

Intentional Teacher-School Counselor Collaboration: Utilizing Culturally Relevant Frameworks to Engage Black Males

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Teachers and school counselors must be trained to address many issues confronting students, including Black males. Increasingly, interdisciplinary partnerships are becoming the educational norm as a method to address the many problems that directly and indirectly impact students inside and outside school environments. However, too little has been written specifically in the teacher education literature about the potential of teacher-school counselor partnership (TSCP). Moreover, virtually nothing has been written about culturally relevant frameworks that teachers and school counselors can use to build partnerships designed to successfully engage and meet the unique and specific needs of Black males. This article presents the Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST) and Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) as frameworks for establishing culturally congruent TSCPs with the potential to address Black males' academic and career concerns by meeting their personal and social needs. A vignette is presented to demonstrate the potential utility of the frameworks when working with Black males.

Keywords: Black males, teacher-school counselor collaboration, career development, culturally relevant framework

Much has been written about the debatable curriculum in schools all across the nation (Farkas Duffett Research Group, 2012), specifically, as a function of pressures associated with high stakes standardized testing. Many teachers are being forced to “teach to the test” as opposed to teaching and operationalizing effective and responsive educational interventions to support students' learning. This is not a trivial matter given that school counselors are charged with contributing to students' learning in this high-pressured environment (Galassi & Akos, 2012; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007. According to the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) National Model (2003), this goal can be accomplished by forming strong and collaborative working relationships with other educators inside and outside of school settings.

Given current policies, such as the Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010), which draw stark attention to classroom practices and learning, an argument could be made that teachers are under considerably more pressure to improve student achievement than school counselors. We do not concur. Rather, both teachers and counselors are under intense scrutiny and, as such, should collaborate with one another to meet students' needs, which are inextricably linked to both areas of expertise.

In the era of accountability, high-stakes testing, and equity, it could be argued that Black students—mainly males—have garnered more attention, often negative and reactive, than any other student population in K-12 educational settings (Holzman, 2010; Toldson, 2011; Whiting, 2009). In particular, scholarly and public discourse is replete with information documenting Black males’ relative lack of personal, social, academic and career success relative to other student populations—Black females and White males specifically. These explanations range from placing the blame on the students themselves to societal barriers out of their control (e.g., racism, stereotypes, prejudice, reverse sexism). These seemingly contradictory explanations do not serve to eradicate the issue; instead, the differing findings seem to exacerbate the problem by presenting very confusing information.

One notion that has consistently been agreed upon is the need to take Black males’ culture into consideration when devising interventions to address their issues and concerns (Henfield, in press; Henfield, 2011, Whiting, 2009). With this in mind, this article presents the Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST) and Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) as frameworks for establishing culturally congruent teacher-school counselor partnerships (TSCPs) with the potential to address Black males’ personal, social, academic and career needs.

In the past, school counselors were strong contributors to gaps in achievement by participating in the placement of students into less rigorous educational tracks based on arbitrary factors such as race, gender, social class and so forth (Ford, 2011; House & Sears, 2002). The field has moved toward a vigorous focus on students’ academic achievement in an effort to eradicate achievement gaps.

The Transforming School Counselor Initiative (TSCI) was developed to eradicate the gatekeeping role school counselors had slowly morphed into over time by emphasizing the need to change the way these professionals were trained (Martin, 2002). Among other emphases, TSCI focused on training pre-service school counselors to engage in increased collaboration with educational peers in an effort to raise student achievement. The ASCA National Model soon followed and began stressing students’ personal, social academic and career needs by collaborating with other educators.

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) 2009 Standards for School Counseling represent yet another transformation of the school counseling profession at the national level. Adherence to the Standards requires school counseling training programs to concentrate on graduating candidates who are proficient in the skills required to raise student academic outcomes and prepare them for postsecondary opportunities. Again, to meet these standards, candidates seeking master’s degrees are expected to demonstrate their skills and ability to collaborate with other educators and to formulate courses of action (e.g., prevention and intervention) designed to increase student achievement and close the achievement gap.

