A Phenomenological Study: Exploring the Career Decision-Making of Women of Color in Counselor Education

by

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Abstract

This study uses a hermeneutic phenomenology approach coupled with critical race theory to examine the lived experiences of women of color in counselor education and their pursuit to the professoriate. Scholars have made longstanding efforts to document the lived experiences of women that occupy faculty roles in higher education. Race and gender are part of the multiple identities women of color acknowledge in navigating the stereotypes, and that may challenge them in the professoriate (Jones et al., 2013). Further, counselor educators have thoroughly researched the experiences of women of color in counselor education programs both as faculty and students. Within the literature, experiences have included overwhelming service commitments, racism and discrimination, sole mentorship of students of color, affirmative action hires, and a lack of opportunity to collaborate with colleagues for research, all of which contribute to the lack of tenure promotion. Despite the documented obstacles, women of color, both knowingly and unknowingly, apply and obtain faculty positions in counselor education programs across the United States. This study will unpack the essence of the lived experiences of women of color (Black & Asian) who have selected a career as faculty in counselor education and how they have come to decide on their career selection. The author provides critical examination of women of color occupying faculty positions in counselor education positions for three years or less.

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I am going to keep this short and sweet, as I believe in giving my support system their flowers on a continuous basis. I first want to acknowledge my Lord and savior that has kept me throughout this entire process. I would not be where I am today without Him. I am grateful to my chair, Dr. Jamie Carney, who has been supportive in keeping me on track and accountable for completing each goal set for the completion of my dissertation. To Dr. Brandee Appling, thank you for staying on me about my methodology and giving me extensive feedback to increase the rigor of my study. To my committee Dr. Chippewa Thomas and Dr. Malti Tuttle, thank you for your encouragement and guidance along the way. Thank you to everyone who had involvement in this research process.

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Last, to my participants, without you this research would have not been possible. Thank you for trusting me with your lived experiences. To anyone who has ever felt marginalized, know that there are people who value your experiences and want to make the world an inclusive place for your uniqueness. I see you. I hear you. I care.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Theoretical Framework

Introduction

"You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by

them" – Maya Angelou

The time has come. With comprehensive exams passed and a successful proposal of the

dissertation completed, it is finally time to select a career. She sat quietly as she recalled the first

day of her doctoral studies in counselor education and the shock she felt as she walked on

campus and realized she was one of a small percentage of women of color at her university,

department, program, and the only woman of color in her cohort. She remembered the thoughts

that began to flood her mind. Do I belong here? How do I make sense of my presence? Will I be

one of the few who identify as I do and can obtain a role in the academy? In reflecting on her

process, she recalled the experiences that brought her to the decision to pursue a faculty role. She

knew that she may very well be one of few who would occupy a predominately white space as a

person of color.

Many counselor education leaders have highlighted the complexities that exist for

persons of color of entering and obtaining positions in the professoriate (Meyers, 2017). Dr.

Thelma Daley, the first African American president of both the American Counseling

Association and the American School Counseling Association, expressed that individuals are

inclined to occupy spaces of which they can see people who are like them (Meyers, 2017). Dr.

Manivong Ratts, past president of Counselors for Social Justice and the chair of the committee

that created the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies, stressed the

importance of understanding how being a person of color lends itself to a unique experience in

the counseling profession (Meyer, 2017). Other notable leaders have expressed the lack of preparation of doctoral students of color when they are unable to apply the knowledge gained in the classroom into a better perception of faculty life (Meyers, 2017).

In consideration of the varying statements of persons of color in the profession, it was plausible to seek an in-depth understanding of the processes and lived experiences of women of color who came to decisions on pursuing and obtaining a faculty role in counselor education at predominantly white institutions (PWI).

According to Catalyst (2015), across disciplines in academia, Asian women hold only 4.9 percent of tenure-track positions and 3.0 percent of tenured positions. African American women hold 3.6 percent of tenure-track positions and 2.3 percent of tenured positions. Hispanic women hold 2.7 percent of tenure-track positions and 2.4 percent of tenured positions. Due to the small but growing number of women of color who occupy faculty roles, research is warranted on the experiences women of color have in their decision-making processes. Additional research includes examining the types of positions women of color select, as research, teaching, and service often vary in allocation. Women of color graduating with doctorates in Counselor Education may find themselves employed in tenure track, non-tenure track, adjunct, and clinical faculty positions. Although women of color find themselves employed in various levels of faculty roles, only a small percentage occupy the tenure-track and tenured positions. Women of color continue to persist and maintain their positions within the professoriate. Understanding the lived experiences of women of color in counselor education faculty roles may assist in better informing the profession on recruiting, retaining, and the inclusion of faculty of color in the diversification of programs.

Literature suggests that challenges for women of color exist due to the complexities that exist in interactions with colleagues, students, administration, and staff, largely due to race and gender. The experiences of women of color include overwhelming service commitments on diversity committees, sole mentorship over students of color, higher teaching loads, microaggressions, inadequate compensation, and exclusion from opportunities to collaborate on research (Bradley, 2005; Modica & Mamiseishvilli, 2015; Rideau, 2019). In addition, missing in the current literature is a critical examination of the influential factors that impact career choice, selection, and satisfaction of counselor educators who are women of color in faculty roles. Due to the various experiences and concerns contributing to the dissatisfaction of women of color in academia, it was important to explore attributes that contributed to career decision-making in counselor education.

Significance of the Study

Women of color have expressed various experiences when working in academia. What remains unknown is the essence of women of color's lived experiences in making decisions regarding their career trajectories. Current literature highlights the experiences of women of color in academia and their struggles of racial microaggressions, lack of promotion, tenure and research opportunities, along with primary responsibility for serving on diversity committees and mentoring students of color (Dortch, 2016; Modica & Mamiseishvilli, 2015; Constantine, Smith Redington & Owens; Bradley, 2005). However, research has not specifically addressed the career decision-making of women of color who have earned their doctorates in Counselor Education and enter faculty positions. Furthermore, what has received little attention is how women of color remain resilient and overcome the challenges of the professoriate in their career selections and decision-making processes. Women of color who earn Counselor Education

doctorates have somehow maintained their presence in faculty roles despite the conditions that appear throughout the research. This study sought to capture the essence of women of color's lived experiences in counselor education and their decisions to pursue and maintain a faculty position at a PWI.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the career trajectories of women of color occupying or seeking faculty roles in counselor education, and how their experiences influenced career decision-making processes and decisions about their careers post-degree. Existing literature highlights critical experiences that may influence the career dissatisfaction of faculty of color in counselor education; however, further exploration is warranted on the career decision-making and pursuit of the professoriate in place of the disadvantageous conditions known to plague women and persons of color in the academy. In addition, implications from this study may inform the profession on inclusive practices to promote the attainment, inclusion, and retention of women of color in faculty positions and promote additional perspectives to those who are considering faculty careers as persons of color in counselor education.

Research Question

1. What are the lived experiences of women of color in their career decision-making in counselor education?

Theoretical Framework: Critical Race Theory

The researcher employed Critical Race Theory (CRT) to allow for the exploration of counter-narratives shared amongst women of color to promote the dismantling of oppressive policies and practices, promoting racial equity and justice (Price, 2019). CRT was originally developed to address the significance of race and racism and the impact it has on sustaining

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homogeneous systems created for white individuals (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). This study was

best suited for CRT due to the lack of representation that exist for women in the academy and the

further marginalization that takes place as a woman of color. The use of this critical theory

allowed the empowerment of participants by giving voice to their lived experiences, paving the

way for them to overcome barriers historically placed on them through race and gender

(Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Decuir & Dixson (2004) suggested that CRT allows for counter-

story-telling analysis, which is a "means of exposing and critiquing normalized dialogues that

perpetuate racial stereotypes" (p.27). CRT is useful in education research and gives participants a

platform to describe their experiences with the phenomenon from individual perspectives

(Decuir & Dixson, 2004). CRT also allows for participants' voices to be heard rather than

silenced in their representation. In addition to allowing social transformation, CRT unmasks the

diversity that exists in intersecting identities, emphasizes social justice, and discontinues

dominant models and processes typically used to ascribe meaning and value (Mills & Unsworth,

2018).

CRT has five tenets that include counter-storytelling, the permanence of racism, whiteness

as property, interest conversion, and the critique of liberalism (Hiraldo, 2010; Ladson-Billings,

1998; Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; McCoy, 2006).

Specifically, this study focused on the tenets of counter-storytelling and the permanence of

racism to examine the data through theory. Through counter-storytelling, CRT allows women of

color the space to speak on their career decision-making while considering their marginalized

experiences. The permanence of racism concludes that racism is inherently a part of life which

allows the researcher to take into consideration the implicit racism that exists both within society

and within the academic institutions in which women of color work (Hiraldo, 2010).

Current literature does not capture the experiences of women of color in counselor education and their decisions to pursue faculty positions. CRT, combined with a phenomenological approach, allowed this researcher to discover and describe the essence of this career decision-making experience for participants who have selected careers and are satisfied with their decisions (Moustakas, 1994). Included were women who decided to pursue a career as faculty and those currently employed or seeking employment as a counselor educator. Women of color face several obstacles when working in counselor education programs; therefore, understanding the factors contributing to maintaining women of color in the professoriate is critical. Giving voice to the lived experiences of women of color who are currently or have previously experienced the decision-making process will allow a more critical examination of additional implications to explore.

Definition of Key Terms

Amongst the many scholars who have conducted phenomenological research on women of color, frequent occurrences of multicultural terms are used to describe their experiences. The definition of these words may vary in context throughout literature; therefore, significant terminology is defined in this text.

Phenomenology: Smith (2013) defines it as the study of structures of experience or consciousness. More literally, it is the study of a "phenomenon": the appearance of things, or things as they appear in our experience, or the ways we experience things, thus the meanings things have in our experience (Smith, 2013). These phenomena are captured using a subjective point of view.

Career trajectory: the path your job takes as you move forward, backward, or stay on a constant track during your working years (Ashe-Edmunds, 2017). Trajectories vary person to person

depending on influences in planning, working towards career goals, and waiting for
opportunities.

Career selection: selecting a job of your choosing from options pursued or available

Career satisfaction: a significant outcome variable that serves as an indicator of career success
and personal contentment with the course of a career (Career Research, n.d.). How do women of
color define career satisfaction in counselor education?

Woman (women) of color: any persons identifying as female categorized as a minority by race or
ethnicity.

Career decision-making: the steps individuals take to explore their values, interests, personality,
and skills to select a career (Yale Office of Career Strategy, 2019)

Review of Literature

The exploration of the career choices of women, particularly women of color, is
historically understudied. Researching the career choice of dominant groups is a diverse process.
As individual needs vary person to person, adding marginalized populations such as women of
color contributes to the complexities of understanding (Cook, Heppner & O'Brien, 2002).
Production of studies on this topic have received little to no attention in over ten years, which
might be due to the lack of qualitative data to better understand the lived experiences of women
of color as they identify careers (Cook et al., 2005). It is significant to note that most
conventional models of career development used White males, identifying as straight, Christian,
and able-bodied (Cook et al., 2005). Previous models developed with dominant groups, often
cannot describe the career decisions of women, people of color, and other minority populations.
How we form career concepts of women of color require acclimation to the many influences that
shape their realities (Cook et al., 2005). Furthermore, women of color completing degrees in

Counselor Education Ph.D. programs and their career trajectories remain unexplored. Although there is a plethora of literature that addresses the experiences of women of color in academia, many find success outside of traditional faculty roles (Dade, Tartakov, Hargave, 2008 & Leigh, 2015; Bhat, Pillay, & Hudson, 2012; Constantine, Smith Redington & Owens; Bradley, 2005). Many factors affect the career choices of women of color receiving degrees in Counselor Education, and a thorough exploration of this specific issue is warranted.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2017), there were 317 recipients to receive their doctorates in a counseling discipline in the U.S. in 2017, one of the lowest rates recorded since 2008. Of the 317 awarded a doctorate in counseling, 23 were women, with 78 of the 317 identifying as a racial minority. Despite women being the majority in earned doctoral degrees in a counseling discipline, women of color continue to lag behind their White counterparts. For instance, women of color are under-represented across disciplines of academia, encompassing approximately 18.1 % of tenure and non-tenure track positions (Catalyst, 2015). Female faculty encounter more hurdles than those in administrative occupations, are least accepted in the academy, and have additional difficulties in earning tenure (Shillingford, Trice-Black & Butler, 2013; American Association of University Professors, 2006). With women of color being grossly under-represented in academia, engaging in unique processes for career exploration, and having varying experiences, additional insight on their trajectories upon completion of their studies is needed. Gaining awareness on the attitudes and beliefs of women of color in their positions within and outside of the academy, what it means to have job satisfaction, and what experiences they have had when focused on career identification can assist with expanding the body of literature that has captured similar experiences. Also, promoting professional dialogue and research regarding the careers of counselor educators who are women

of color contributes to bridging the gap and building community amongst the profession (Bryant, Coker, Durodoye, McCollum, Pack-Brown, Constantine, & O'Bryant, 2011).

Experiences of Women of Color in Counselor Education and Related Programs

Women of color, particularly Black women, have a difficult time adjusting to faculty life (Bradley, 2005). Scholars have addressed issues such as being overcommitted to serve on diversity boards, being the sole mentor for students of color, high teaching loads, and not being asked to collaborate in research or lacking the time to research independently (Bradley, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy& Addison-Bradley, 2004). Others document experiences of discrimination in pay, the adverse treatment that manifests in microaggressions, perception as the derogatory stereotypes associated with women of color, and lack of promotion and tenure (Modica & Mamiseishvilli, 2010; Kowalski, 2009). Research on the experiences of Asian and Hispanic women in Counselor Education is marginal at best, and many studies are unable to capture the voices of all women of color. Research shows that experiences of Hispanic counselor educators are undocumented, nor is there any understanding of factors that contribute to their success (Lerma, Zamarripa, Oliver, Vela, 2015). Assumptions can be made that the experiences women of color face are similar; however, representation of the umbrella termed "women of color" may or may not encompass all individuals categorized in this group.

Research depicts that women of color in doctoral studies have challenges that impede their academic trajectories (Dortch, 2016). In a study by Bhat et al. (2012), women of color in Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology Ph.D. programs indicated that they found themselves often battling to overcome stereotypes. The following quotes from this study demonstrate this sentiment; "I found myself still dispelling myths about African Americans being from the ghetto, [having] lower IQ, and [being] overly sensitive to issues of race" (p. 9).

