increased for Students in the Connect to Success Academy. Bandura and Cerovne (1983) and Eccles, Wigfield, Schiefele (1998) found similar findings linking self-regulation and judgments to positive outcomes. The likelihood of a student's goal attainment occurred when there was a familiarity through

approximation of goals. Student's observations and understanding of their own performance contributed to their sense of self-efficacy and motivation. When students become acquainted with constructs that helped them achieve their goals, their sense of personal abilities in attaining those goals increased due to their increased confidence

Occupational Information subscales increased from pretest to posttest for students in the Connect to Success Academy. This study correlated with Stern, Powel, and Ardoin's (2011) findings where students exposed to a program on environmental education resulted in increased levels of knowledge on environmental responsibility. Programs where students are exposed to information correlate with their acquisition of that knowledge.

This study demonstrated increased measures of the Planning subscales. Students who participated in Academy intervention, increased in their task orientation for planning for Career acquisition. Schunk (1989) found students acquired a level of confidence in their abilities when trained. Students in the Connect to Success Academy were trained in dynamics that allowed for a deeper understanding of careers and courses that gave students and their families the information needed to plan for college.

Increased Measures of the Problem Solving subscale on the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale indicated that a student's acquisition of experience showed an increase of goal setting, finding solutions in reaching those goals and confidence in reaching those goals. After participating in the Connect to Success Academy, students' measures of confidence increased. Similarly, Schunk's (1983) postulated a correlation in gained

confidence once knowledge was acquired and tasks perceived as achievable after experiential exposure.

Perna and Swail (2001) also recognized the influence college readiness programs have on all the levels of an adolescents' life when they reach higher levels of educations. Economic systems, governments, communities, business organizations, schools and family are impacted by students and their choices.

Research Question Three

Is there a difference in the Connect to Success Academy Parent Questionnaire domains when comparing pretest and posttest scores?

This study found significant increases from pretest to posttest in the Educational Beliefs category for parents. This indicated that parents developed stronger expectations of their student's success in high school and pursuit of higher education. Statements like "I am confident that I can guide my child's high school success" and "I believe college is an option for my child" are included in this domain.

No significant gains were reported for Parental Involvement, College Readiness Knowledge, or Funding Knowledge domains. The Connect to Success Academy parents had lower expectation in their abilities to make decisions about their child's future, knowledge about the college process and insight on funding opportunities for their student's post-high school success. Questions such as "As a parent I take an active role in education of my child", "I can help my child make an informed decision about

college" and "I feel confident in seeking financial aid opportunities" are included in these domains.

Research Question Four

Is there a different in the Connect to Success Academy Student Questionnaire domains when comparing pretest and posttest scores?

This study revealed there no significant changes from pretest to posttest for the CSA Student Questionnaire. Students remained consistently positive in their ratings of the domains including Workforce Readiness, College Readiness, Funding Knowledge, and High School Graduation. In the Workforce Readiness domain, students remained steadfast in their beliefs about their options and decisions about their future as indicated in the item "I feel like opportunities are available to help me explore vocational options". The College Readiness domain indicated an positive attitude and inflexibility in the student's perception of their college preparation as noted in the item "I feel like attending college is and achievable goal." The unwavering scores on the Funding Knowledge domain indicated the student's confidence in their efficiency in seeking funds for college as seen in the "I feel I know specific actions I can take in order to prepare myself financially for college" item. The consistent measures in the High School Graduation domain specified the student's confidence in their high school success as noted in "I feel prepared to meet the requirements for graduating high school".

Overall, some improvement and some decreases from pretest to posttest occurred in the subscales for the Achievement Motivation Profile. Student's Relaxed Style, Self-

Confident, Extroversion, Team Player and Planning and Organization pretest scores went up when compared to posttest scores. Significant increases were reflected in the student's perception of student's Inner Resources after intervention. All scores for this scale were a closer reflection to other students from the normed population who also demonstrated a relaxed style when dealing with others, perceived level of happiness, perceived level of poise and increased sense of self-assurance. Interpersonal Strengths such as engagement with the environment or extroversion significantly increased from posttest to pretest measures while measures such as cooperativeness remained steadfast. The Connect to Success Academy students experienced increases in work habits such as planning and organization and sense of cooperation with others as identified through the subscales Planning and Organizations and Team Player. Similar to Bandura's theory, this study demonstrates how one's perception of capabilities and sense of purpose increases when exposed to experiences and engagements with the environment (1977, 1982, 2001). Various student constructs increased after exposure to the Connect to Success Academy. Students who engaged in the Connect to Success Academy experienced an increase in perceived levels of planning and organization, relaxation and self-confidence allowing them to cooperate with others in the environment in a collaborative manner. Students' problem solving skills also increased providing opportunities for students to progress in areas which may have been perceived as difficult.