According to Brown and Trusty (2005), “academic development and career development are inexorably tied to one another....Education problems *are* career problems, and educational successes are very likely career successes” (p. 57). That said, research indicates that many Black males are not receiving the educational training necessary for employment that requires higher

levels of educational attainment (Lee & Ransom, 2011). For example, in 2008, 33.4% of Black males ages 15-24 with a high school diploma enrolled in some form of secondary education. Of those Black students with and without a high school diploma, Black females represented 55.5% of those enrolled in a two-year, four-year, or vocational institution compared to Black males 15-24 year-olds who represented 44.5%. More specifically, in 2008, fewer Black 15-25 year-old males than 15-24 year-old Black females attended vocational schools (0.9% to 2.1%), two-year institutions (12.9% to 18.4%), four-year institutions (29.0% to 32.6%), and graduate schools (1.7% to 2.5%).

To some, personal, social and career issues may be perceived as separate from academic concerns but we believe they are intimately linked. As such, it makes sense that school counselors, who are trained to meet students' needs in all four areas, work with teachers whose core mission is to increase students' academic achievement. Despite the clear emphasis in school counseling policy to raise school counselors' involvement with increasing students' academic success, there is no explicit direction regarding measures to be taken to specifically address Black males' academic issues. With this in mind, Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) and Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST)—given their combined emphases in personal, social, academic and career concepts—are introduced as potential frameworks to develop TSCPs aimed at increasing Black males' academic achievement, in particular.

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)

SCCT, an offshoot of Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory, endeavors to address issues of culture, gender, genetic endowment, social context, and unexpected life events that may interact with and supersede the effects of career-related choices. SCCT focuses on the connection of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals that influence an individual's career choice (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000).

SCCT proposes that career choice is influenced by the beliefs individuals develop and refine from four major sources: (a) personal performance accomplishments, (b) vicarious learning, (c) social persuasion, and (d) physiological states and reactions. How these aspects work together in the career development process is through a process by which an individual develops an expertise/ability for a particular endeavor and meets with success. This process reinforces one's self-efficacy or belief in future continued success in the use of this ability/expertise. As a result, one is likely to develop goals that involve continuing involvement in that activity/endeavor. Further, through an evolutionary process beginning in early childhood and continuing through adulthood, one narrows the scope of successful endeavors to focus on and form a career goal or choice. What is critical to the success of the process is the extent to which one views the endeavor/activity as one at which they are successful and offers valued compensation. Contextual factors come into play and influence the individual's perception of the probability of success. If the person encounters or perceives few barriers, the likelihood of success reinforces the career choice; but if the barriers are viewed as significant, there is a weaker interest and fewer choice actions (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994, 2000).

Concerns have been expressed that traditional career development theories tend to minimize the role of culture and structural barriers in the career experiences of people from racial/ethnic minority groups and lower economic strata (Constantine, Wallace, & Kindaichi, 2005; Waller, 2006). Castillo, et al. (2006) demonstrated that a student's perception of the university environment mediates the relationship between ethnic identity and persistence attitudes. Byars-Winston (2006) expanded Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT; Lent et al., 1994) by incorporating the personal variable of racial ideology from a multidimensional inventory of Black identity developed by Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith (1997) for 141 Black undergraduates enrolled at a historically Black university. Her results provided statistically significant support for two of the four racial ideologies (nationalist and assimilationist), both independently and in combination, in predicting career self-efficacy, outcome expectations, career interests, and perceived career barriers. Cheatham (1990) proposed a model of African American career development based on Afrocentricity. According to this model, the dominant feature of career development of African Americans is based on the interplay of two cultural traditions -- African and American -- representing biculturalism. Importantly, Parham and Austin (1994) asserted that African Americans might have a propensity toward a collaborative or collectivist career decision-making style rather than toward an independent one. These scholars believe the African American cultural value of collectivism (i.e., family, community, and social orientation) influences this process.

Self-efficacy is central to the SCCT framework. Self-efficacy refers to the beliefs that Black males have about their consequences of performing particular academic/career-orientated tasks (also see Whiting, 2006). Accordingly, Black males' engagement in schooling, and their effort, persistence, and ultimate success are greatly influenced by both their self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations. Noticeably, PVEST provides one context to understand the factors that may enhance or impede high levels of self-efficacy. For example, Lent et al. (2000) incorporated an SCCT framework and found additional context-focused research that includes family, financial, and emotional support, are important contextual affordances that increase or decrease the probability that people will be able to pursue their interests and this, in turn, will affect their career choices.