Another commented, "I spent time legitimizing myself because sometimes they [undergraduate students being taught by the doctoral student] looked at me as if [asking] what does she know?" (p. 9). Collectively, these comments reflect how stereotypes and imposter syndrome, which involves incidents of high achievers lacking the ability to welcome their successes, can affect doctoral students of color interested in faculty positions (Weir, 2013). These are significant and highlight the importance of considering the experiences women of color have during their studies. Consideration of experiences of women of color by faculty, administration, and hiring committees can, directly and indirectly, affect the willingness of women of color and their desire to apply for faculty positions post-degree. The results of the study by Bhat (2012) highlighted factors of isolation, difficulties in understanding the department's culture, responsibilities of graduate or teaching assistantships, and lack of mentoring and advising, all of which contributed to a sense of physical and psychological pressure. Upon entering doctoral programs, many students of color must address the feelings associated with being a minority due to the lack of presence of those similar to themselves in their programs (Brunsma, Embrick, & Shin, 2016). As noted, experiences as students may significantly impact women of color and the decision to enter academic roles; thus, it is critical to consider what experiences these women had and whether these experiences influence their overall career decisions related to Counselor Education faculty roles.

Understanding the factors that influence career decision-making is an important consideration when thinking about career trajectories among women of color. Finding careers that are both purposeful and meaningful is particularly important to women of color (Burlew, 1977; Marks, Harrell-Williams, Tate, Coleman & Moore, 2018). Marks et al. (2018), examined the idea of having a "calling," which means to have feelings of purpose and altruism in work and

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the influence of family dynamics of that process. They also addressed critical consciousness, the development of an understanding of inequities in the universe, and the actions that change institutional frameworks that marginalize, and its contribution to career satisfaction in women of color (Marks et al., 2018). The findings only supported a connection to family influence in guidance in career selection, as opposed to a calling to a specific career. Critical consciousness was unfounded as there was no relation between the dimensions highlighted in this study. Due to the study being quantitative, a qualitative approach could provide the generalizability needed in exploring the experiences of the women of color that participated in more depth.

Career Decision-Making of Women of Color

Literature shows that women of color have unique considerations in making decisions regarding their careers (Bryant et al. 2011). Achieving higher education increases the earning potential and employment of individuals of all groups (U.S. Bureau of Labor & Statistics, 2014). There is considerable evidence that calls for the pursuit of obtaining higher education in the promotion of favorable career trajectories and outcomes for women of color. However, across ethnic minorities, there is a lack of cultural sensitivity in career developmental models, specifically for women (Alfred, 2001; Evans & Herr, 1994; Storlie, Hilton, Duenyas, Archer, & Glavin, 2018). Researchers cite that women of color experience more barriers in career choice and selection to include gender issues, family influence, social support, coping and self-efficacy (Storlie et al., 2018) Suh & Flores, 2017; Quimby & O'Brien, 2004; Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001; Novack & Novack, 1996).

Black women value careers that allow them to avoid hostile work environments, although researchers perceive racism as an "unavoidable way of life" (Storlie et al., 2018, p.30; Evan & Herr, 1991). Regardless of conditions, Black women remain both hopeful and resilient in career

decision-making with family support and influence as well as embracing the individual journey taken in career selection (Storie et al., 2018). Included in this individual journey is the development of racial identity, self-perception, and self-consciousness (McCowan & Alston, 1998; Baldwin & Bell, 1985; Cross, 1978). This exploration of self helps Black women achieve their goals and develop a vocational identity, whereas the lack of self-exlporation results in barriers to success (Jackson & Neville, 1988).

Scholars have cited in-group factors as pivotal in the career choice and selection of Asian women, positioning competition, and comparing Asian males as influential (Suh & Flores, 2017). Similar to Black and Hispanic groups, family influence is significant; however, there is a more substantial influence on how positive career development reflects on the family. Competition with male in-groups coupled with parental influence has contributed to the high interest in the thoughts and opinions of "others" in career choice and selection (Suh & Flores, 2017). This consistent comparison is known as relative deprivation, which may result in the belief that their career trajectories are not as significant as others (Suh & Flores, 2017; Cheung, Wan, Fan, Leong, & Mok, 2013; Cheung, 2012; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The ability to self-regulate is associated with immense career decision-making self-efficacy, exploration, and professional development (Suh & Flores, 2017; M. Kim & Kim, 2014; Lent & Brown, 2013; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000).

Hispanic women have the lowest attainment of degrees of all ethnic groups in the United States (Reyes & Nora, 212). Taking this into account, research is limited on the complexities of career decision-making of this group. Balancing traditional life roles may contest the pompous structure of higher education (Storlie, Mostade, & Duenyas, 2016). Hispanic women may need support from family to increase their self-efficacy in higher education environments. Research

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has shown that those who dwell in higher education environments have trouble adapting due to coming from more collective backgrounds. Despite this, positive academic experiences with faculty, peers, and staff have resulted in strengthening the career trajectories of Hispanic women and increasing their ability to flourish and cope (Storlie, Mostade, & Duenyas, 2016).

Career Decision-Making and Work-Life Balance

Careers that have substance and meaning are significantly crucial during the career selection process for women of color (Marks, Harrell-Williams, Tate, Coleman & Moore, 2018; Burlew, 1977). Substance and meaning can foster an environment in which women of color feel "called" and purposed in what they do (Allan, Tebbe, Duffy & Autin, 2015; Marks et al., 2018). Also, careers that consider the many roles women of color may hold outside of the work environment affirm their place and worth to organizations (Cook et al., 2005). Roles outside of careers for women include home life and families. Although autonomy can play a significant role in career trajectories, sustainability occurs when a sense of community exists through their work. (Cook et al., 2005). This literature supports that several moving intrinsic and extrinsic factors influence women's search for job satisfaction (Cook et al., 2005; Allan et al., 2015; and Blakin et al., 2018).

Exploring the career selection process requires that researchers consider the systems in which women of color dwell. These systems, from an ecological perspective, include microsystems, mesosystems, ecosystems, and macrosystems. Microsystems include social interactions at work, school, and within the home. Mesosystems capture the interconnection between microsystems. Exosystems include indirect influences such as neighborhoods and the media, and macrosystems incorporate values and norms (Cook et al., 2005. How women of color maneuver through these systems can affect how they select their careers. A study on Hispanic

counselor educators found that parental expectations facilitated a more exceptional contribution to pursuing higher education and professional development (Lerma et al., 2015). This study adds to the literature that supports family influences have a significant impact on the career path one chooses to select as families typically provide knowledge and monetary support while imparting their values and beliefs, which are inclined to influence career choice (Marks et al., 2018). It is also important to note that the various stereotypes reflected throughout social cultures may also contribute to what women of color consider pursuing. The inner workings of career trajectory take place with several guiding factors and conceptualize the many components of life for women of color.

Paralleling this work-life balance embodies stability between personal and professional life, which is a significant milestone to reach in achieving the desired level of career satisfaction. Literature that explores the work-life balance of people of color is extensively abandoned as the concept is associated with a special status of privilege that minority populations typically do not have (Balkin, Reiner, Hendricks, Washington, McNeary, Juhnke & Hunter, 2018). Balkin et al. (2018) examined the effects of work addiction and its impact on life balance, finding that a lack of community support resulted in more prevalent work addiction. The Balkin (2018) study revealed that individuals who are overwhelmed with work often suffer in their relationships, therefore having work environments that have a sense of community that are inclusive of individual differences and are emotionally supportive can create better work-life balance. It is plausible to consider that women of color gravitate towards careers that offer balance and stability in career selection.

Summary

The literature presented gives great consideration to women of color's experiences in faculty roles; however, literature does not explicitly address trajectory into faculty roles or career satisfaction. Most of the literature addresses the challenges faced in faculty positions and not how or what processes women consider when making their career decisions. Women have multiple roles outside of work, and that appreciation is given to altruism in the work environment. What remains unclear is the phenomenon of how they come to select the spaces they occupy, how they achieve work-life balance, and what experiences contributed specifically to career selection. Lastly, a study that examines women of color to include Latino/Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, American Indians, and Black or African Americans in various work settings greatly adds to the exploration of minority women's career decision-making.

Description and Rationale of Qualitative Design

This study employed a qualitative approach. The use of a qualitative method requires the researcher to agree to the essential philosophical assumptions and allow for the conceptualization of behaviors, actions, beliefs, and values that capture the essence of a phenomenon amongst participants through an exploration of connectedness in their relationships and results (Nolen & Talbert, 2011; Berg & Lune, 2013). The CRT framework is used in this study to provide an account for actions, beliefs, and behaviors to hypothesize and code themes within the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2008). Qualitative inquiry allows the researchers' focal points to be on instinctive expression and experiences designated by the individuals participating (Berg and Lune, 2013). This approach values the researcher's ability to use reflexivity throughout the process, collecting the lived experiences of women of color. Qualitative methods also employ "thick rich descriptions" involving intentionality to one's behavior in understanding and absorbing the context of the situation or behavior (Ponterotto, 2006). Researchers can capture feelings, desires, symbols, interpretations, and other subjective components, all known as life-worlds (Berg and Lune, 2013). Specifically, this qualitative study sought to understand the influencing factors and experiences related to career trajectories and career decision-making of women of color who have earned or are earning their degrees in Counselor Education. Previous research addressed experiences of women of color in counselor education and some factors that may influence their career decision-making; however, a more in-depth and textual understanding is necessary to give voice to the lived experiences of women of color who have selected their careers (Lerma, 2015; Shillingford, 2013; Holcomb & Addison-Bradley, 2005).

Phenomenology

For this study, I employed the use of phenomenology to collect and analyze the data. Phenomenology seeks to understand the behaviors of individuals by ascribing meaning, frameworks, and the essence of the lived experiences amongst a group of people who are experiencing a peculiar phenomenon (Simon & Goes, 2011). Moustakas (1994), saw the combination of behavior and experience as an integral relationship with those experiencing the phenomenon. In phenomenology, the researcher is engaged in the experience with the participants, room is given for insight, understanding is increased, and interpretation of the experiences are compounded into themes (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenologists value methodological congruence through meticulous procedures that promote validity through thoroughness (Pereira, 2012). Phenomenological approaches help the researcher conceptualize the worldviews of groups of people by comprehending their experiences on a specific phenomenon.

For this research, it is not plausible to assert that understanding will come without exploring the various perceptions of human experience (Husserl, 1952, 1980; Laverty, 2003). Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1981) helped researchers see how phenomenology positions itself on the notion that there are multiple truths and that knowledge is constructed through experience, not intelligence or fact (Laverty, 2003). Therefore, the use of phenomenology is best suited to explore the lived experience of women of color and give meaning to the phenomenon of career decision-making in counselor education. In addition, capturing the essence or multiple essences common to participants is foundational to phenomenology (Patton, 2002). The essence of this phenomenological study is identifying as a woman of color and selecting a faculty position as a career. Due to the phenomena being an experience shared by myself, I felt a hermeneutic phenomenological approach best suited for this research. This study, being birthed out of a topic

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from my own experiences, is a fundamental element of hermeneutic phenomenology, making use of this design appropriate (Van Manen, 1990).

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

The phenomenological method of inquiry allows for the interpretation of lived experiences and the engagement of making meaning to gain a deeper human understanding of a shared phenomenon (Qutoshi, 2018). Literature posits that some contradictions exist between phenomenology and hermeneutics; however, my position as the messenger that delivers the interpretation of the participants' lived experiences made this approach most appropriate. "Hermeneutics is concerned with the understanding and interpretation of our being in the world and how our different ways of being in the world are connected to our understanding of things" (Kakorri, 2009, p.26) In acknowledging that subjectivity is unavoidable in the research, I facilitated an approach that allowed me to seek out my subjectivity while my research was in process, collection, and analysis (Peshkins, 1988). Gadamer, the founder of hermeneutic phenomenology, posited that all "knowledge consists of prejudice and pre-judgments" (Van Manen, 2016, p.133). Qualitative methods of inquiry are not free of subjectivity from the researcher; therefore, acknowledgment of preconceptions as a condition of understanding and interpretation is essential (Gadamer, 1960, 1998; Laverty, 2003). As a woman of color, who is currently engaging in the process of career decision-making, I must acknowledge both my subjectivity and pre-judgments in completing research on this topic. The use of this phenomenological approach is most appropriate for exploring the principal tenets of this study, primarily how the experiences of women of color in counselor education may assist in better understanding their career decision-making. Furthermore, "essence" as described by van

Maanen, is a "linguistic construction, a description of a phenomenon," which bridges the connection between both traditional and hermeneutic phenomenology (van Maanen, 1990, p.39).

Description of Design

A phenomenological research design was used to conduct this study. Phenomenological research originated from philosophy and psychology, allowing the researcher to study the lived experiences of individuals and a specific phenomenon depicted by participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Phenomenology allows the researcher to capture the essence of a specific phenomenon experienced by multiple participants. In collecting data, phenomenological frameworks do not dictate, but rather seek to understand how the phenomenon is displayed in one's awareness (Giorgi, 2012; Dortch, 2016). In other words, the studied phenomena are conceptualized by the researcher using data collected from interviews and observation, leading to an understanding of how this information is influential to the topic (Dortch, 2016). Additionally, qualitative research situates the researcher as the instrument; therefore, a combination of reflexivity, emergent designs, meaning-making, triangulation, and inductive and deductive analysis were used to gather and interpret data during these processes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

To establish quality qualitative research, Tracy's (2010) "Big Tent" criteria served as a guiding model. This specific model focuses on establishing rich rigor, credibility, sincerity, and meaningful coherence in research (Tracy, 2010). The use of CRT as a basis of theory provides complexity in interpreting the lived experiences of women of color, further contributing to the rigor of the study. As the primary investigator, I understand that the checking of biases, subjectivity, and maintaining transparency is necessary to allow for sincerity. "The task of sorting out the qualities that belong to the researchers' experience of the phenomenon" was

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defined by Drew (2004) and described the need to attend to internal thoughts and beliefs—in essence, bracketing compliments epoché in that the researcher can focus on meaning and the reduction of noise that may contaminate the research (Balaban, 2002). I engaged in bracketing by keeping a reflexive journal when engaging in the details of the study. In doing this, I understood my positionality concerning participants and delayed those biases to move forward in the study (Tufford & Newnan, 2010).

To establish credibility, the adoption of thick descriptions, triangulation, saturation, and member-checking procedures were facilitated. Tracy (2010) gave the analogy of recipes to describe varying ways of which we do the same thing in different ways. These common markers assist with employing the research process without impeding on individuality in the frameworks and methods used. Triangulation was used to increase the depth of the findings by inviting additional perspectives through cross verification from multiple sources (Varpio, Monrouxe, O'Brien, & Rees, 2017). With the triangulation of data, I arrived at saturation and discovered "a truth" (Varpio et al., 2017). For this study, I used data, theory, and methodological triangulation to enhance the credibility of the findings. Furthermore, the study will maintain the procedures and goals that are set forth throughout to include connecting to literature, research questions, findings, and interpretations (Tracy, 2010).