Contrary to the aforementioned, when self-efficacy was determined to be low, depression and anxiety were found to be prevalent (Bandura, 1984). Some constructs on

the Inner Resources scale were low such as Happiness and Patience indicating struggle in perception of achievement motivation in those area of inner capital for the students.

Teacher and peer mentoring have also been found to affect a student's sense of self-efficacy (Schunk, 1989). Bronfenbrenner stressed the importance of the micro-level which encompasses the individual and how it interplays with the individual (1986). Students are affected by those most proximal to them resulting in belief of their own abilities.

Bronfenbrenner's microsystem allows for a deeper understanding of those immediate contextual factors that may influence a young person (1976). Durlak and his colleagues (2007) acknowledged the correlation between youth intervention programs as an influence which impacted a young person's surrounding such as school, family and community.

Similarly, the spillover effects that college process intervention programs such as the Connect to Success Academy may have on students and their community are bountiful. The ripple effect these programs can have on the adolescent transcends thorough many levels of the young person's life. Like Bronfenbrenner's theory suggests, all levels are influenced by the environment and influence the ever-changing ecology. This interplay results in interdependence between student and all that may affect the interaction with the student.

Conclusion

The results indicated that the Connect to Success Academy had significant effects on students' perceptions of achievement and career decisions skills. Students increased in the Inner Resources Interpersonal Strengths, Work Habits, and Planning subscales which signified increases in inner assets, engagement in community through civic duties, collaboration with others and preparation for future academic endeavors. Interpersonal Strengths and Work Habit subscales increase positively from pre-intervention to post intervention phases of the Connect to Success Academy for students indicating an increase in their perception of self-achievement. Parents received the necessary information hence giving them the opportunity to make informed decisions. Parents beliefs about their student's education increased after participating in the Connect to Success Academy.

Based on the results of this study, modifications should be added to increase positive scores in the domains. The study should be repeated to evaluate additional changes to optimize the student's pre-college process information and gain needed information to make decision about preparing for college.

Limitations

The study identified several limitations:

1. Due to the small sample size, the findings cannot be generalized to students in similar programs.
2. The intervening time between the pretests and posttests may not have provided adequate time to impact the students' attitudes and beliefs.
3. The Cronbach Alpha Values for only four of the subscales in the Achievement Motivation Profile had accepted levels of reliability.

Implications

Findings in this research revealed many implications for educators, parents and students. It is important for communities to have programs such as the Connect to Success Academy. Programs such as the Connect to Success Academy are a valuable commodity not only for the student but for the community. A bi-directional spillover effect may exist between student and community. Community colleges such as the North Central Texas College may achieve high enrollment of student participants from the Connect to Success Academy. Students from the community colleges may create a positive spillover effect into the communities resulting in positive influences on the community. These community college students who live within their community may positively impact their communities once they graduate and are able to give back to their communities.

Schools may also play a crucial role in the development of curriculum for students that educate students on career development and higher education access. A collaborative effort between school counselors and programs such as the Connect to Success Academy may help identify families that need programs like the Connect to Success Academy. A collective effort between agencies that provide programs such as the Connect to Success Academy and high school career development classes may heighten career knowledge and development through connected objectives and efforts to provide different approaches in understanding career, career choices and the acquisition of careers through higher education.

Student's actual experience within the North Central Texas College campus may have given the Connect to Success Academy students the opportunity to understand the college process and the college campus experience first-hand. The increase of the student's familiarity with the actual college setting may develop within a student a sense of understanding of the college process which may consequently develop assurance and confidence in their ability to attend college. By participating in programs such as the Connect to Success Academy, the student acquires first-hand knowledge and understanding of the college process and all of the dynamics of college life. Dynamics such as classrooms, the college process, the financial process and visualization become realistic and the experience of walking in the hallways and sitting in classrooms may lessen the hesitance of going to college conveying a sense of comfort ability.