SCCT was selected as part of a theoretical framework for working with Black males due to its focus on the role of students' personal and social beliefs, and their influence on academic and career choices. Also important in the analysis of academic and career choice is the influence of racial/cultural identity of Black males and how they impact decision-making processes (Gainor & Lent, 1998; Whiting, 2006). PVEST contributes to this aspect of the proposed TSCPs.

It is necessary to note that Black males who successfully graduate from high school and/or college may face additional economic and career advancement inequities as they enter the labor market. To wit, Black men are further challenged by discriminatory hiring practices, making them the least likely to be hired and/or the most likely to be unemployed (Wilson, 2010). In February 2011, the unemployment rate for Black males age 20 and over was nearly twice that of White males (17.5% versus 9.1%) (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). Therefore, explorations beyond SCCT are necessary to examine and understand the rugged and unequal terrain situating Black males' vocational and unique lives.

Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST)

Ecological systems theory is a framework concerned with understanding the contexts in which an individual exists, and further describes and explains the thoughts and actions of individuals and groups within their specific contexts. This aspect of systems theory suggests that, to unpack the achievement and career aspirations of Black males, understanding their identity and the effects of their social environment is critical.

Building on the work of Anthony's (1974) adaptation of resiliency theorizing and Bronfenbrenner's (1999) child development model within the context of the system of relationships and environment, the PVEST (Spencer, 2006) incorporates ecological systems with identity development in describing normative and different processes for youths of color. The context of PVEST emanates from a cultural-ecological perspective, which comprises the interaction of identity, experience and culture; it integrates social, political, and cultural issues with developmental processes (Spencer, 2008). Identity development is the foundation of this framework, which recognizes that protective and risk factors operate differently for youth, depending on their environment and how they make meaning of their experiences. The PVEST also argues that stressors such as racial discrimination and racial stereotypes impact African American students' emergent identities as they make meaning of racialized situations (Spencer, 2006, 2008a, 2008b). As described, the PVEST interacts dynamically among five basic components, namely (a) net vulnerability, (b) net stress engagement, (c) reactive coping methods and support, (d) emergent identities, and (e) life stage-specific coping outcomes.

Net vulnerability level. The net vulnerability level refers to the balance between risk and protective factors. The PVEST considers race a risk factor for a number of conditions and contributes to educational and career disparities. For Black males, race and gender stereotyping are often risk factors (Spencer et al., 2012). In a recent study, high-achieving mathematics and engineering Black college males described their experiences at historically White institutions where they were consistently plagued by notions of Black men cheating and stealing (McGee & Martin, 2011a). In spite of their high achievement in these highly competitive majors, the respondents felt they had to persistently defend themselves against intellectual under-estimation, as well as other demeaning Black male stereotypes. Although the racial and gendered stereotype of Black men being unethical served as a risk factor, the students did not engage in either. These Black male students, however, had protective factors in their lives that assisted in balancing or countering risk factors. How each individual appraises their experiences determines their subsequent actions, reactions, and behaviors. For Black males, under-acknowledged in the literature are their abilities to defy negative societal portrayals and resist the barriers they encounter in educational and labor environments, to effectively cope within these settings (Nicolas et al., 2008).

Net stress engagement. Net stress engagement refers to risk and protective factors that manifest in actual real-life encounters, resulting in experiences that challenge the students' well-being. For example, college-related risk factors for high-achieving Black male mathematics and engineering students included racial isolation in mathematics classes, the anticipation of continued racial bias in their STEM careers, and being viewed as "Affirmative Action students," to name a few. Some protective factors for these students included culturally-affirming college organizations, such as

the Black Student Union or National Society of Black Engineers (McGee & Martin, 2011a). Resilience is also achieved and negotiated through the process of experience and successful adaptation. Many of the Black males in the aforementioned study learned how to manage racial stereotypes and other forms of racial and gender bias over time, by developing a toolkit of strategies to lessen the blow of stereotypes while maintaining proficient levels of college achievement. Whereas risk and protection are potential factors, stress and support are actual manifestations experienced within context.