Procedure

Participant Sampling and Recruitment Techniques

Purposeful sampling was used to select participants who self-identified as a woman of color, working in CACREP faculty positions in counselor education for three years or less. Purposeful selection allowed the phenomenon to be researched in a way that helped the researcher comprehend the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To get a diverse

pool of applicants in race, ethnicity, and geographical location, participants were recruited

through counselor education listservs. Participants were recruited using email distribution and

social media posts inviting them to participate in the study and were selected based on meeting

the criteria stated above. The email included an overview of the research study and the

information letter required by Auburn's Institutional Review Board (list appendices). Those

interested were directed to contact the PI via her Auburn University email address to answer any

questions and provide the informed letter and demographic questionnaire. After participants

consented to participate in the study, times were selected that were agreeable for both the

participant and researcher (PI).

Institutional Review Board Processes

Before participating in research and scholarship, researchers take the responsibility of

ensuring ethical practices by having consistent regard for participants and keeping them

informed, reducing any risk associated with participation, and imploring an appropriate design to

the methods, procedures, and analysis that responds to the research questions and acknowledge

those who contribute. To ensure the ethics of my study, the Institutional Review Board reviewed

all components before its beginning. Recruited participants were provided an information letter

before receiving a demographic questionnaire, as advised by the board. Obtaining consent for

participants in the study included providing them with a copy of the information letter regarding

the purpose of the study, participation, rights, procedures, and any risk associated. Upon receipt

of the information letter and demographic questionnaire, I began scheduling for data collection.

Data Collection

The primary investigator (PI) was responsible for recruiting potential participants,

consenting, and interviewing the participants, and transcribing the data. Participants were current

faculty in counselor education who had completed all course work or ABD (all but dissertation) or current faculty in counselor education with three years or less in their roles. The PI sent recruitment emails using various counseling listservs as well as social media posts that reached counselor education students and faculty across the United States. The PI had access to the participants' contact information once initial contact was made on interest in participating in the study with her direct contact information being provided in the recruitment emails. Once the email was received, the PI shared the informed consent with the potential participant to begin the consent process. The participants then completed a demographic questionnaire and began scheduling a time for the interview that could be mutually agreed upon by the PI and participant. The interviews were held via Zoom or a phone call in a confidential setting of the researcher and participants choosing. Informed consent was further explained to allow for any additional questions. Participants selected or were assigned a pseudonym for confidentiality purposes prior to beginning the interview. Recordings were on a recorder and audio-only. Once interviews were transcribed, all information was securely uploaded to the Auburn University Box online storage system and labeled with a pseudonym created by the participant or primary investigator. This system has secured access in place.

Demographic Questionnaire

Data collection began with the collection of demographic information through the use of a questionnaire specifically designed for this study. The demographic questionnaire included questions pertaining to participants' race, gender, employment status, CACREP accreditation status of their doctoral institution, type of institution of present employment, and type of faculty role. By asking these questions, I was able to verify that participants qualified to participate in

the study. In addition, this provided insight into the diversity of voices from women of color that would be heard through the research study.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Participants participated in a 10-15 open-ended question, semi-structured interview that allowed flexibility to probe into additional experiences introduced by the participants. The interview questions were constructed from the "Big Q" question, which Josselson (2013) describes as a conceptual roadmap that distinguishes one's study from the gap in literature discovered. This question guided the "how" to better understand my core theoretical question in exploring the career decision-making of women of color in counselor education programs. My interview questions engaged the participant in "experience-near" narratives of their career decision-making process (Josselson, 2013, p. 45). The interview protocol asked minimally invasive questions about the participants' career decision-making in counselor education. The protocol was developed to probe questions related directly to the participants' decision to pursue or obtain a role as a faculty member. Interviews lasted approximately forty-five minutes to one hour and were conducted via phone or via Zoom.

Data Analysis

Concurrent analysis. The concurrent analysis combines information gathered by the researcher with related data from the literature (Snowden & Atkinson, 2012). I began analyzing my data after each interview and so forth. After transcribing an interview, I began to engage in the analysis by sitting with the data concurrently and exploring the details (Creswell 2014). Upon the completion of the first interview, concurrent data analysis was employed until each was concluded and all data were obtained.

Epoché. Primary in this study was engaging in epoché, which is imperative when conducting phenomenological research. Epoché allows for bracketing of personal assumptions that are instinctively presumed (Roberts, 2019). Utilizing Husserl's epoché allows openness to new knowledge, and the view of the information received with fresh eyes (Roberts, 2019; Moustakas, 1994). I began my study by bracketing my experience as a Black woman exploring career-decision making as a doctoral candidate. In doing this, I was able to separate my own experiences from that of my participants. This process was essential to implement not only when beginning my study but throughout data analysis by engaging in reflexive journaling.

Phenomenological data analysis. Both textural and structural descriptions were used to capture the essence of the lived experience of the participants' career decision-making. These descriptions included structural descriptions, the 'how' of experience, to include verbatim quotes and responses to establish the links amongst the meanings (Moustakas, 1994). The textural descriptions, by Moustakas (1994) include the 'what' of the experience by studying the universal themes of the phenomenon experienced across all participants (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015). Analysis processes included both hand-coding and transcription services to transcribe my data. As each interview was completed, I began to hand-code the data until each was complete. I then placed the codes into NVIVO software to organize and begin inductive analysis of the findings, creating a codebook of the data. The analysis was then sent to the auditor who reviewed the codes of themes and probed for additional meaning.

Trustworthiness of the data. The trustworthiness of the data involves the researcher increasing the rigor of the study being conducted (Amankwaa, 2016). For this study, trustworthiness is defined by building the following, as noted by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Amankwaa (2016): 1. "Credibility: confidence in the 'truth' of the finding 2. Transferability:

showing that the findings have applicability in other contexts 3. Dependability: showing that the findings are consistent and could be repeated 4. Confirmability: a degree of neutrality or the extent to which the respondents shape the study's findings and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest" (p.121). Within my study, I used triangulation, member checking, reflexivity, rich thick descriptions, and an audit trail to establish value and enhance the findings of my study.

Member checking. Upon completing the data analysis and coding themes, participants were sent the findings to review. Member checking was used to ensure the certainty of experiences shared by participants in my interpretation and translation. This method was employed to validate the analysis process employed (Birt, Scott, Cavers, 2016; Creswell, 2014). Participants received a hard copy of coded data and themes to review their accuracy and confirm their experiences were appropriately depicted.

Triangulation. Data collection is represented most accurately when the researcher does not solely rely on the three I's, insight, intuition, and impression (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Triangulation was used to methodically sort through the common codes and themes through the lens of the research and auditor or peer-reviewer (Creswell & Miller, 2010). The auditor was selected with the intent to relate to the career decision-making process and contribute to a deductive analysis of the data. My research team consisted of myself, a White, female, doctoral candidate approaching the career decision-making process, and my dissertation chair.

Audit trail. An audit trail was upheld throughout the research process to document details of the research process (Creswell & Miller, 2010). The audit trail was stored in Box, a three-factor authenticated system.

Bracketing and reflexivity. As the researcher, I identify as a woman of color in a Counselor Education program preparing to select a career as faculty. Critical to this study was

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my transparency in being the primary instrument for methods, data collections, and analysis in this study. I had to acknowledge my personal biases throughout the research process, attending to how I conceptualized participants in the study. For these reasons, I engaged in reflexive journaling throughout my research study to bracket my experiences from those of my participants. In qualitative research, achieving quality and validity involves journaling, reflecting, and reflexivity (Vicary, Young, Hicks, 2017). My underlying assumption surrounded the idea that women of color have unique decision-making processes because of their marginalization. My belief is that the factors considered by women of color differ from their White female and male colleagues. Also, considering whether women of color had a sense of purpose and meaning in what they do, freedom and autonomy seemed particularly important to me. I assumed that my positionality would allow me to build rapport and engage my participants in my research study.

Additionally, my stance as a student and within my professional identity was also integral to my positionality. As a woman of color, in a doctorate program in Counselor Education transitioning into my third year, my experiences could be similar or significantly differ from other women of color. Each woman had intersecting identities that shaped her experiences. As a Black, heterosexual, Christian, cisgender, able-bodied woman, I felt the need to acknowledge those distinctions. As the researcher, I was transparent, honest, and informative in my interactions with participants, disclosing any problems or concerns that surfaced and the resolutions (Nolen & Talbert, 2011). Lastly, I explored my own values, biases, and worldviews concerning how it could influence my research study.

Summary

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Phenomenology allows for a description of experiences to be ascribed meaning holistically by scaling down the experiences of several individuals to a common essence (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Phenomenology is best suited for research intending to capture the individual phenomenon of career trajectories of women of color and allows for exploration of influential experiences in career selection through interviews and observation. Foundational to social science is the pursuit of answers to the how and why of individual behavior along with the constructs and developments they establish surrounding a particular phenomenon (Chafetz, 2004). Using traditional approaches to research, this understudied topic was pivotal in collecting the needed data. Ultimately, this framework provided reciprocity to the participants through the use of phenomenological qualitative inquiry and a social justice framework for data collection in the sharing of their lived experience. Good ethics require that a researcher considers the reciprocal exchange that occurs with participants; that is the consideration of what we take and what we give (Given, 2008).

Hermeneutic phenomenology was used as it allowed the researcher to go beyond the description of the phenomena into meaning-making and exploration (Bynum & Varpio, 2018). Hermeneutic phenomenology calls for interpretation and focuses on the lived experience being studied, the involvement of the researcher's experiences in data collection, and the analysis and reflection of thought throughout processes (Bynum & Varpio, 2018). This approach allowed the researcher to promote transparency by candidly acknowledging biases and subjectivity in the analysis.

Chapter 3: Findings

"Unlike my women of color colleagues who have faced their marginalization right from the day they were born, for me, my marginalized identities were a shock that was pushed onto me, whether I wanted or whether I chose or whether I recognized. Being a woman of color even in your dissertation, I don't think I consciously chose that identity until more recently, it was an identity that was slapped on my face that so what do you think in terms of being another woman of color? That took me some time. Knowing that I'm going to be a faculty, I knew that I would have to confront some of these choices that were once again made for me as opposed to made by me. Be that through expressions of entitlement, expressions of privilege, expressions of ownership, or infantilizing what I'm doing, or just overly exoticizing whatever I was doing, forgetting that I was not very different from them, be that through my education, be that through my values. I knew that that was important, not a decision that I made, but that was a decision that was made for me when I was choosing my trajectory as a faculty."- Vanessa, Participant and Asian woman of color

CRT considers the constructs of race and power to promote equity and empowerment amongst women of color in the sharing of their experiences (Price, 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Through this framework women of color were encouraged to share their lived experiences of career decision-making in counselor education. The purpose of this study was to examine the career trajectories of women of color occupying faculty roles in counselor education, and how their experiences influenced career decision-making processes and decisions about their careers post-degree. The following research question guided the qualitative exploration of this phenomenon: What are the lived experiences of women of color in their career decision-making in counselor education? Thick descriptions from the participants experiences emerged from the

semi-structured interviews that allowed for probing. The women of color identified several intrinsic factors that influenced their career decision-making such as intuition, mentorship, sense of community, power, privilege, family, professional development, and previous clinical experience.

This chapter introduces the key findings collected from nine detailed, semi-structured interviews. A general overview of the demographic characteristics of the participants is provided, following information obtained from the demographic questionnaire in Table 1. The findings are then summarized into seven themes and six subthemes shared across the nine participants as follows: 1) Leadership by mentorship and influence on counselors-in-training and communities with a sub-theme: 1.a. embracing social justice and advocacy, 2) sense of community felt amongst colleagues with a sub-theme: 2.a. visibility of diverse faculty, 3) power and privilege in identity with a subtheme: 3.a desire for respect 4) job selection by intuition and fit of the university with subthemes 4.a. significance of salary and 4.b. a desire for continued growth and opportunities to learn 5) experience as students in counseling programs 6) family influence 7) Post-masters experience: pushing beyond clinical practice

This study included nine Asian and Black women of color who had obtained and occupied a position as faculty in a CACREP accredited counselor education program for three years or less across the South, North, and Midwestern regions of the U.S. Each of the participants graduated from CACREP programs and were engaged in full-time work at their respective universities.

Table 1: Participant Demographics

Participant	Age Range	Race/Ethnicity	Length of Time as Faculty	Role Rank	Institution Type
Alexis	35-49	Black/African American	2-3 years	Associate Professor (non-tenure track)	Teaching
Eden	25-34	Asian	0-1 years	Assistant Professor (tenure-track)	Research II
Janet	35-49	Black/African American	0-1 years	Assistant Professor (tenure-track)	Research I
Jordan	25-34	Black/African American	1-2 years	Assistant Professor (tenure-track)	Research II
Michelle	25-34	Asian	0-1 years	Assistant Professor (tenure-track)	Research I
Nicole	35-49	Black/African American	1-2 years	Assistant Professor (non-tenure track)	Teaching
Sade	25-34	Black/African American	0-1 years	Assistant Professor (tenure-track)	Teaching
Sara	25-34	Asian	0-1 years	Clinical Professor (non-tenure)	Teaching
Vanessa	25-34	Asian	0-1 years	Assistant Professor (tenure-track)	Teaching

All participants graduated from CACREP programs, were employed full-time, and identified as cisgender.

Alexis was full-time faculty and coordinator splitting her time evenly between roles at her university. Her institution of employment was an online university.

Eden was full-time faculty working primarily in the school counseling program. Her employment was allocated to 50 percent research, 25 percent teaching, and 25 percent service. Her institution of employment was located in the Southeast.

Janet was full-time faculty with designations in teaching, research and service with allocations being equally distributed. Janet described an emphasis on research and teaching at her institution located in the Southeast.

Jordan was full-time faculty with responsibilities that included teaching, advisement, research, and service within and outside of her department. Jordan also served as a coordinator in at her institution which was located in the Mideast.

Michelle was full-time faculty with designations in teaching, research, and service. Michelle's allocation was primarily dedicated to research; however, she described an increased amount of service, accreditation, and program responsibilities. Michelle's institution was located in the Northeast.

Nicole was full-time faculty and a program director with designations in teaching. Nicole oversaw practicum, internship, and the counseling center at her university. Nicole's institution was located in the Mideast.

Sade was full-time faculty and the clinical coordinator in her program. Sade also held allocations in teaching. Sade's institution was located in the Northeast.

Sara was full-time faculty with allocations in teaching and service.

Vanessa was full-time faculty with designations primary teaching in the clinical mental health program at her institution. Vanessa also had responsibilities that included service and leadership. Vanessa's institution was located in the Midwest.

Discussion of Themes

The interviews on the lived experiences of women of color who had obtained and occupied a position as faculty in a CACREP accredited counselor education program captures the essence of the shared and individualized experiences of each woman. The interviews reveal the journeys that formulated career decision-making in counselor education, an expression of passions, aspirations, challenges, drive, and growth throughout their experiences. From the data captured in the essence of the phenomenon of career decision-making, the reader can gain insight and awareness into how women of color come to make decisions regarding their careers and what is needed to sustain their presence within counselor education programs. Data was hand-coded and organized into themes before placed into NVIVO software for organization. NVIVO assisted with inductive coding to find the essence of the lived experiences through the data amongst the participants. Seven significant themes and six subthemes emerged from the data and are discussed below.