The availability of college financial aid information may make college entrance and access less discouraging for parents. Students and their families may find college financially unobtainable but providing financial information in programs such as the Connect to Success Academy may encourage parents to support their students. The career knowledge and financial gains information provided by the Connect to Success Academy courses may also influence families to pursue higher education.

The Connect to Success Academy program can give "first generation" parents information they need about the college process. Information acquired such as the college process, financial aid, career area information, and university information provided families of the Connect to Success Academy with access of information that otherwise would not be available. The knowledge gained by parents can assist parents in supporting their students consequently helping them make informed decision about college.

Recommendations

Future Research

Based on the findings of the current study, a follow-up study may address other dynamics that will give further understanding of this research study. Considerations that may be worthwhile exploring include:

1. Providing of a larger sample to allow for findings with generalizability for the general population.
2. Providing translations for the Connect to Success Parent and Student Survey.

3. A longitudinal follow-up with the student participants to understand how the Connect to Success Academy has affected the students in their admission to college.

4. Adding a motivational component to the study may enhance the student's follow through with college.

5. Providing assessments electronically to allow for completion of all answers.

6. Offering the Connect to Success Academy during the summer may encourage parents and students to participate due to availability of time and less extracurricular academic obligations such as school sports or club affiliations.

Practice

Practitioners may want to implement a program such as the Connect to Success Academy to help first generation students and their parents understand the college process. First generation students may not have the needed information from family members or parents to help guide them in making decisions about college. Programs like the Connect to Success Academy give students the information they need to make informed decisions about college.

Teachers may want to implement the Connect to Success Academy course areas in their classrooms for a more experiential learning experience. The presence of other peers with the same Connect to Success Academy experience may create an atmosphere of information exchange leading to learning opportunities and exploration for students and their peers. Awareness of the gap of knowledge by the teachers and administrators

may help lend support of teachers and administrators for these families that are new to the college process.

Policy

Results indicated that a high percentage of Connect to Success families came from low socio-economic circumstances and low education levels. Cabrera and La Nasa (2000) and Hillemeir and colleagues (2009) established a clear delineation between socio-economic status (SES) and how student's education attainment is influenced by SES. Research has shown that underrepresented populations in academia come from these disparaging circumstances. Programs like the Connect to Success Academy are sought out by communities that strive to acquire the information in order to help their families make educated and informed decisions that otherwise would not have access to that information. Governmental policy should provide these types of programs to address these educational access disparities that are linked to poverty.

Governmental policy should move to provide for a collaborative or stronger connection between social agencies that provide programs such as the Connect to Success Academy and college and career initiative programs in highs school that are designed to prepare students for success, Program such as the *Achieve Texas* which are designed to prepare students for postsecondary opportunities and knowledge during middle school and high school years can develop an interconnection allowing students to extend their knowledge via experience. The active citizenship component of programs such as these

can give students the opportunity to volunteer in their communities which can augment their sense of social responsibility through higher education.

Summary

This study examined the effects of the student's participation in the Connect to Success Academy. Measures used to understand the effects of this program included assessments on achievement motivation, career decision self-efficacy and a questionnaire for parents and students on the high school and college process. This chapter summarized all of the finding for this study and its research questions. Implications, limitations and recommendations for future research were also provided.

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APPENDIX A

IRB Approval Letter

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY
DENTON DALLAS HOUSTON

Institutional Review Board
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
P.O. Box 425619, Denton, TX 76204-5619
940-898-3378 FAX 940-898-4416
e-mail: IRB@twu.edu

December 19, 2013

Ms. Milagros Magaly Lozano

Dear Ms. Lozano:

Re: The Effect of the Connect to Success Academy on Adolescents' Career Decision Self-Efficacy and Achievement Motivation (Protocol #: 17497)

The above referenced study has been reviewed by the TWU Institutional Review Board (IRB) and appears to meet our requirements for the protection of individuals' rights.