Reactive coping methods and support. The third component of PVEST refers to reactive coping methods and support, which are employed to counter stressors. Reactive coping methods motivate problem-solving strategies that are either adaptive or maladaptive. This component suggests that adaptive coping methods for Black males ought to encompass reflections and subsequent actions that enhance their quality of life and endorse academic achievement and career goals. Contrastingly, maladaptive coping reactions would mostly likely focus on embodying the media-driven and commercialized versions of the ‘stereotypic Black male’. These stereotypic aspects purportedly include underachievement, unemployment, hypermasculinity, hypersexualization, violence, substance abuse, and denigrations of Black women (Nicolas et al., 2008; Whiting, 2006). Despite steady exposure to this normalized narrative, some Black male students are, nonetheless, resilient, displaying the skills and ability to use adaptive coping skills to achieve productive outcomes.

Emergent identities. Emergent identities define how individuals view themselves within various contextual experiences. Students find themselves within and between contexts that vary across family, school, neighborhood, and nation. Particularly, Black males often find themselves juggling multiple contexts and making sense of divergent environments. For example, a Black male college student in one year may operate within and across the following spatial contexts: attendance at historically White college, home on semester break returning to his predominately Black home neighborhood, participating in a summer internship in a rural location, joining a Black fraternity on a predominantly white institution (PWI) campus, and so on. A Black male in his freshman year of high school may be less prepared to deal or cope with these multiple environments than a Black male in his junior year of college, where maturity and experience assist in stabilizing these environments and his place in them (Spencer, 2008). Stable reactive coping skills, cultural and racial identity, as well as an understanding of social roles and self-and peer appraisal help define the emergent identity. Black male students that can self-regulate among a host of varying, sometimes hostile experiences, often utilize positive racial identity as a mediator, minimizing the impact of stressful situations (Cokley, 2007; Cross & Strauss, 1998; Helms, 1990; Phinney & Ong, 2007). The emergent identities lead to either productive or unproductive coping outcomes.

Life stage-specific coping outcomes. The fifth PVEST component, called life stage-specific coping outcomes, can result in negative or positive coping outcomes. If the outcome is negative, the individual’s foundational identity will suffer from a lack of support from others and general productivity. If positive, the outcomes will result in good health, high self-esteem, and strong, healthy relationships. Productive outcomes may include positive and supportive relationships with friends, academic achievement, school completion, and intrinsic motivation, while unproductive outcomes may include dropping out of school and dismal academic achievement.

Productive outcomes for Black males in college include high-levels of academics and a growing understanding of how race and racism operates within their educational and social lives (McGee & Martin, 2011a).

PVEST remains a dynamic framework throughout the lifespan. There will always be new risks, possible protective factors, stressors, and support systems; when combined with coping strategies, allow for redefinition of the self, which also impact the way others view individuals. Whereas an unresolved crisis in a developmental stage influences future coping and identity formation, PVEST allows for the unresolved crisis to be captured and properly contextualized (Spencer, 2006). In sum, PVEST allows for an understanding of the specific personal and social challenges Black males face during development, which can be associated with academic and career-related outcomes.

PVEST and SCCT as a Framework for Teacher-School Counselor Partnerships

Combining PVEST with SCCT has the potential to help teachers and school counselors in recognizing the importance of TSCPs relative to approaching Black males from a strength-based and culturally-dependent standpoint. It may also allow for a theoretical meeting space for teachers, counselors, and Black males to assemble, examine personal and social issues that impact Black male learners within context, share methods and approaches they utilize to address these issues, and brainstorm relevant and responsive steps to move with improving Black males' educational and career success. This framing takes into account biculturalism—Black male students whose culture, racial identity, linguistic preferences, and educational ability are often devalued by mainstream school curriculum *and* the need to operate within this mainstream structure to increase their chances for successful educational achievement and upward career mobility. The PVEST model is of particular importance to TSCPs, given that many Black males have been found to underachieve on standardized tests, experience greater drop-out rates, and are often categorized as a population at-risk in educational settings, which can impact their self-efficacy, an important contributor to the SCCT framework.