Leadership by Mentorship and Influence on Counselors-in-training and Communities

Leadership by mentorship and influence on counselors in-training and communities was identified as a theme. The majority of the women in this study explicitly expressed throughout their interviews a need to make an impact. Not only within the classroom but beyond into their respective communities and marginalized populations. Women of color value careers that give them purpose and meaning (Burlew, 1977; Marks, Harrell-Williams, Tate, Coleman & Moore, 2018). Participants reiterated this in articulating their positions to shape their students and

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individuals by being a representative for both people of color, practicing clinicians, and counselors-in-training. Alexis expressed her desire to educate and propel school counselors-in-training forward so they could better assist with the needs of students within the school district:

It's really important to me to be able, one, to see some things and people that they can't see in themselves or may not be in themselves yet. And to help them find that and then to help put people in a position to change their lives. As a school counselor, I help put students in a position to make changes and to do better in life. I wanted to be in a position to support and shape future school counselors so that there will be less stories or situations where students aren't getting what they wanted. I could be instrumental in shaping them and teaching them how to work better with students. So like my whole kind of reason for wanting to be a counselor educator in the first place was because I've met so many terrible school counselors. I wanted to do something about that. That's extremely important to me, which is why this field is important to me.

Sara expressed similar thoughts:

I wanted to continue to support school counselors and also wanted to continue to support students by way of supporting school counselors. I thought the best way to do that was to pursue my Ph.D. and to focus my research and energies into school counseling and training future school counselors and also advocacy for school counselors in K-12 settings. I also do a lot of trainings for clinical mental health counselors as well.

Sara also spoke about using her platform to approach the way she facilitated pedagogical methods. She described her thoughts about being a part of the very communities she works:

I want to be able to influence how it is that counseling is being taught. I want to be able to influence the different ways in which the communities that I'm a part of or some of the

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communities that I'm very passionate about working in are represented. I don't know. I feel that's very important to me.

Michelle discussed the impact she had in having a Ph.D. within the community where she was reared, and the emphasis placed on her title:

So, I will say that, um, in my community, mental health is really not something that exists or is talked about. I'm from an immigrant community. A lot more of the generation that's kind of been raised in the U.S. is starting to see all of the needs for mental health, trauma, acculturation, understanding those different concepts. However, the community that I grew up in it's very much not something they consider. It's even now if I talk about mental health, people kind of dismiss it, and they ask for, you know, they want it to focus on like the science. So, if they do talk about this, they're thinking, all right, so if somebody has schizophrenia, what are the drugs you're going to give them? Or they want to throw somebody in my room and be like, make it better. And I'm like, that's not how any of this works. So, part of my wanting...I wanted to get a doctorate, I think from the beginning because it's honestly the only way anybody in my community would take somebody seriously, in talking about mental health, because the word counselor just doesn't exist. But if you say, you know, "Dr" blah, blah, blah, ""Ph.D., they understand what that would mean. In some ways, you know, they don't understand what this field is, but they can understand, okay, there's research behind this. There's something more. So, it was kind of a reason or way to give my voice more power within my community that I want to give back to.

Mentorship was stated as a motivating factor towards the pursuit of a faculty role in counselor education. Participants discussed how they have been able to reach students through

their positions at their institutions and provide guidance and support. Participants conveyed a responsibility to serve as mentors and "passing it along," amongst others in the field. Participants reported an understanding of the "why" mentorship is critical, "how" it has worked in their professional lives, and the power that exists in mentorship alone, even if not persons of color or woman. Mentorship was voiced as a component that gave the women purpose and meaning through supporting and serving of students and faculty of color. When speaking about what it meant to be a counselor educator of color, Sara discussed its relation to her students stating, "I think it means having this really personal, and I think powerful connection with your students even though you might not always have that connection to the field."

Nicole shared how mentorship lead her to seek a Ph.D., also instilling in her the need for more representation in the field for others to see:

> It was my first advisor in my master's program, who was really a strong advocate to encourage me to go forward and get my Ph.D. He was very instrumental in encouraging me as a woman of color and saying what a need there is for our field to have more women color on this level.

> Vanessa outlined the advice and instruction she received from women of color in the field. She relayed her job hunt and connection with others that had shared that experience. She also discussed how this translated into her desire to pay it forward with other women of color in the counseling profession:

> They would offer up this wealth of knowledge that just fits like an ultimate act of generosity, an ultimate act of kinship that they could recall what they felt like 10 years ago, 20 years ago, 30 years ago when they were in the job hunt. They want to help this younger female faculty, aspiring faculty, and create a time in their extremely busy

schedules. I was very aware of how pass-it-on, pass on the kindness culture we had

secretly created as other women of color in counseling.

Jordan spoke on her pursuit of mentorship regardless of whether an identified mentor occupied a

role in her counseling department or not. She also expressed a need to have women of color in

academia in her life:

> Mentorship is something that I have been very much, um aware of as far as like the
>
> importance of it and purposeful and trying to, you know, get mentors around me who
>
> look like me and have experience within academia, whether that's in my department or
>
> not.

Jordan also discussed reaching out to expand her network of mentors:

> I am the only faculty, um, black faculty member in my college. There are a couple black
>
> staff members, but as far as in my college, you know, I'm the only one that I know of
>
> right now. Um. So, I knew that I would have to seek those types of supports out in. I've
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> been very well; I've put much effort into trying to do that. So, I have an African
>
> American female faculty mentor right now at the university who, um, I recently just got
>
> in contact with last semester, so I'm excited to start this mentorship relationship with her.
>
> Granted, she's not in counselor education, but you know, I don't care. I, just having
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> somebody, like I said, that looks like me. I had experiences going through academia and
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> being successful in getting tenure, obtaining tenure, and all that kind of stuff has been,
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> um, what is important to me. So, I'm excited to start that relationship with her and, um,
>
> possibly might have another person as well, um, of actually getting ready to have lunch
>
> with this person next week. Um, the other female faculty of color. So I'm like, you know,
>
> it takes a village, so, um, you know, whoever I can kind of get around me to kind of help

guide me and school me or what it looks like to make it academia as a woman of color is

important.

Janet spoke on the power of mentorship by itself, regardless of color or sex, and the sense of

purpose it serves in academia:

I don't know of minority women, or doc students know that. I don't know if we have

possessed the confidence because maybe we didn't see it or not enough of it or didn't

have enough people to affirm us in a way and empower and encourage us to move

forward. I was very fortunate, and all my mentors were not African American women or

minority women, they were just sometimes women and sometimes not even women. But

the point is I needed people in my life..they are needed to equip me and empower me and

filling me that I had what it takes to make it in academia.

Embracing social justice and advocacy. A sub-theme of embracing social justice and

advocacy emerged from mentorship as women expanded on reaching outside of their roles of

mentoring faculty and students into a need to make an impact on individual marginalized

communities.   Expressed was an understanding of how the permeance of racism persists and a

need for the continuance of social justice, advocacy, and education within the counseling

profession through mentorship and beyond (Hilrado, 2010). Women were able to acknowledge a

need for social justice reform within communities and how their positions as counselor educators

could assist. What emerged regarding social justice was engaging counselors-in-training in their

understanding of the needs of communities and how individuals in counseling can be impacted at

varying levels. Among women, this caused a need for increased focus on issues within and

outside of the counseling room and the use of personal visibility to be an advocate. Michelle

discussed her need to begin to instill in counselors-in-training the importance of this work within the communities that are at a disadvantage:

> So how do we, um, push counselors-in-training to move past just a one on one connection to understanding a community and moving into moving basically from counseling into social justice work. But I'm also interested in that in more of a greater sense for how we develop that in different communities, period.

Focusing on all levels in which individuals are impacted was significant for Eden as she discussed a need for more emphasis on insight and awareness by relating to the narratives of populations rather than looking at numerical data:

> And because I believe that, you know, the more that we listen to the individual at a micro level, the more we know. So that we support them at a macro level as well. So you know, I don't know if that totally answers your question, but I think for me, like that's the weight of..like the importance of the profession is how, you know, how we can truly provide an insight into something a lot bigger than just like the numbers. And "what," you know, like the pieces that I think, societally we value a lot more of like, what's the bottom line and you know, how am I going to make them money and all of that. But I think there's also people behind that. And I think that's why counseling is so, you know, was so important to me.

Nicole expounded on this increased insight and awareness about marginalized populations that could help bridge the gap to mental health services. She also spoke on how advocacy for more people of color to enter the profession could result in a belief that academia can and will accommodate the diversity:

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Then also to be a voice to the profession for African Americans about what are some of

the pressing needs of our population as well as what are ways it interacts with us that will

make it so that we are more receptive to receive mental health services. Then from a

teaching standpoint, as we have more counselors where people that want to become

counselors that are African-Americans, I think it's beneficial to have faculty that look like

us so that we know that this is not just for who we may believe it's for, but that it's for us

too.

Sense of Community Felt Amongst Colleagues

Sense of community felt amongst colleagues was identified as a theme. Participants

described the importance of having a "support network," feeling a "parental or guardianship"

over one another, having "somebody who would lookout", and opportunities to "connect" with

both colleagues of color and White colleagues. A sense of community is often described as

interpersonal support for individuals by cultivating a sense of acceptance, belonging, and benefit

from available social support (Cohen, 2013). This theme resulted in each of the women defining

what a sense of community looked like at their institutions and its value. Both Alexis and Sade

described the importance of having a supportive network of individuals within the counseling

education discipline in order to have space for error, be able to lean on when having feelings of

isolation, and someone who was "looking out". Alexis described the importance of this:

And so it's really important to have a support network as a counselor educator so that I

don't feel as alone or I don't feel like I'm doing things on my own or I have had the

potential to make a mistake because I didn't know what was going on. And so being

supported wherever I am is extremely important to me.

Alexis also highlighted the personal relationships formed from having the support of colleagues:

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There were Saturdays that I had to work too, and I wasn't able to see my son, or I would have to find someone who could watch my son. And it turns out that one of the other faculty of color that I connected with ended up watching my son on Saturdays while I had to work".

Sade paralleled this describing the significance of having both an individual that was a colleague and friend that supported her, "I had the luxury of having a friend, like a close friend, not even just a colleague, that I work with (…) I had somebody who was looking out for me".

Eden spoke on her ability to foster an environment that creates a sense of community.

There's this understanding that there aren't a lot of us. And so, I think we feel like almost parental or like guardianship of each other and of others, like of students coming up in the profession that we need to foster more of us.

Janet described connecting with other women in the profession even outside of her institution as a woman and person of color:

I think they're striking numbers and they're connected with both minority colleagues as well as majority, I guess you could say colleagues, and it's been appreciated having the opportunity to connect with both sets as a woman and not just be regulated to one or the other. I needed that, and I benefited from it.

Visibility of diverse faculty and students. A subtheme emerged from sense of community felt by colleagues, identified as visibility of diverse faculty and students. The women expressed their appreciation for the diversity of faculty and students at their institutions. This included acknowledging that some of their institutions had made progress in this area during their time at the institution. Although all institutions did not begin with many people of color, some detailed the progress made since their arrival. Women discussed the significance of

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diversity and their gratitude in being able to collaborate not only with faculty of color but also with students of color. In addition, collaboration on research on multicultural issues, support, and having the representation in not being the "only one" permeated through the data. Sara described the differences between her doctoral program and her faculty position and how much it meant to her to see the diversity as a faculty member:

> I think another thing that I really like about the school that I'm in right now is the students are pretty diverse. It's much more diverse than where I was doing my doctorate. I really appreciate that. Then it's like you really feel like you're working together with your students to also build something. There's a lot of women of color as well that are just in the program that I'm teaching in. I really appreciate that.

Michelle added an additional layer to the faculty of color's significance in her department, discussing an increased potential for collaboration on similar research interests and connecting on a humanistic level through racial identification:

> I appreciate that there is a faculty of color. Um, and somebody that we could possibly talk to for their research interest because a lot of people are more interested in multicultural issues, and they didn't have as much support on that earlier. Um, but they're also excited about, um, just understanding a little bit more about what it's like to be a woman of color and pursue kind of the different things.

The progression of her department in hiring and retaining more people of color was noted by Janet as she communicated her satisfaction with more minorities, "I'm different, I look different from the people that were originally in my department. I'm happy that it has become more diversified with my being employed. There are some additional hires, other minorities specifically".

Power & Privilege in Identity

Power, pride, and privilege in identity emerged as a theme as participants discussed their roles and interactions in varying spaces in academia. Many spoke on opportunities that existed by being in the counselor education profession and how their identities as women of color propelled their agendas. The women discussed how their presence, titles, privilege, and navigation of institutional systems helped them acknowledge the power they held, their pride, and the privilege that now existed to connect and make an impact. Janet reflected on her journey from a practicing school counselor to a counselor educator and how the career change was influential:

> You're sitting at the table with the people that are making the decisions that were handed down to me once before. Now I know the people that are sitting on the board, and I interact with them. Now I know how these decisions come about. Before I just received the information, now I'm with the people that are making the decisions, or I can have a seat at the table to make the decisions.

Nicole discussed how her positionality within the classroom established credibility for her to raise awareness in marginalized communities:

> From a teaching standpoint, having a doctorate gives me the ability to teach in the classroom, so that type of credibility. Then from a non-teaching standpoint within the general community at large, it gives me more credibility to talk to different groups about the need for mental health awareness, especially the African American community.

Sade spoke about the importance she always held in being able to have the title of "Dr.." Although she eventually sought her Ph.D., she temporarily found solace in her role as a mental health counselor. This led her to pursue the professoriate for richer reasons:

I always had this desire to want to go for a Ph.D., PsyD something to kind of call myself

a doctor, and that was just out of vanity initially. Then once I got into the field, I started

to do some work in the field and really enjoyed just kind of being a licensed mental

health counselor.

Other women addressed not knowing their marginalized identities until beginning to operate in

educational systems. Vanessa discussed the identity that was projected on her regardless of how

she personally identified and having to empathize with other women of color who had

experienced marginalization their entire lives:

Unlike my women of color colleagues who have faced their marginalization right from

the day they were born, for me, my marginalized identities were a shock that was pushed

onto me, whether I wanted or whether I chose or whether I recognized. Being a woman of

color even in your dissertation, I don't think I consciously chose that identity until more

recently, it was an identity that was slapped on my face that so what do you think in

terms of being another woman of color? That took me some time. Knowing that I'm

going to be a faculty, I knew that I would have to confront some of these choices that

were once again made for me as opposed to made by me. Be that through expressions of

entitlement, expressions of privilege, expressions of ownership, or infantilizing what I'm

doing, or just overly exoticizing whatever I was doing, forgetting that I was not very

different from them, be that through my education, be that through my values. I knew that

that was important, not a decision that I made, but that was a decision that was made for

me when I was choosing my trajectory as a faculty.