If applicable, agency approval letters must be submitted to the IRB upon receipt PRIOR to any data collection at that agency. A copy of the approved consent form with the IRB approval stamp is enclosed. Please use the consent form with the most recent approval date stamp when obtaining consent from your participants. A copy of the signed consent forms must be submitted with the request to close the study file at the completion of the study.

This approval is valid one year from December 18, 2013. Any modifications to this study must be submitted for review to the IRB using the Modification Request Form. Additionally, the IRB must be notified immediately of any unanticipated incidents. If you have any questions, please contact the TWU IRB.

Sincerely,

Vicki L Zeigler

Dr. Vicki Zeigler, Co-Chair
Institutional Review Board - Denton

cc. Dr. Karen Petty, Department of Family Sciences
Dr. Lin Moore, Department of Family Sciences
Graduate School

APPENDIX B

Parents' Demographic Questionnaire

Questionnaire for Parents of Students in Connect to Success Academy

What is your name? _____

What is the name of your student/s? _____

1. What is your gender?	☐ Female ☐ Male
2. What is your relationship to the student?	☐Father ☐ Mother ☐Stepmother ☐Stepfather ☐Grandmother ☐Grandfather ☐Foster parent ☐Guardian
3. What is your student's position in the family?	**Student #1** **Student #2** ☐ Only child ☐ ☐ Oldest child ☐ ☐ Middle child ☐ ☐ Youngest child ☐
4. Have other siblings participated in the Connect to Success Academy in previous years?	☐ Yes ☐ No
5. Type of household?	☐ single parent household ☐ 2-parent family household ☐ Extended family household (grandparents or other relatives living in the home)
6. What are the ages of adults living in the household?	

Mother/step-mother/grandmother		**Father/step-father/grandfather**
☐	Under 25	☐
☐	26-35	☐
☐	36-45	☐
☐	46-55	☐
☐	56-65	☐
☐	Other (describe)	☐

7. What is the total household income? Please check one of the boxes to the right.	☐ Less than 10,000	☐ $10,000 to 19,999
	☐ $20,000 to 29,999	☐ $30,000 to 39,999
	☐ $40,000 to 49, 999	☐ $50,000 to 59,000
	☐ $60,000 to 69,999	☐ $70,000 to 79,999
	☐ $80,000 to 89,999	☐ $90,000 to 110,000
	☐ $111,000 to 130,000	☐ $130,000 or more

8. What is your ethnic background?

Mother/step-mother/grandmother		**Father/step-father/grandfather**
☐	Asian American	☐
☐	Black or African American	☐
☐	White or Caucasian	☐
☐	Hispanic or Latino	☐
☐	Multi-ethnic (describe)	☐
☐_____	Other (describe)	☐_____

9. What languages are primarily spoken at home?

	English	Spanish	Both English and Spanish	Other (describe)
Mother/step-mother	☐	☐	☐	☐_____
Father/step-father	☐	☐	☐	☐_____
Grandmother	☐	☐	☐	☐
Grandfather	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. What language does your student speak most often at home?

☐ English ☐ Spanish ☐ Both English and Spanish ☐ Other _____

	Mother/step-mother or Grandmother		Father/step-father or Grandmother
11. What is the highest level of education completed?	☐	Elementary School	☐
	☐	Some high school courses	☐
	☐	High school diploma/GED	☐
	☐	Some college	☐
	☐	Associates degree	☐
	☐	Bachelor's degree	☐
	☐	Some graduate degree courses or credits	☐
	☐	Master or doctoral degree	☐

APPENDIX C

Student's Demographic Questionnaire

Questionnaire for Students in Connect to Success Academy

What is your name? _____

1. What is your gender?	□ Female □ Male
2. What is the name of your school?	
3. What is the name of your school district?	
4. What grade are you in?	☐ 9th ☐ 10th ☐ 11th ☐ 12th
5. What is your age?	_____
6. What is your ethnic background?	☐ Asian American ☐ Black or African American ☐ White or Caucasia ☐ Hispanic or Latino ☐ Other (describe)_____
7. Do you help with a family business?	☐ Yes ☐ No
8. Do you help care for younger children in the family?	☐ Yes ☐ No
9. Are you employed outside of your home or family?	☐ Yes ☐ No
10. How many hours do you work per week?	_____
11. Are you enrolled in dual credit courses (high school courses that also earn college credit)?	☐ Yes ☐ No
12. Are you enrolled in a Career Prep program (work-study)?	☐ Yes ☐ No