This multidisciplinary framework, which combines identity development processes with career and counseling practices, could serve as a promising approach toward a creative education model designed to help counter many of the negative experiences encountered by Black males. PVEST could conceivably be used as the first step toward understanding the barriers Black males perceive as obstructing their personal and social success. Once this is understood, SCCT could then be used to support academic achievement and career success.

It should be noted that the framework has yet to be applied. Nonetheless, given the goals of PVEST and SCCT, it stands to reason that the two approaches have the potential to make a lasting impact on the lives of Black males. The following vignette serves as an illustrative example to demonstrate the framework's potential utility in K-12 educational settings.

Vignette

Marcus is a 16-year old Black male who is contemplating his future plans. As a junior in high school, he knows that decisions need to be made soon regarding what he will do after graduation. Marcus lives with his mother (a high-school graduate working as an administrative assistant), his grandmother, and his two younger siblings, ages 11 and 13. His father, a high-school dropout, does not live with the family and has had a series of jobs, primarily in the restaurant and hospitality field.

Marcus is a 'B' student who takes honors-level science courses and is involved in school athletics. Through the PVEST lens, we conclude that Marcus has a number of potential protective factors, such as multi-generational sources of support, a working parent, and his leadership role as a big brother. Risks factors may seem more apparent, namely, his father's job, parental status, and mother's low-income employment and employment opportunities. Unfortunately with Black males, risk factors are often overemphasized and protective factors are deemed as absent or tangential (Spencer, 2006).

Marcus has recently stopped turning in class assignments. His chemistry teacher asked to meet with him to discuss this sudden change in behavior. After class, he disclosed to the teacher that he is "not into school anymore." When asked why this was the case, Marcus said "Why should I do all of this work for nothing? All of you teachers keep talking to me about college, but I don't know anybody like me in college. Nobody makes it out of the 'hood'."

This interaction concerned Marcus' teacher. In the past, Marcus had positive interactions with his school counselor during course registration, so the teacher made an appointment with the school counselor to discuss the situation. Marcus' teacher gave the school counselor a wealth of information about Marcus—information that is not typically found in a formal school file folder, such as classroom interactions, informal conversations, etc. For instance, Marcus once told his teacher that his mother supports the idea of him continuing his education, but wants him to stay close to home so he can continue to work part-time and be available to help care for his brothers. Based on what the school counselor learned from the teacher, it was determined that Marcus should come in for a meeting. Marcus's change in his achievement attitudes and behaviors suggests that his net stress engagement level, the second component of PVEST, is being challenged by a host of educational and family demands. Marcus's expressions might possibly represent his vulnerability in response to a challenging context, which undermines positive math and science achievement. Math and science appear counterproductive to his future exploration, as he grapples with an uncertain future.

The school counselor began their first meeting by asking Marcus about a classroom guidance lesson he participated in that was designed to help students develop a sense of their career interests and goals. Marcus reported high scores in Investigative and Realistic (Holland Codes) related occupations, but was uninterested in any of the careers that required an advanced degree. The careers listed as highly matching his interests included engineer, chemist, computer systems analyst, physician, and science teacher. When asked to talk further about this, Marcus said that careers in the science and computer fields were for "white people, geeky white people." He stated that he was considering careers in the automotive industry and that he enjoyed repairing his

mom's car. Marcus also mentioned that his interests moderately matched those for auto mechanics on the interest inventory. When the counselor remarked on his good grades in science and math, Marcus observed that he simply had lenient teachers and that much of the material seemed easy to him. He also indicated that, although he did well in those subjects, he would never consider jobs related to them because they would require four years of college and no one in his family had gone to college. Marcus has taken an adaptive approach to learning and succeeding in mathematics and science. Certainly, not all students who are proficient in mathematics and science take the opportunity to showcase success through high achievement in quizzes, tests, class work, and homework.

There is a certain amount of agency that Marcus demonstrates in order to achieve by the dominant standards of success, although his attempts to minimize his success by referring to his achievements as "easy." Marcus has certainly learned to cope with the rigors that accompany high school level mathematics and science including the teachers, his peers, and the curriculum.