Last, Eden talked about understanding the formalities that exist in academia and how to speak up

and out in varying situations:

I think as a woman of color, we're constantly having to navigate, um, these power

structures that are not created for our success. So being a woman of color in counselor ed

means recognizing that and knowing what battles to fight, um, and choosing them wisely

and choosing them where you're not burning yourself out.

Desire for respect. A subtheme identified from power and privilege was a desire for

respect. Many of the women spoke about their experiences in advocating for themselves and for

their voices to be heard amongst their colleagues and students. Each woman discussed the spaces

in which they operate and the unsaid but felt responses when they spoke. A theme of respect and

appreciation for their contributions to their universities and beyond emerged prominently. Many

of the women described an understanding of how the intersectionality of being both Black and

woman influenced varying perspectives, however, women reported a desire to be respected.

Eden made a statement about being in rooms with colleagues that belonged to the majority and

the level of respect and attention that was given to a White males' voice, over a woman of color,

despite conveying a similar message:

> So, you can sometimes tell that when a woman of color says something, a white
>
> male can say the same thing, and that student might take it differently depending
>
> on who said it. There's a lot more value put in what a white male counselor
>
> educator says, especially one that's a full professor. It contrasts to what an
>
> assistant professor who's a woman of color might say and say the same thing.

Jordan mirrored this message in the exclusion she described when also occupying predominantly

White spaces:

I know when I walk into the room, there are some thoughts or questions about like,

number one, am I supposed to be there? And then also, number two, kind of questioning

some of the objectivity of my teaching and my knowledge and all those kinds of things.

Vanessa added to these sentiments in her expression of being "valued" by recognizing her insight and knowledge. She went on to emphasize a need for value and respect by being advised on things of significance:

For me, it was how will I be valued here? I would be perfectly happy, I am perfectly

happy in a smaller liberal arts university where my students want to be taught by me, my

colleagues want my perspective. Even when I miss meetings, they send me an email and

say, "Hey, I know you're new to this, but we want to really know what you think about

it." I don't know if a lot of women of color faculty get to that even in the most glamorous

top tier institutions. That was very important for me, and that was another thing I was

constantly reminded to look out for. A place that I'm valued, a place where I'm respected.

Other's participants spoke about their process in earning respect from their colleagues and those within their institutions. Nicole addressed approaching individuals that would assist her in getting to the next level in her endeavors to advance:

I have ambition, there are things that I want to do, but there are certain relationships that

I'm going to have to figure out how to foster so that I can get into some rooms where

most people that look like me don't land.

Sade simply stated a need to be respected regardless of her racial identity, "So, as a woman of color, like coming into this role for me, I know that despite being a Black woman, I want it to be respected".

Job Selection by Intuition and Fit of University

Job selection by intuition and fit of the university was identified as a theme. Many of the women expressed a need to understand the culture at the institutions where they interviewed. This included non-verbal communication through body language, feelings held while visiting, and good "spirit" and "energy" by felt by faculty and students. Others spoke on appreciating the uniqueness universities offered in their programming and being able to fuel or contribute to creativity. Sara spoke on the creativity that existed in her department, the collaboration that she saw, leading her to appreciate the department, "I really like the department. I like just how creative they are, I like how they work well together".

Some women expressed having positive interactions and "feelings" about faculty and students as more critical than demographical representation. Vanessa voiced this perspective:

> When I was going for interviews, I was watching how people would talk to me, what their body language was, how the students felt around me. That was very important for me in terms of how I felt rather than just the demographics.

Sade echoed this expression, expanding on the placement of value on energy when engaging with others:

> So, it's really about the energy that I, that I sense. It's not about the money, it's about how I'm helping people, how I'm, you know, being able to be myself, how I can interact well with other people, all those different things.

"Good spirit" was what Janet needed when summing up selecting a place to work:

> When I was looking for- as picking employment as to where to work, it was important for me to have a department or to work within a department at a school, and I didn't really have a specific school in mind when I started interviewing. Things that were important to me were the ability to be able to grow, to be able to really find a good spirit.

Significance of salary. A subtheme emerged from job selection by intuition and fit of the university identified as significance of salary. Participants described different perspectives regarding the importance of salaries. Participants reported a need for women of color to negotiate increases and obtain a salary that allowed them to take care of their families. Other women reported how money was secondary to the gratification received by being a counselor educator. Sade stressed the importance of advocating for yourself during negotiations:

> Women, in general, don't negotiate for increases in salary. Then Black individuals aren't an advocate for an increase in salary. So why the hell would I walk away as a Black woman not negotiating a salary increase (….) So, I'm gonna go in here, and I'm gonna ask them for this. This wasn't so much for me to be like selfish or like greedy, but so much to be like, this is what I'm worthy of, right?

Alexis mentioned the need to be able to support her family with her finances, "Of course, finances..cause I still have to support myself and my family. So, salary also is important to me". Vanessa talked about the journey into the counseling profession not being due to the money and having lower expectations about income as a counselor educator:

> But for the money, I'm sorry, this is not the right career for you. This is a career in which we spend a lot of time working, not just the 40 hours. Of course, this is an education sector which often takes the first hit when there're budget cuts, but I think most of my colleagues, most of my friends, my mentors are in this because of how gratifying this is.

Desire for continued growth and opportunities to learn. A subtheme emerged from job selection intuition and fit of the university identified as a desire for continued growth and opportunities to learn. A need to continue to grow as counselor educators emerged as a theme amongst participants. Earning a Ph.D. was only a platform to seek more opportunities and

be challenged to increase competence in research with endless possibilities in the field of counseling. The opportunities that existed were enough for the women to feel drawn to counselor education as a way of staying abreast of emerging issues and areas of the profession. Janet discussed why she was attracted to constant knowledge seeking the counselor education faculty role would provide:

I was very much interested in the new learning that was as a part of a doc program or a Ph.D. program, and I thought the new learning paired with the years of experience. To be able to apply that new learning and still obtain new learning were very much attraction to becoming a counselor educator and working in higher ed and even more specifically, a research one institution.

Being able to continue her growth in areas of counseling, teaching, supervision, and research were of interest to Jordan as she mentioned the "limitless" options she had as a counselor educator:

I wanted to be able to see clients. I wanted to be able to teach. I wanted to, um, well, first of all, learn how to teach. I wanted to be able to supervise, do research, all of those different things. So essentially, I wanted my options to be limitless when it came to what I could do in the counseling field. So, um in my master's program. I had a couple of conversations with advisors, and they thought it would be a good fit for me. Um, and that is what pushed me towards pursuing my Ph.D.

Experience as Students in Counseling Programs

Experience as students in counseling programs emerged as a theme. When prompted to reflect on their masters and doctoral programs, many of the women expressed mixed emotions surrounding their program experiences. Some revealed how significant the support was from

faculty and being able to display vulnerability during stressful points of their programs. Some of the women found safe environments that encouraged such vulnerability to be beneficial as they were their authentic selves when personal and professional issues intersected. One participant described her decision to leave her institution because she felt marginalized and discouraged, along with increased responsibility. Others reported a lack of attention was given to multicultural issues, having no support, and feeling more connected with clinical faculty or other doctoral students due to their passion for the field. Sara expounded on her experience with her professors and the "tone deaf" approach within the classroom and with multicultural issues:

I don't think that there were a tremendous amount of people that I could turn to for support. I felt it was just all about the numbers and just getting people in, and then you're left on your own in order to graduate. If anything, I feel they put up so many more barriers in your way to get out and prove yourself, I don't know, just in a way that doesn't really mimic what happens [chuckles] in the real world. I feel there was a lot of tone-deafness also when it came to multicultural issues as well. The classes were not very good. Professors did not rely on the most current scholarship or significant work of activists and advocates. They dealt with things in a very anecdotal with a few random peer-reviewed articles thrown in for good measure. Nothing that really pushed you or prepared you for the field in a meaningful of substantive way-- I guess the professors didn't have a lot of very up to date information or perspectives. I thought it was a very superficial way of exploring topics like multicultural counseling. I didn't have much trust in any of the faculty either. That being said, towards the very end, I started to have more connections with some of the clinical faculty. I think that a lot of times the other students, that's been a source of support and learning. It's interesting. Even when I first started my

program, the best classes were always taught by doc students, just because they were more relevant, they were more up to date, they were more passionate about the work.

Alexis began by discussing her lackluster experience in her first doctoral program and the courage she discovered in making the decision to switch programs. She described an opposite experience going from an unsupportive environment into a program that allowed her to be herself, which helped to mold her as a counselor educator:

I got the complete opposite experience and the second program to where I was encouraged to be myself. I was encouraged to study and look for things that were important to me, and I didn't feel as I guess constricted as I did in the previous program. I felt more confident in being myself, and I think that experience has shaped the way that I teach now as a counselor educator in terms of not wanting to make my students feel the way that I felt in that program but also wanting to encourage them to be themselves and to, um, tap into the things that they're interested in, to help them become the best counselors that they can be.

Eden expressed feeling challenged while in her programming, yet having the support she needed with faculty who valued cultural issues:

A lot of the professors, their focuses were on multicultural and social justice issues and counseling. So, I felt really supported, and I felt like, you know, it was definitely difficult, and I had challenges along the way just personally. Um, but I feel like I was really supported, um, in my program as well.

Last, Sade spoke about the safe environment she had amongst faculty in being able to cry and release frustration:

So I know like I've cried in front of several of my professors before, cause it was either

just being exhausted, you know, being, being overwhelmed, you know, not understanding

the material, things like that(…) And having the ability to feel comfortable enough to cry.

And the keyword there is comfortable enough because sometimes we end up crying and

we still kind of like shame ourselves for doing that in front of other people.

Family Influence

Family influence emerged as a theme. Family influence is a theme that consistently

presents itself within studies on women of color (Chope, 2005; Cooskey & Cole, 2012). Women

in this study spoke of their childhood upbringings and how that shaped their desire to pursue the

counseling field. Also, a level of consideration was given to families both present and hoped for,

which was a prevalent theme among women. Participants discussed how they valued their

universities taking into consideration their roles as wives and mothers to obtain work-life balance

and flexibility in accommodating future families. Women reflected wanting considerations to be

made surrounding motherhood and being able to play a vital role in their children's day to day

lives while balancing work. Some also reported a need to not disrupt their families' lives by

making decisions regarding their careers. Alexis added perspectives on how her title as a mom

fostered her decision in knowing what type of place she wanted to begin her career as a

counselor educator stating, "My family life or my role as a mom, my role as a wife really helped

in terms of me knowing that it was a place that I wanted to be in, and they kind of welcomed my

opinions".

Janet discussed the importance of having a work-life balance due to her commitment to her

husband and children. She added that her decisions to go into both school counseling and

counselor education were influenced by her family and personal life, knowing she would have the ability to accommodate all aspects consider of importance:

> I'm a mom, I have a family, I have a husband and children, so I had to-- those are things that-- and being able to balance family, personal life and professional is very important to me. Those were factors that I'm absolutely more considered when I initially even left K-12 and wanted to explore additional or future career opportunities, so my family and personal life.

Jordan expressed similar sentiments for the future when considering her desire to have children one day and to pursue a career that would allow her the flexibility needed to attend to both career and family:

> I don't have any children right now, but that is what I want the future and I wanted that to be something where I would have flexibility and being able to still, you know be there for my children, whether that's taking them to school or having to pick them up, that flexibility, all of those kinds of things. So, um, that play a pretty huge factor in terms of me going into this route as well.

Nicole voiced an understanding that career not only impacts the individual but also impacts the family unit. She expressed monitoring her own goals and aspirations was a necessity in prioritizing her children. Nicole stated a need to place her family at the forefront of her decisions and limiting herself in location to ensure the stability of her family:

> One of the things that influences my decision-making is just honestly like my family where they're at and developmentally, how is my ambition as an individual, could it impact them. I have four kids. I don't want my career ambition to be something that we'll just pick up and move, and the kids will just have to figure life out. They're just at

different stages where I know as a counselor that that type of transition if it can be avoided it should be. We're going to avoid that. That means that I am limited to my immediate surroundings when it comes to finding a position.

Eden reflected on her childhood and how it was influential in her belief in counseling:

I think for me, it's the reason that I like truly strongly believe in counseling with children and adolescents is that I felt that I didn't have a lot of power when I was a child in my upbringing. And, you know, just with my experiences, I felt very out of control. It felt like I was dealing with a lot of trauma, but people didn't feel like I deserved to have a voice. A lot of decisions that were made for me. And so, I really believe that counseling children and adolescents provides that space for them to feel like they have power in a place where we've created a structure where they don't.

Post-Masters Experience: Pushing Beyond Clinical Practice

Post-maters experience, pushing beyond clinical practice emerged as a theme. Reflections on clinical experience and its influence on driving women into academia was evident, emerging across all participants. Stories of burnout, lack of training, and flexibility arose. Through their work within the field, women saw a need to do more for themselves. Some described how they were able to make amends within themselves and their decisions to pursue their doctorates as their professional identities had always encompassed their roles as clinicians. Furthermore, being able to take preventative measures for counselors-in-training to minimize burnout proved to be an incentive for women to move beyond their clinical jobs into education. Sade spoke on how inadequate supervision and support in her career led to her burning out and seeing a need for more training for beginning counselors:

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So, majority of my caseload were adolescents who were high risk. So this was not

something that was. Uncommon for my clients to be experiencing some suicidality. So

the idea that I didn't get the adequate support and supervision that I wanted to, um, really

led me to say, nah, something's to happen. Something's gotta give. There needs to be

better training. There needs to be better. Um, focus on like how to support our counselors

are now novice counselors and all that. So I found counselor education, which was really

fitting because I think initially when you think about being a counselor or this, you think

about clinical psych programs or counseling psych programs but finding a counselor ed

program was... resonated with me 100%.

Jordan reverberated feelings of being "drained" and a decreased desire to do full-time clinical

work:

I was honestly just mentally and emotionally drained. So I knew for, for certain, I didn't

want to do clinical work full time. Um, I didn't want to completely neglect that aspect of

it, cause that it was, it's important to me, and I do love to see clients, but for me, it was

just too much to be seeing clients every day, nine to five type of type of job.

Janet depicted her decision to move from school counseling after some many years of work and

growing weary of the daily tasks:

I work as a school counselor for approximately 14 years, right at 15 years, 14 and a half

years. I think I'm burned out on the day-to-day of working as a school counselor. I

wanted to continue my work because I enjoy school counselor, so it took me a while to, I

guess, convince myself that I'd actually burned out. It was well after I left that profession

and then moved into my doc program that I was able to come to terms with the word

burnout for something that I held so dear to my identity, professional identity, and just what I feel like I was called to do.