APPENDIX D

Connect to Success Academy Parent Questionnaire

Connect to Success Academy

Parent Name_____

Directions: Please read each statement carefully and reflect on how it may or may not apply to you. For each statement, indicate the extent to which it is true for you by circling the appropriate number representing the following statements:

(1) Not true at all **(2) Just a little** **(3) Quite a lot actually** **(4) Very true for me!**

Parental Involvement

How true are the following statements?

1	As a parent I take an active role in the education of my child	1	2	3	4
2.	I attend PTA meetings	1	2	3	4
3.	I attend my child athletic events	1	2	3	4
4.	I feel confident in making decisions about my child's future	1	2	3	4
5.	I have had meetings with my child's guidance counselor	1	2	3	4

Score____

College Readiness Knowledge

How true are the following statements?

1.	I feel like attending college is an achievable goal for my child	1	2	3	4
2.	My child attending college is important to me	1	2	3	4
3.	I feel prepared to guide my child through the college application process	1	2	3	4
4.	I feel like I understand the difference between a two year college and a four-year university	1	2	3	4
5.	I can help my child make an informed decision about college	1	2	3	4

Score____

Directions: Please read each statement carefully and reflect on how it may or may not apply to you. For each statement, indicate the extent to which it is true for you by circling the appropriate number representing the following statements:

(1) Not true at all **(2) Just a little** **(3) Quite a lot actually** **(4) Very true for me!**

Funding Knowledge

How true are the following statements?

1.	I feel like we can afford college	1	2	3	4
2.	I am aware of different financial aid opportunities	1	2	3	4
3.	I feel like we have easy access to financial aid opportunities	1	2	3	4
4.	I feel confident in seeking financial aid opportunities	1	2	3	4
5.	I feel like I know specific actions I can take in order to prepare my child financially for college	1	2	3	4

Score____

Educational Beliefs

How true are the following statements?

1.	It is important to me to that my child graduates from high school	1	2	3	4
2.	I am confident I can guide my child's high school success	1	2	3	4
3.	I understand what my child needs to do to graduate high school	1	2	3	4
4.	I believe college is an option for my child	1	2	3	4

Score____

Parental Education Information

1.	I am a high school graduate	☐ Yes	☐No
2.	I attended some college	☐ Yes	☐ No
3	I am a college graduate	☐ Yes	☐ No
4.	I have education beyond college	☐Yes	☐ No

APPENDIX E

Connect to Success Academy Student Questionnaire

Connect to Success Academy

Student **Grade**_____ Name_____

Directions: Please read each statement carefully and reflect on how it may or may not apply to you. For each statement, indicate the extent to which it is true for you by circling the appropriate number representing the following statements:

(1) Not true at all **(2) Just a little** **(3) Quite a lot actually** **(4) Very true for me!**

Workforce Readiness

How true are the following statements?

1.	I feel like I have career options available to me upon graduating high school	1	2	3	4
2.	It is important to invest time and thought into what I will choose to do after high school graduation	1	2	3	4
3.	I feel like opportunities are available to help me explore vocational options	1	2	3	4
4.	I feel confident in making decisions about my future	1	2	3	4
5.	I feel like I am familiar with the vocational opportunities available to me in my community	1	2	3	4

Score____

College Readiness

How true are the following statements?

1.	I feel like attending college is an achievable goal	1	2	3	4
2.	Attending college is important to me	1	2	3	4
3.	I feel prepared to complete the entrance requirements for college	1	2	3	4
4.	I feel like I understand the difference between a two year college and a four-year university	1	2	3	4
5.	I can make an informed decision about college	1	2	3	4

Score____

Directions: Please read each statement carefully and reflect on how it may or may not apply to you. For each statement, indicate the extent to which it is true for you by circling the appropriate number representing the following statements:

(1) Not true at all **(2) Just a little** **(3) Quite a lot actually** **(4) Very true for me!**

Funding Knowledge

How true are the following statements?