During the second and third sessions, Marcus participated in career counseling activities to help him gain a better understanding of the kinds of careers that may be best suited to his personality. He completed a modified card activity, where he sorted various occupations into categories of 'might choose,' 'would not choose,' and 'in question.' Marcus and the school counselor then discussed the discarded activities and examined Marcus's reasons for discarding these activities. The counselor noted that many of the discarded occupations were related to science and math, and Marcus provided reasons such as "there are no Black people in this field" and "I could never do something this hard," which is quite interesting considering that he previously stated that his courses were rather easy. Brown and Lent (1996) recommended this type of exercise to help clients determine if the discarded occupations were due to faulty self-efficacy or outcome expectation beliefs. Spencer's PVEST (2006, 2008a) would further suggest that Marcus's emergent identity (i.e.,) how he defines himself within and between his various contexts of development (family, school, neighborhood), does not include a math or science career trajectory, in spite of his high achievement in those areas. In other words, Marcus does not see himself in a math or science field, in part because he envisions those professions as White, but more importantly not Black. Ironically, Marcus had demonstrated yet until recently, productive outcomes in mathematics and science, along with high self-esteem, while believing that he would suffer adverse outcomes in the long run.

The counselor then challenged Marcus to think of other reasons why he did well in math and science classes. Marcus recognized his ability to understand the meaning of scientific theories and saw that he was able to complete complex computations without a calculator. When the counselor asked how others responded to his ability to do well in these subjects, Marcus indicated that his teachers were always pleased with his work, but that his friends often made fun of him for doing well in classes that were just for nerds. This was not the first time the counselor heard of this phenomenon. In fact, it was quite common for many Black students, regardless, of background, to be ridiculed for participating in advanced courses and programs (Ford, 2011). As in other instances, this information suggested to the counselor that Marcus might need new experiences so he could create and envision and expect more positive outcome expectations.

The school counselor also further explored Marcus's feelings about college. Marcus stated that he wanted to go to college but this would be a financial burden on his family. In addition, if he continued his education, his mother only wanted him to consider a school within a 30-mile radius. At this point, the school counselor became curious about the extent to which other students in the school were suffering from similar difficulties. In order to develop a more concrete understanding, the school counselor sent out a survey to all students in the school asking questions designed to capture their perceptions of college, and the likelihood they would attend. To the counselor's surprise, there were many students in a similar situation to Marcus. With this new understanding, the school counselor decided to develop a number of small (6 to 10 students) counseling groups to help students support one another and develop a better understanding of themselves in relation to college and careers. The counselor also worked with teachers to make arrangements to go to different classes to deliver career and financial aid information. As a homework assignment for Marcus, the counselor asked him to attend a career fair at the high school and talk to at least five people in different careers. Marcus told the school counselor he was uncomfortable going to something like that by himself. The school counselor, in response, said that Marcus' teacher was taking a group of students to the career fair and that he may be able to accompany them. After leaving the school counselor's office, Marcus met with his teacher, asked for permission to accompany his teacher and the other students, and was allowed to do so.

Marcus began the fourth session by sharing what he learned at the career fair. He explained that he spent a long time talking with an African American engineer who had grown up in the same type of neighborhood. The engineer had gone to a nearby college and knew of various scholarship opportunities for students who had above-average grades. He offered Marcus the opportunity to shadow him on the job to see what engineering was all about. Marcus also noted that engineers used math and science skills that could be related to the automotive industry. The counselor observed that Marcus had now begun to create self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations related to science and math careers.

The counselor, recognizing some potential barriers facing first-generation students, discussed other possible financial aid opportunities with Marcus and encouraged him to accept the shadowing experience. He was also encouraged to join one of the small counseling groups to find other students like him who were struggling to determine their career goals. Marcus stated that he would call the engineer that evening and planned to attend the next group counseling session. Before he left, the counselor also recommended that Marcus discuss the opportunities of financial aid and nearby colleges with his mother. Marcus had begun to expand his perception of himself and gained tremendous confidence and alternative perspectives through his interaction with the African American engineer. We hypothesized that Black racial identity, including role modeling that incorporates his race and gender, represents an integral aspect of Marcus's development, in particular how he assesses his career competencies and overall competence formation.