Chapter Summary

The findings chapter shared the results from the essence of the experience shared amongst the nine women of color who participated in this study. Depicted is the experiences women of color reported in their career decision-making. The study was guided by a central research question: What are the lived experiences of women of color in their career decision-making in counselor education? The data compiled brought forth significant emergent content from the individual semi-structured interviews; from this content, seven themes and six subthemes emerged. The first theme, "leadership through mentorship and influence on counselors-in-training and communities," in which value was placed on the development and fostering of mentorship, training, and development as a necessary component to navigating academia and advancing communities. A subtheme of "embracing social justice and advocacy" emerged from "leadership through mentorship and influence on counselors in-training and communities" as women expressed a need to engage with marginalized communities beyond their departments. In the second theme, "sense of community felt amongst colleagues," participants ascribed meaning to having support surrounding their work. A subtheme of "visibility of diverse faculty and students" emerged from "sense of community felt amongst colleagues" as women reported the importance of diversity. The third theme, "power, pride, and privilege," allowed participants to consider the opportunities in their roles as counselor educators of color. A subtheme of "desire for respect" emerged from "power, pride, and privilege" as women expressed a need for respect. The fourth theme, "job selection by intuition and the fit of the university," captured a need to sense the culture at the universities employed. Two subthemes

emerged from "job selection by intuition and the fit of the university" which included the "significance of salary" and "desire for continued growth and opportunities to learn." Within the subtheme of "significance of salary," participants discussed varying components related to salary. Within the subtheme of "desire for continued growth and opportunities to learn," women expressed a need for opportunity to continue their development as counselor educators. The fifth theme, "experience as students in counseling programs," revealed mixed emotions, all propelling women to pursue the professoriate. The sixth theme, "family influence," captured the considerations women gave to their families both future and present. The seventh, "pushing beyond clinical practice," revealed the influence of engaging in clinical work before pursuing a doctorate.

Chapter 4: Discussion

Introduction

The findings conferred in this study offer increased awareness of career decision-making for women of color and the significant factors that influence their processes. A hermeneutic phenomenology approach was to pilot the study and answer the research question: What are the lived experiences of women of color in their career decision-making in counselor education? To answer the central research question, semi-structured interviews were conducted to capture the essence of career decision-making amongst nine women of color currently occupying faculty roles. Phenomenological data analysis was used to make meaning of the data. The findings were presented in the voices of the participants using quotes. Each of the quotes that captured the essence of participants' voices was categorized into seven themes and six subthemes. In this chapter, conclusions are discussed based on how the findings connect with literature and the central research question. Implications are included for counselor education doctoral programs regarding the trajectory into the professoriate, support, and retention of women of color in programs and departments.

The purpose of this study was to examine the career trajectories of women of color occupying faculty roles in counselor education and how their experiences influenced career decision-making processes and decisions about their careers post-degree. The use of a qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological approach captured the essence and meaning of shared experience amongst participants (van Manen, 1990). The semi-structured interview was developed using a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to capture the essence of participants' experience in a way that allowed the researcher to go beyond the descriptions into meaning-making and exploration (Bynum & Varpio, 2018). The use of a hermeneutic phenomenology approach

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through the lens of CRT allowed for the capturing of participants' experiences and the involvement of the researcher's experience in data and analysis connection through reflection employed throughout the methodology.

Discussion of Research Findings

Findings were analyzed using a critical race approach to understand women of color better and unpack their career decision-making experiences. CRT assisted in examining the complexities that exist both as a woman of color and the intersectionality that exists within that identity. Additionally, the CRT framework helped frame the analysis to see how operating in existing power structures within the academy impacts the career decision-making process for women of color. The use of a CRT framework for the central research question and the interview protocol was developed, focusing on undoing the oppressive practices that hinder and suppress the voices of women of color and their experiences (Price, 2019). Women were encouraged to share their counter-narratives, empowering participants to give voice to their career decision-making, ascribing their own meaning, in their own words, despite the systems that suppress them based on their race and gender (Mills & Unsworth, 2018). Each of the women in this study shared specific characteristics, identifying as women, people of color, and faculty members; however, they were each distinct from the group in their own right. Nevertheless, sharing of experience was captured, revealing common factors and values in the career decision-making process.

This study focused on the counter-storytelling, the permanence of racism, and a critique of liberalism to examine the data using the CRT theory. CRT, coupled with hermeneutic phenomenology, were used to analyze and capture the essence of the experiences among the nine participants. Under the basis of hermeneutic phenomenology, the world has been full of meaning

and entanglement with people, culture and more; therefore, attempts are made to describe the phenomena of career decision-making as it appeared in the everyday lives of participants (van Manen, 1990). In this conceptualization, many themes arose from the data that highlighted the connections to CRT. Seven themes and six subthemes emerged in this study and are discussed as they correlate to the lived experiences of women of color and their career decision-making into faculty roles. What these themes reveal within the framework of CRT is that women of color are working to disrupt the systems through their roles as counselor educators not only in the universities where they serve but also in the communities where they dwell and have an origin (Delgado & Jean, 2012). It also conveys that women of color are forced to consider society's influence on their identities and how that impacts their roles as faculty (Delgado & Jean, 2012). Through the themes of mentorship, sense of community, making an impact on communities and students, experience as students in counseling programs, pushing beyond clinical work, and family influence, a connection is made in the value of counter-storytelling. Counter-storytelling allows for the sharing stories that are often left untold. From the data, women of color expressed a desire to share their narratives through a reciprocal and educational exchange with individuals within their reach. Through the data, it was evident that women were empowered by their racial identities and wanted not only to be tolerated and accepted but also acknowledged by their universities and beyond. Last, power, pride, and privilege in identity, job selection by intuition and fit alluded to the permanence of racism, as racism is deeply engrained with U.S. society (Milner, 2017). Women of color have continued to be in positions in which they have historically been required to produce scholarship without resources or collaboration from colleagues, have been subject to tokenism, or slighted in their financial worth within the institutions in which they dwell (Bradley, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy& Addison-Bradley, 2004).

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Leadership through mentorship and influence on counselors-in-training and communities

Emerging from the data was a strong desire for mentorship, both as donors and recipients of time and knowledge. Johnson & Ridley (2015) describe mentorship as a "dynamic, reciprocal, personal relationship in which a more experienced person (mentor) acts as a guide, role model, teacher and sponsor of a less experienced person (mentee). Mentors provide mentees with knowledge, advice, counsel, support, and opportunity in the mentees pursuit of membership in a particular profession" (p.15; Remaker- Gonzalez, Houston-Armstrong, & Sprague-Connors, 2019). Permeating throughout the data was a need for more support for women of color regarding mentorship from people of color and White colleagues existing within institutions. As in the data gathered from participants, mentors are essential to the shaping of professional identity development, which is significant as decisions are made towards the pursuit of the professoriate (Remaker- Gonzalez et al., 2019). Connecting students with mentors who have common interests can offer direction and result in favorable outcomes (Remaker- Gonzalez et al., 2019).

Assumptions must not be made on students identifying their mentors. Providing adequate proactive support can assist in the success of women of color during their studies and well into their careers. In addition, it fosters a reciprocal nature for those who have experienced the benefits of mentorship to continue to promote its value to others (Remaker- Gonzalez et al., 2019). Research has shown that mentorship during doctoral studies is pivotal as students transition to faculty. Tilman (2001) offers what could be considered a comprehensive definition of the mentoring experience: "a process within a contextual setting; a relationship between a more experienced individual; a means for professional networking, counseling, guiding, instructing, modeling, and sponsoring; a developmental mechanism (personal, professional and

psychological); a socialization and reciprocal relationship; and an opportunity for identity transformation for both the mentor and the protégé" (p.296). The definition above stresses that mentorship has a multitude of components. From the data, women of color expressed various ways of achieving the mentorship they wanted, whether it was sought, offered, or developed from personal relationships. Ultimately, women of color expressed the importance of mentorship in their trajectories into their respective faculty position, the continuance of mentorship in their roles, and the reciprocation of being able to do the same for other aspiring students interested in the counseling profession.

Women of color discussed how their roles as counselor educators placed them in a position to bring awareness to counselors-in-training and their communities. CACREP's (2016) standards call for counselor educators to engage in leadership in advocacy. The following components from doctoral professional identity standards are depicted from women of color in this study: 1) model's competencies for advocating for clients at the individual, system, and policy levels, and 2) strategies of leadership concerning current multicultural and social justice issues. On the community level, women asserted their influence in the communities they identified and the agenda of progressing various marginalized communities. CACREP (2016) calls for counselor educators to be competent in leadership in counselor education programs. Lockard et al. (2014) suggested that "doctoral students may be better prepared to be leaders if they know they are expected to be leaders from the start" (p. 237). The women of color who participated in this study found value and meaning in leadership through their early and ongoing experiences of mentorship, leading them to expand their reach into making an impact and having an influence on their students beyond the classroom.

Sense of Community Felt Amongst Colleagues

Sense of community is defined by McMillan & Chavis (1986) as "a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (p.9). Throughout the data, women of color described a need to be supported, to have individuals who would "lookout" and protect them, and to ultimately connect with others more intricately. Participants described a need for acceptance, belonging, and social support from their departments, all of which Cohen (2013) defines as a sense of community through interpersonal support. This sense of belonging is often needed for people of color at predominately White institutions (Johnson, 2012). Sense of community has been linked to improved collaboration and development of knowledge and meaning (Palloff & Pratt, 2005). Through collaboration, a sense of community is built, which assists in the advancement of professional identity (Johnson & Johnson, 2000). Incoming faculty who were women of color described this as fundamental to their success.

Visibility of diverse faculty and students. Increasing the visibility of people of color throughout programs is a critical piece to promoting the sense of community women of color described. Research has indicated the over visibility that exists when there are few people of color in programs and how that increases competition rather than a building a sense of connectedness (Bryant et al., 2011). As indicated in the study, women of color desire to have positive interpersonal relationships with both students and faculty of color. Broadening the visibility of people of color within programs conveys that leaders in counselor education prioritize environments that are "welcoming, appreciative, and fair" as described by Bryant (2011, p.316).

Power & Privilege in Identity

Bradley (2005) stated that suppression of Black female faculty "voice" could lead to senior faculty and promotion and tenure committees in counseling departments drawing their own conclusions regarding the career experiences and challenges of African American women. Having earned a Ph.D., many of the women of color had a desire to be seen for their expertise and contributions to the profession. Women of color communicated an understanding of the power they carried and the privilege of it, while still working to establish a presence at their institutions. From the voices of participants, permeating throughout the data was a need to be heard and respected. Women of color expressed this as not only important in their universities but also in their communities.

A desire for respect. The question as prompted to women of color within the study "what do women of color value in the careers they select" echoed a need for respect, whether blatantly stated or conveyed through their words. Historically, women of color have carried stereotypes and biases that are associated with the dissatisfaction in academia (Bradley, 2005). These have included stereotypes of "the mammy" and "sapphire" for Black women, and the "model minority" for Asian women (Kowalski, 2009; Pilgrim, 2008; Bradley, 2005). Each of these titles is contributable to the lack of respect women of color have felt historically through the labeling and mislabeling of their identities. In addition, these labels are attributable to the marginalization women of color experience when working in academia (Cooksey, Cole, 2012). "Mammy" associated with the permanence of slavery, and "sapphire," associated with the "Angry Black Woman" are negative stereotypes that result in biases towards Black women (Kowalski, 2009; Pilgrim, 2008). The "model minority myth," typically conveyed as a "positive stereotype" may often threaten intellectual performance (Nguyen, 2014; Cheryan & Bodenhausen, 2000). Women of color may be reduced to the labels historically placed on them

by U.S. society and the lack of respect that is a manifestation of those labels (Bradley, 2005; Cookskey & Cole, 2012). Furthermore, research has found that a significant number of women of color within academia are "devalued" and "undervalued" due to longstanding bias and gender stratification within the constructs of race (Cooksey & Cole, 2012).

Job Selection by Intuition and Fit of the University

Women of color expressed a need to sense good "spirits" and "energy" in their exchanges at their future departments of employment. This included both verbal and nonverbal communication in how they were received upon their initial interactions and visits at their institutions. What women seemingly described was intuition which is defined as "an ability to understand or know something immediately based on your feelings rather than facts" (Cambridge Dictionary). Scholars have cited the merit intuition may have on ethical decision-making and conscious reasoning (Liao, Chung, Huang, 2018; Rest, 1986). Ultimately individuals have and will continue to use intuition as a means to make personal and professional decisions and, despite the lack of scientific support, the nature of intuition continues to permeate the literature Malewska, 2018).Many participants, described their observations and exchanges with the department during interviews and how this guided their decision-making. Malewska (2018) described prevalent characteristics accepted as the intuitive process that includes "intuition is a thought process that occurs automatically, the process is based on knowledge structures formed as a result of various types of learning, occurs in part unconsciously, and its outcomes can include feelings, signals or interpretations" (p.33). What is illustrated here parallels with what women of color ascribed meaning to in the positive exchanges needed to make career decisions.

In addition, when making the decision to accept faculty positions, women described the importance or unimportance of salary and their need to have the opportunity to continue to

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develop their expertise. Tuttle et al. (2019) found that psychological, social, and lifestyle factors served as internal and external determinants for pursuing a career in counselor education. Included in these factors were cause for continuous learning and personal fulfillment, which coincides with the voices of participants (Tuttle, Grimes, & Lopez, 2019). The College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (McChesney, 2018) found that inequality in pay continues to be a fight for women of color in higher education. In comparison to both White and men of color, women of color are paid less, although they have higher rates of employment in higher education than their male of color counterparts (McChesney, 2018). Whereas some women expressed an increased need to negotiate salaries, others expressed an overall understanding of the rates of pay in counselor education in relation to other fields. Regardless, it was evident that women of color encompassed a personal understanding of how salary informed their decisions.

Experience as Students in Counseling Programs

Studies have shown that women of color must work to legitimize themselves and not be overly sensitive to issues of race in their programs (Bhat, Pillay, & Hudson, 2012). In Bhat's (2012) study most students found their interactions with professors to be mostly satisfactory; however, interactions with peers had some negative consultations. Research studies have proposed that doctoral students with faculty career goals should be informed about the pros and cons of a future career in academia (Betrand-Jones, Wilder, & Osborne-Lampkin, 2013). Many women of color are informed solely by their experiences within their programs alone. Increasing knowledge on the experiences of women of color during their studies should be considered by faculty, administration, and hiring committees. Failure to do so may impact their willingness and desire to apply for a faculty position post-degree. Dortch (2016) discussed the importance of

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academic self-efficacy of women of color in their doctoral programs, which can contribute to future success as faculty. Furthermore, it is clear from the data that although the needs of students may vary during their programs, what counselor educators do or do not do to meet the needs of their students will remain influential well into their careers.