1.	I feel like I can afford college	1	2	3	4
2.	I am aware of different financial aid opportunities	1	2	3	4
3.	I feel like I have easy access to financial aid opportunities	1	2	3	4
4.	I feel confident in seeking financial aid opportunities	1	2	3	4
5.	I feel like I know specific actions I can take in order to prepare myself financially for college	1	2	3	4

Score____

High School Graduation

How true are the following statements?

1.	It is important to me to be a good student	1	2	3	4
2.	I have a supportive network that encourages me to finish high school	1	2	3	4
3.	I understand what I need to do to graduate high school	1	2	3	4
4.	I feel prepared to meet the requirements for graduating high school	1	2	3	4
5.	I feel that graduating high school is necessary to achieve my goals	1	2	3	4

Score____

APPENDIX F

Script

SCRIPT IN ENGLISH

Hi there,

My name is Millie Lozano and I am a doctoral student at Texas Woman's University. Thank you for giving me a few minutes of your time. I would like to discuss with you a research study, I am currently conducting at Texas Woman's University. The title of my research is "the effects of the Connect to Success Academy on adolescent's career decision self-efficacy and achievement motivation.

The purpose of my study is to investigate the participant's achievement motivation and self-efficacy in relation to the Connect to Success Academy. If you decide to participate in this study you will be asked to sign a consent form and your child will be asked to sign an assent form. This will take approximately 10 minutes. You will also be asked to fill out a Questionnaire for parents. The questionnaire will describe your family background such as gender, age, ethnicity, home language, educational level. With your consent your student will be asked to fill out a student assent to participate, a questionnaire for students describing their personal information which include as age, grade, gender.

As part of the study, I will ask your student to fill out the Achievement Motivation Profile (AMP), which will take 25 minutes. The AMP is used to measure a student's level of motivation. The second instrument I will be using is the Career Decision Self-efficacy Scale which is used to assess your student's degree of confidence in the completion of tasks that are vital in making career decisions. The administration time for this is 20 minutes. I will administer this at the beginning of the academy in November of 2013 and at the end of the Academy in May 2014. You may email me at milagro577@hotmail.com if you have any questions regarding the study.

There are some potential risks for participating in this study. There is a potential risk of loss of confidentiality. To minimize the risk, identification numbers will be used to match the parents' questionnaires with the results of Achievement Motivation Profile (AMP) and the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale. In addition, no names of teachers, parents, or children will be used in the summary report. I am studying groups not individual behaviors.

Another loss is that of anonymity. To lessen the risk, responses to email and email addresses will be deleted immediately if you email me. I will also be using a coding system to match students and parents as well as pretest and posttest results. I will develop a coding system for the data will replace the names of parents, and students. Only my research advisor and I will have access to the code book and original data forms.

Potential fatigue is another potential risk. You and your student can take as many breaks as needed during the administration of questionnaires, surveys, and assessments.

Another potential risk is the loss of time in answering the questionnaires, surveys, consent forms and taking in part of motivation and self-efficacy assessments. Your parents' and students'

questionnaires should take less than 10 minutes. You may also skip items or stop responding at any time.

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions or inquiries, I will be available at a table in the foyer. Thank you!

The potential loss of confidentiality is another potential risk. The responses from printed materials such as questionnaires, surveys, and demographics will be secured in a locked filing cabinet in my office in my home. No names or identifying information of parents, and students will be used in the summary report. Findings will be of groups not individuals.

All materials except for the achievement motivation profile and the self-efficacy scale will be handed to each of you in an envelope. I will be in the foyer receiving packets whether you have decided to participate or not in this research study. If you decide to not participate in the program you may still participate in the Connect to Success Academy. The decision to not participate does not affect your services. You or your student may choose to withdraw at any time. You will not be penalized in any fashion or form.

A brief summary report of the Achievement Motivation Profile (AMP) and the Career Decision Self-efficacy Scale will be provided to parents and their students in sealed envelopes following the pre- and post-test assessments upon request. Again you can email me at milagro577@hotmail.com if you have any questions. Thank you and I also be available for questions now or in the foyer where I will have a table set up. Again thank you for your consideration and I will be available if you have any questions.