The last session with Marcus focused on ways that he could learn more about college life. Marcus made an appointment to shadow the engineer during winter break, and reported that his mother had expressed interest in the information about financial aid and generally supported his efforts to continue his education. In addition, Marcus was encouraged to accompany the friends he made in the group counseling to use the library's computer to visit various college websites and to explore

additional careers. These activities were designed to help Marcus obtain a more accurate view of college life with the hope that some potential barriers could be eliminated.

This vignette is presented to demonstrate how identity (mathematics, science, racial, gender, etc.) interacts with career projections for some Black high-achieving high school male students. By gaining a more holistic understanding of Marcus, where he positions himself within larger cultural, educational, and structural contexts offers more complex interaction of all of these domains to better understand his ideologies and actions. Learning about his support system, amidst its challenges, helps us appreciate that for Marcus, college attainment is a family decision, with potential geographical and financial constraints. Explorations of role modeling and mentorship through an African American engineer helped Marcus to envision himself in broader career spaces, including engineering, mathematics and science. Without a knowledgeable counselor, who had an understanding of Black youths experiences, including the importance of racial identity, Marcus's recent behavior might have been misinterpreted and his academic efforts would go un-respected by the school system. Marcus's story further emphasizes that school counselors of Black male students have a tremendous responsibility for instilling career competence were Black male success is scarce and unreported, and can be a significant factor in determining career and college course choices.

Discussion

The complexity associated with navigating Black male identities in K-12 educational setting is tremendous. Marcus's vignette sheds light on examples of personal and social barriers Black males must overcome in order to achieve academic success and settle on career goals. Teachers and school counselors are charged with helping Black males achieve success despite the challenges Black males encounter. The most efficient, effective way for this seemingly insurmountable task to be achieved is by educators collaborating with one another to meet students' needs. Marcus's vignette also provides an example of a TSCP that used PVEST and SCCT to meet Black males' personal, social, academic, and career needs using resources in their personal environment.

The counseling sessions gave the school counselor insight into Marcus' relative to his burgeoning identity and career goals. Marcus was at a life stage in which figuring out his career goals and the courses needed to achieve them was of utmost importance. From the information gleaned, the school counselor was able to gain a better understanding of Marcus's outcome expectations, perceived barriers related to various careers, as well as information about self-efficacy beliefs regarding his potential for succeeding in college. Being a Black male born into an immediate family bereft of a college graduate served as a source of vulnerability. It seemed that Marcus was reacting to his context by foreclosing on careers that he perceived as not being appropriate for Black males. It was up to the counselor to collaborate with Marcus's teachers to develop interventions designed to establish systems of support that could help him succeed despite potentially stressful risk factors. Ultimately, it was hoped that TSCPs would result in helping Marcus form a new identity; one in which he would be able to develop and utilize healthy support systems that were appropriate for his current stage in life.

The individual counseling sessions served to help the school counselor gather a wealth of information related to the chasm between Marcus's academic achievement and career goals. However, before meeting with Marcus, it was important that the school counselor meet with the teacher to gain a better understanding of Marcus aside from the information contained in his school files as was related to Marcus' presenting problems.

Summary

Marcus's story should not be unique. Although wide variations exist in school experience, particularly in relation to Black male high school students disproportionately being placed at-risk, school counselors serve as a tremendous resource for students, as well as teachers charged with educating them in increasingly stressful environments. School counselors equipped with identity- and career-based capital, serve as a pivotal resource for healthy and positive identity, college, and career development, along with navigating gainful employment into adulthood. Too often, though, overcrowded schools and public school policies and practices impede school counselors' efforts to collaborate with teachers and guide underrepresented students toward successful school-to-work transition.

This article is an attempt to highlight the potential for school counselors and teachers to use the theories to work together and meet Black males' academic and career needs by addressing their personal and social concerns. Although the literature suggests the importance of collaborative partnerships between educators, a particular framework for TSCPs has yet to be developed. This article suggests the possibility of PVEST and SCCT as strong contributors to a potential culturally relevant framework. However, there is much more work to be done. We included a vignette to demonstrate how it could be applied in a school setting, but this is just a first step to illustrate how such a framework might be applied. Scholars should consider the potential in combining the two theories into a more concrete model that can be measured for effectiveness. Only then will its utility truly be determined.

AUTHOR NOTES

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