Family Influence

Family influence was of significance for women of color in their career decision-making. More so than the family of origin, many discussed the desire to have children and the flexibility that would be attributable to a faculty position. Other women found importance in consulting their families prior to making career decisions, placing their needs as a priority, and having the balance and flexibility to be an integral part of their lives. Research has shown that qualitatively assessing family influence in career decision-making can be quite challenging with the constant changes that occur within family systems (Chope, 2005). For the purpose of the data collected, a postmodernist approach was used to examine how women of color found meaning in the influence of family surrounding their careers (Chope, 2005; Thorngren & Fret, 2001).

Literature has asserted that marriage and motherhood are part of Black womanhood, which is established by providing stability and security within their families (Chaney, 2011). This echoed throughout the data in shaping the present and future for Black women interviewed for this study. For Asian women, parental influence has been significantly linked to career decision-making (Suh & Flores, 2017). Marks et al. (2017) found family expectations to be significant to the career calling of women of color, which parallels with the data collected in this study. Having a career that provided flexibility and reward to accommodate past, present, and future ideals surrounding family was essential. Additionally, despite the variations that existed within women, the family was influential in decision-making.

Pushing Beyond Clinical Practice

Prior to entering doctoral programs, CACREP (2016) states prior counseling experience as fundamental in admission criteria (Farmer, Sackett, Lile, Bodenhorn, Hartig, Graham, & Ghoston, 2017). Discovered in the data was how previous experience in counseling propelled women of color into counselor education. From their clinical experience, the women described the ways in which they desired to make an impact in the areas of research, supervision, teaching, and counseling. Research has found that faculty in counselor education share the notion that there is significance in clinical work forming research interests as well as corroborating credibility in teaching (Farmer et al., 2017; Sackett, Hartig, Bodenhorn, Farmer, Ghoston, Graham, & Lile2015). Evident in the data was an agreement of the role of clinical practice informing the decision to pursue the professoriate. Each of the women expressed feelings of burnout prior to seeking their degrees in counselor education. Research has cited numerous times the burnout counselors are exposed to in various clinical settings (Fye, Gnilka, & McLaulin, 2018; Nelson, 1988; Allan, Owens, & Douglas, 2019). Despite burnout, women of color found meaning within their clinical positions leading them to seek opportunities to advance the profession through research, scholarship, teaching, and supervision, which are positive outcomes (Allan et al., 2019).

Implications for the Counseling Profession

Additional research into implementation of mentors for new faculty of color would be helpful in identifying how more conducive environments can be created for women of color. Researching the effectiveness of mentorship programs could be beneficial to incoming graduate students looking at pursuing careers as counselor educators. Creating policies to promote inclusion of incoming faculty into programs that lack diversity should be prioritized; such changes could be

monumental in combating negative experiences of women of color in counselor education. Programs could benefit from evaluating and revisiting current systems to minimize the effects of women of color feeling isolated and misunderstood in their respective roles.

The profession must advocate to ensure the findings in studies such as those related to the recruitment and retention of faculty of color fall on open ears that are inspired and eager to do the work it takes for women to have a comfortable space in academia. It is crucial as the profession continues to advance that those who fight for the same vision and standards in the field, feel a sense of belonging. Social justice and advocacy are central to who and what counselor educators are and what they do. If we fail to advocate against disparities for our colleagues, we fail at what we are called to do. As part of our responsibility to social justice, we must encourage continuous engagement in professional development, training, and dialogue about the concerns and considerations women of color have in their career-decision making processes in counselor education.

Mentorship as Essential

The women of color included in this study exude the power of resilience in making decisions to pursue faculty positions in counselor education. Despite obstacles, women highlighted significant factors that influenced their decision-making that can assist the counseling profession in supporting students and faculty of color. Enrollment rates are continuing to increase in graduate programs as it relates to women of color, therefore, highly suggested is mentorship and professional guidance to support these numbers (Remaker, Gonzalez, Houston-Armstrong, & Sprague-Connors 2019). As institutions take steps to diversify faculty, it is essential that those who are present begin to do the needed mentorship newly admitted faculty and students require to be successful (Noy and Ray, 2012). Many institutions

must begin to examine their ability to foster cross cultural mentorship. White faculty must consider how race, racism, and intersectionality play a role in their mentee's life, in order to develop trust and rapport (Johnson-Bailey and Cervero, 2004). Each participant discussed mentorship as pivotal to their decision-making in pursuit a faculty role. Important components in mentorship relationships from the voices of participants included a. the ability to be vulnerable, b. acknowledgement and consideration of racial identity, c. having a genuine connection with mentors, and d. instilling the importance of mentorship through others.

Diversification of Programs

Consideration to commit to the diversification of programs is needed amongst the counselor education profession and has been long advocated for at post-secondary institutions (Viernes-Turner, Gonzalez, Wood, 2008). Those in leadership positions must prioritize the recruitment and retainment of people of color. Evident from the participants was an increased value of institutions that committed to implement changes improve to the lack of representation in departments. Failure, to take into account the diversity women of color value can result in their dissatisfaction and feelings of exclusion. Women of color may be forced to seek support outside of their department which may contribute to feelings of isolation. As voiced by participants in this study having a sense of community includes colleagues considering the unique needs women of color have as a minority group in academia, strengthening interpersonal relationships.

Additionally, counselor educators must be mindful that tokenism may be an end result of the deficiencies that exist in representation. Programs are called to diversify departments and due to the disparity of women of color they are often looked as a means to resolve the issue of lack of diversity upon securing roles as faculty (Bryant, 2005). Over visibility can adversely impact

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women of color being undermined and reduced to the color of their skin. Women of color desire to be respected, make an impact, and have opportunities to continue their advancement as shared from the voices of participants in this study. As counselor educators it is important remember that diversifying programs and fostering inclusivity is an ongoing process and commitment that is "active, intentional, and ongoing". Furthermore, addressing issues of diversity may increase the satisfaction and attainment of women of color in counselor education.

Retention of Women of Color: Work-life Balance

Retention of women of color goes beyond visibility of people of color within departments into addressing professional and personal needs. Women of color need to be heard and understood in their institutions of employment by implementing essential factors that contribute to work-life balance. Gathered from this study was the importance of both personal and professional components women valued in their roles as faculty. Personal factors included attention given to their current and future roles as mothers, which calls for flexibility and autonomy in juggling work responsibilities. In addition, programs should give consideration to the duties as tasks assigned to beginning faculty of color as they make adjustments to faculty life. Women of color not only have the tasks of adjusting to faculty life, they may often have to adjust to being one of few people of color.

Programs should also consider of the lack of opportunities that have historically for women of color in academia. Intentionality is suggested on collaboration with colleagues on topics that are within their interests. Participants in this study wanted to have a connection with their colleagues in which they come together professionally in research, leadership and beyond. Opportunities for advancement and growth that are explicitly available and offer women of color the ability to be heard and respected as experts in counselor education may assist in the desire for

respect valued by participants (Dade, Tartakov, Hargrave, and Leigh, 2015). Furthermore, taking into consideration the exclusive barriers women of color face in academia that may contribute to their dissatisfaction is critical in retainment (Constantine, 2008).

Limitations of the study

Lack of representation in diversity of participants was a limitation of this study. Although participants were recruited from a national counseling listserv, women of color included in this study were Black and Asian. There was no representation of Hispanic or Latino, American Indian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander women. The researcher sought to get representation across multiple groups of women of color, however, was not successful. Therefore, this study does not include representation on the lived experiences of women of color identifying in groups beyond Asian and Black. The difference between other groups could be significant or insignificant as it relates to career decision-making processes. In addition, most participants fell between 0-1 years as faculty, which may impact the stage of development in career decision-making.

An additional limitation is the response rate for member checking in which all participants did not respond. Out of the nine participants five responded, confirming the credibility and accuracy of emergent themes and their words. The four participants who did not respond may have provided additional insight in regard to the themes and potentially their voices. Although the researcher did not hear from all participants, feedback was implemented from the five who provided revisions or clarity to their words to preserve the trustworthiness and credibility of the study.

Recommendations for Future Research

The experiences gathered from this study create several opportunities for future research. From the nine women of color who participated in the study the researcher was able to hear the lived experiences in career decision-making which is highly under researched in counselor education. Additional studies that address the career decision-making of women may include the following: 1. Include white women to do a cross comparison of decision-making between groups 2. Extend study to include counselor educators who are men of color and white men 3. Examine the experiences of counselor educators who have been in the field longer than 3 years 4. Examine the impact of mentorship overtime for new faculty in counselor education and 5. Examine what fosters career satisfaction of women of color in counselor education. The following suggestions surrounding career decision-making have been included due to the lack research in counselor education on this topic.

Additional topics to research would include understanding more significantly the "intuition" process for counselor educators who pursue faculty roles. Many of the women in this study expressed a need to sense the universities they were seeking employment were a good fit. Counselor educators have unique roles as clinicians, therefore, exploring their thoughts on how or if their intuition is influenced by the nature of the clinical work in conceptualizing their institutions through the behaviors of individuals. Last, studying the impact of clinical burnout on the trajectory into counselor education is warranted. Across all participants, women discussed reaching their threshold in their clinical roles before the pursuit of a doctorate. Research is needed on how to create conducive environments for counselors in-training transitioning into roles as full-time clinicians.

Summary

In researching the lived experiences of women of color in counselor education who pursue faculty roles a multitude of findings were revealed. Through the analysis process themes affirmed that women of color face hurdles in their career decision-making yet remain resilient in their pursuit of the professoriate. The findings indicated women of color require the full support of counselor education programs holistically. Counselor education programs can retain women of color by supporting the attainment of work-life balance in considering their roles as mothers, valuing their expertise and perspective, providing fortuity for development, and understanding and implementing mentorship through masters, doctoral and faculty transitions. The limitations of the study coupled with the paucity of the literature surrounding this topic warrant additional research. This study may serve individuals within the counseling discipline in their efforts to better support and service of women of color in counselor education. Furthermore, the findings of this study show the exclusive lived experiences of women of color in counselor education and the ways in which they can be empowered in their roles.

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Chapter 5: Manuscript

Abstract

Scholars have made longstanding efforts to document the lived experiences of women that occupy faculty roles in higher education. Race and gender are part of the multiple identities' women of color acknowledge in navigating the stereotypes, and that may challenge them in the professoriate (Jones et al., 2013). Further, counselor educators have thoroughly researched the experiences of women of color in counselor education programs both as faculty and students. Within the literature, experiences have included overwhelming service commitments, racism and discrimination, sole mentorship of students of color, affirmative action hires, and a lack of opportunity to collaborate with colleagues for research, all of which contribute to the lack of tenure promotion. Despite the documented obstacles, women of color, both knowingly and unknowingly, apply and obtain faculty positions in counselor education programs across the United States. This manuscript will unpack the essence of the lived experiences of women of color (Black & Asian) who have selected a career as faculty in counselor education and how they have come to decide on their career selection.

Many counselor education leaders have highlighted the complexities that exist for persons of color to enter and obtain positions in the professoriate (Meyers, 2017). Dr. Thelma Daley, the first African American president of both the American Counseling Association and the American School Counseling Association, expressed that individuals are inclined to occupy spaces of which they can see people who are like them (Meyers, 2017). Dr. Manivong Ratts, past president of Counselors for Social Justice, and the chair of the committee that created the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies, stressed the importance of understanding how being a person of color lends itself to a unique experience in the counseling

profession (Meyer, 2017). Other notable leaders have expressed the lack of preparation of doctoral students of color when they are unable to apply the knowledge gained in the classroom into a better perception of faculty life (Meyers, 2017).

In consideration of the varying statements of persons of color in the profession, it was plausible to seek an in-depth understanding of the processes and lived experiences of women of color who came to decisions on pursuing and obtaining a faculty role in counselor education at predominantly white institutions (PWI).

As of 2015, according to Catalyst (2015), across disciplines in academia, Asian women hold only 4.9 percent of tenure-track positions and 3.0 percent of tenured positions. African American women hold 3.6 percent of tenure-track positions and 2.3 percent of tenured positions. Hispanic women hold 2.7 percent of tenure-track positions and 2.4 percent of tenured positions. Due to the small, but growing number of women of color who occupy faculty roles, more research is warranted on the experiences women of color have in their decision-making processes. Additional research may include examining the type of position women of color select, as research, teaching, and service often vary in allocation. Women of color graduating with doctorates in Counselor Education may find themselves employed in tenure track, non-tenure track, adjunct, and clinical faculty positions. Although women of color find themselves employed in various levels of faculty roles, only a small percentage occupies the tenure-track and tenured positions. Women of color continue to persist and maintain their positions within the professoriate. Understanding the lived experiences of women of color in counselor education faculty roles may assist in better informing the profession on recruiting, retaining, and the inclusion of faculty of color in the diversification of programs.

Literature suggests that challenges for women of color exist due to the complexities that exist in interactions with colleagues, students, administration, and staff, largely due to race and gender. The experiences of women of color include overwhelming service commitments on diversity committees, sole mentorship over students of color, higher teaching loads, microaggressions, inadequate compensation, and exclusion from opportunities to collaborate on research (Bradley, 2005; Modica & Mamiseishvilli, 2010; Rideau, 2019). In addition, missing in the current literature is a critical examination of the influential factors that impact career choice, selection, and satisfaction of counselor educators who are women of color in faculty roles. Noting the various experiences and concerns contributing to the dissatisfaction of women of color in academia, it was important to explore attributes that contributed to career decision-making in counselor education.

Review of Literature

The exploration of the career choices of women, particularly women of color, is historically understudied. Researching the career choice of dominant groups is a diverse process, as individual needs vary person to person, adding marginalized populations such as women of color contribute to the complexities of understanding (Cook, Heppner & O'Brien, 2002). Production of studies on this topic has received little to no attention in over ten years, which might be due to the lack of qualitative data to better understand the lived experiences of women of color as they identify careers (Cook et al., 2002). It is significant to note that most conventional models of career development used White males, who were representative of the dominant culture, identifying as straight, Christian, and able-bodied (Cook et al., 2002). Since previous models were developed with dominant groups, they often cannot describe the career decisions of women, people of color, and other minority populations. How we form career

concepts of women of color require acclimation to the many influences that shape their realities (Cook et al., 2002). Furthermore, women of color completing degrees in Counselor Education Ph.D. programs and their career trajectories remain unexplored. Although there is a plethora of literature that addresses the experiences of women of color in academia, many find success outside of traditional faculty roles (Dade, Tartakov, Hargave, 2008 & Leigh, 2015; Bhat, Pillay, & Hudson, 2012; Constantine, Smith Redington & Owens; Bradley, 2005). Many factors affect career choice of women of color receiving degrees in Counselor Education, and a thorough exploration of this specific issue is warranted.

Experiences of Women of Color in Counselor Education and Related Programs

Women of color, particularly Black women, have had a difficult time adjusting to faculty life. Scholars have addressed issues such as being overcommitted to serve on diversity boards, being the sole mentor for students of color, high teaching loads, and not being asked to collaborate in research or lacking the time to research independently (Bradley, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy & Addison-Bradley, 2005). Others have documented experiences of discrimination in pay, the adverse treatment that manifests in microaggressions, perception as the derogatory stereotypes associated with women of color, and lack of promotion and tenure (Modica & Mamiseishvilli, 2010; Kowalski, 2009). Research on the experiences of Asian and Hispanic women in Counselor Education is marginal at best, and many studies are unable to capture all women of color. Research has shown that experiences of Hispanic counselor educators have not been documented, nor is there any understanding of factors that contribute to their success (Lerma, Zamarripa, Oliver, Vela, 2015). Assumptions can be made that experiences women of color face are similar; however, representation of the umbrella termed "women of color" should encompass all that is categorized in this group.

Career Decision-Making of Women of Color

Literature has shown that women of color have unique considerations in making decisions regarding their careers. Achieving higher education increases the earning potential and employment of individuals of all groups (U.S. Bureau of Labor & Statistics, 2014). There is considerable evidence that calls for the pursuit of obtaining higher education in the promotion of favorable career trajectories and outcomes for women of color. However, across ethnic minorities, there is a lack of cultural sensitivity in career developmental models, specifically for women (Alfred, 2001; Evans & Herr, 1994; Storlie, Hilton, Duenyas, Archer, & Glavin, 2018). Researchers have cited women of color experience more barriers in career choice and selection to include gender issues, family influence, social support, coping and self-efficacy (Storlie et al., 2018) Suh & Flores, 2017; Quimby & O'Brien, 2004; Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001; Novack & Novack, 1996).

Black women career trajectories are influenced by careers that allow them to avoid hostile work environments, although researchers have perceived racism as an "unavoidable way of life" (Storlie et al., 2018, p.30; Evan & Herr, 1991). Regardless of conditions, Black women have remained both hopeful and resilient in career decision-making with family support and influence as well as embracing the individual journey taken in career selection (Storie et al., 2018). Included in this individual journal is the development of racial identity, self-perception, and self-consciousness (McCowan & Alston, 1998; Baldwin & Bell, 1985; Cross, 1978). This exploration of self assists in helping Black women achieve their goals and develop a vocational identity, whereas the lack it results in barriers to success (Jackson & Neville, 1988).

Scholars have cited in-group factors as pivotal in the career choice and selection of Asian women, positioning competition, and comparing Asian males as influential. Similar to Black and

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Hispanic groups, family influence is significant; however, there is a more substantial influence on how positive career development reflects on the family. Competition with male in-groups coupled with parental influence, has contributed to the high interest in the thoughts and opinions of "others in career choice and selection (Suh & Flores, 2017). This consistent comparison is known as relative deprivation, which may result in the belief that their career trajectories are not as significant as others (Suh & Flores, 2017; Cheung, Wan, Fan, Leong, & Mok, 2013; Cheung, 2012; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Besides, the ability to self-regulate has been associated with immense career decision-making self-efficacy, exploration, and professional development (Suh & Flores, 2017; M. Kim & Kim, 2014; Lent & Brown, 2013; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000).

Career Decision-Making and Work-Life Balance

Careers that have substance and meaning are significantly crucial during the career selection process for women of color (Marks, Harrell-Williams, Tate, Coleman & Moore, 2018; Burlew, 1977). Substance and meaning can foster an environment in which women of color feel "called" and purposed in what they do (Allan, Tebbe, Duffy & Autin, 2014; Marks et al., 2018). Also, careers that consider the many roles women of color may hold outside of the work environment affirms their place and worth to organizations (Cook et al., 2002). Roles outside of careers for women include several things revolving around home life and families, and although autonomy can play a significant role in career trajectories, sustainability occurs when a sense of community is felt in their work. (Cook et al., 2002). This literature supports that several moving parts influence women in their search for job satisfaction.

The inner workings of career trajectory take place with several guiding factors and conceptualize the many components of life for women of color. Paralleling this work-life balance embodies stability between personal and professional life, which is a significant milestone to

reach in achieving the desired level of career satisfaction. Literature that explores the work-life balance of people of color has extensively been abandoned as the concept is associated with a special status of privilege that minority populations typically do not have (Balkin, Reiner, Hendricks, Washington, McNeary, Juhnke & Hunter, 2018). Balkin et al. (2018) examined the effects of work addiction and its impact on life balance, finding that a lack of community support resulted in more prevalent work addiction. This study revealed that individuals who are overwhelmed with work often suffer in their relationships, therefore having work environments that have a sense of community are inclusive of individual differences and are emotionally supportive can create better work-life balance. It is plausible to consider women of color gravitate towards careers that offer balance and stability in career selection.

Summary

The literature presented gives great consideration to women of color's experiences in faculty roles; however, literature does not explicitly address trajectory into faculty roles or career satisfaction. Most of the literature addresses the challenges faced in faculty positions and not how or what processes women consider when making their career decisions. It has also been found that women have multiple roles outside of work, and that appreciation is given to altruism in the work environment. What remains uncertain is the phenomenon of how they come to select the spaces they occupy, how they achieve work-life balance, and what experiences contributed specifically to career selection. Lastly, a study that examines women of color to include Latino/Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, American Indians, and Black or African Americans in various work settings greatly adds to the exploration of minority women's career decision-making.

Description of Design

A phenomenological research design was used to conduct this study. Phenomenological research originated from philosophy and psychology, allowing the researcher to study the lived experiences of individuals and a specific phenomenon depicted by participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Phenomenology allows the researcher to capture the essence of a specific phenomenon experienced by multiple participants. In collecting data, phenomenological frameworks do not dictate, but rather seek to understand how the phenomenon is displayed in one's awareness (Giorgi, 2012; Dortch, 2016). In other words, the studied phenomena are conceptualized by the researcher using data collected from interviews and observation, leading to an understanding of how this information is influential to the topic (Dortch, 2016). Additionally, qualitative research situates the researcher as the instrument; therefore, a combination of reflexivity, emergent designs, meaning-making, triangulation, member checking, and inductive and deductive analysis were used to gather and interpret data during these processes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Procedure

Participant Sampling and Recruitment Techniques

Purposeful sampling was used to select participants who self-identified as a woman of color, working in CACREP faculty positions in counselor education for three years or less. Purposeful selection allowed the phenomenon to be researched in a way that helped the researcher comprehend the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In order to get a diverse pool of applicants in race, ethnicity, and geographical location, participants were recruited through counselor education listservs. Participants were recruited using email distribution and social media posts inviting them to participate in the study and were selected

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based on meeting the criteria stated above. The email included an overview of the research study

and the information letter required by Auburn's Institutional Review Board (list appendices).

Those interested were directed to contact the PI via her Auburn University email address to

answer any questions and provide the informed letter and demographic questionnaire. After

participants consented to participate in the study, times were selected that were agreeable for

both the participant and researcher (PI).

Data Collection

The primary investigator (PI) was responsible for recruiting potential participants,

consenting, and interviewing the participants, and transcribing the data. Participants were current

faculty in counselor education who had completed all course work or ABD (all but dissertation)

or current faculty in counselor education with three years or less in their role. The PI sent

recruitment emails using various counseling listservs as well as social media posts that reached

counselor education students and faculty across the United States. The PI had access to the

participants' contact information once initial contact was made on interest in participating in the

study with her direct contact information being provided in the recruitment emails. Once the

email was received, the PI shared the informed consent with the potential participant to begin the

consent process. The participants then completed a demographic questionnaire and began

scheduling a time for the interview that could be mutually agreed upon by the PI and participant.

The interviews were held via Zoom or a phone call in a confidential setting of the researcher and

participants choosing. Informed consent was further explained to allow for any additional

questions. Participants selected or were assigned a pseudonym for confidentiality purposes

before beginning the interview. Recordings were on a recorder and audio-only. Once interviews

were transcribed, all information was securely

uploaded to Auburn's Box system and labeled with a pseudonym created by the participant or primary investigator.

Data Analysis

Phenomenological data analysis. Both textural and structural descriptions were used to capture the essence of the lived experience of the participants' career decision-making. These descriptions included structural descriptions, the 'how' of experience, to include verbatim quotes and responses to establish the links amongst the meanings (Moustakas, 1994). The textural descriptions, by Moustakas (1994), include the 'what' of the experience by studying the universal themes of the phenomenon experienced across all participants (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015). Analysis processes included both hand-coding and transcription services to transcribe my data. As each interview was completed, I began to hand-code the data until each was complete. I then placed the codes into NVIVO software to organize and begin inductive analysis of the findings, creating a codebook of the data. The analysis was then sent to the auditor, who reviewed the codes of themes and probed for additional meaning.

Trustworthiness of the data. The trustworthiness of the data involves the researcher increase the rigor of the study being conducted (Amankwaa, 2016). For this study, trustworthiness is defined by building the following, as noted by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Amankwaa (2016): 1. "Credibility: confidence in the 'truth' of the finding 2. Transferability: showing that the findings have applicability in other contexts 3. Dependability: showing that the findings are consistent and could be repeated 4. Confirmability: a degree of neutrality or the extent to which the respondents shape the study's findings and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest" (p.121). Within my study, I used triangulation, member checking, reflexivity, rich thick descriptions, and an audit trail to establish value and enhance the findings of my study.

Findings

The findings are then summarized into seven themes, and six subthemes shared across the nine participants as follows: 1) Leadership by mentorship and influence on counselors-in-training and communities a. embracing social justice and advocacy 2) sense of community felt amongst b. visibility of diverse faculty 3) power and privilege in identity a. a desire for respect 4) job selection by intuition and fit of the university a. significance of salary b. a desire for continued growth and opportunities to learn 5) experience as students in counseling programs 6) family influence 7) Post-masters experience: pushing beyond clinical practice

This study included nine Asian and Black women of color who had obtained and occupied a position as faculty in a CACREP accredited counselor education program for three years or less across the South, North, and Midwestern regions of the U.S. Each of the participants graduated from CACREP programs and were engaged in full-time work at their respective universities.

Discussion of Themes

The interviews on the lived experiences of women of color who had obtained and occupied a position as faculty in a CACREP accredited counselor education program captures the essence of the shared and individualized experiences of each woman. The interviews reveal the journeys that formulated career decision-making in counselor education, an expression of passions, aspirations, challenges, drive, and growth throughout their experiences. From the data captured in the essence of the phenomenon of career decision-making, the reader can gain insight and awareness into how women of color come to make decisions regarding their careers and what is needed to sustain their presence within counselor education programs. Seven significant themes emerged from the data and are discussed below.

Leadership by Mentorship and Influence on Counselors-in-Training and Communities

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The majority of the women explicitly expressed throughout their interviews a need to make an impact. Not only within the classroom but beyond into their respective communities and marginalized populations. Women of color value careers that give them purpose and meaning (Burlew, 1977; Marks, Harrell-Williams, Tate, Coleman & Moore, 2018). Participants reiterated this in articulating their positions to shape their students and individuals by being a representative for both people of color, practicing clinicians, and counselors-in-training. Alexis expressed her desire to educate and propel school counselors-in-training forward so they could better assist with the needs of students within the school district:

> It's really important to me to be able, one, to see some things and people that they can't see in themselves or may not be in themselves yet. And to help them find that and then to help put people in a position to change their lives. As a school counselor, I help put students in a position to make changes and to do better in life. I wanted to be in a position to support and shape future school counselors so that there will be less stories or situations where students aren't getting what they wanted. I could be instrumental in shaping them and teaching them how to work better with students. So like my whole kind of reason for wanting to be a counselor educator in the first place was because I've met so many terrible school counselors. I wanted to do something about that. That's extremely important to me, which is why this field is important to me.

Sara expressed similar thoughts:

> I wanted to continue to support school counselors and also wanted to continue to support students by way of supporting school counselors. I thought the best way to do that was to pursue my Ph.D. and to focus my research and energies into school counseling and

training future school counselors and also advocacy for school counselors in K-12 settings. I also do a lot of trainings for clinical mental health counselors as well.

Michelle discussed the impact she had in having a Ph.D. within her community she was reared, and the emphasis placed on her title:

> So, I will say that, um, in my community, mental health is really not something that exists or is talked about. I'm from an immigrant community. A lot more of the generation that's kind of been raised in the U.S. is starting to see all of the needs for mental health, trauma, acculturation, understanding those different concepts. However, the community that I grew up in it's very much not something they consider. It's even now if I talk about mental health, people kind of dismiss it, and they ask for, you know, they want it to focus on like the science. So, if they do talk about this, they're thinking, all right, so if somebody has schizophrenia, what are the drugs you're going to give them? Or they want to throw somebody in my room and be like, make it better. And I'm like, that's not how any of this works. So, part of my wanting...I wanted to get a doctorate, I think from the beginning because it's honestly the only way anybody in my community would take somebody seriously, in talking about mental health, because the word counselor just doesn't exist. But if you say, you know, "Dr" blah, blah, blah, ""Ph.D., they understand what that would mean. In some ways, you know, they don't understand what this field is, but they can understand, okay, there's research behind this. There's something more. So, it was kind of a reason or way to give my voice more power within my community that I want to give back to.

Mentorship was infused as motivation towards the pursuit of a faculty role in counselor education. Participants conceptualized how they have been able to reach students through their

positions at their institutions and provide guidance and support. Included in the discussion was being a vessel in educating others about the need for mentorship and "passing it along," amongst others in the field. Articulated was an understanding of the "why" mentorship is critical, "how" it has worked in their professional lives, and the power that exists in mentorship alone, even if not persons of color or woman. Mentorship not only was voiced as something that gave women purpose and meaning, but a necessary component to stand in the gap for students and other faculty who needed guidance. When speaking about what it meant to be a counselor educator of color, Sara discussed its relation to her students stating, "I think it means having this really personal, and I think powerful connection with your students even though you might not always have that connection to the field."

Nicole shared how mentorship lead her to seek a Ph.D., also instilling in her the need for more representation in the field for others to see:

> It was my first advisor in my master's program, who was really a strong advocate to encourage me to go forward and get my Ph.D. He was very instrumental in encouraging me as a woman of color and saying what a need to do is for our field to have more women color on this level. It's very supportive in that process.

Unsaid bonds were at the forefront of Vanessa's dialogue as she outlined the advice and instruction she received from women of color in the field. She relayed her job hunt and connection with others that had shared that experience. She also discussed how this translated into her desire to pay it forward with other women of color in the counseling profession:

> They would offer up this wealth of knowledge that just fits like an ultimate act of generosity, an ultimate act of kinship that they could recall what they felt like 10 years ago, 20 years ago, 30 years ago when they were in the job hunt. They want to help this

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younger female faculty, aspiring faculty, and create a time in their extremely busy schedules. I was very aware of how pass-it-on, pass on the kindness culture we had secretly created as other women of color in counseling.

Jordan discussed reaching out to expand her network of mentors:

I am the only faculty, um, black faculty member in my college. There are a couple black staff members, but as far as in my college, you know, I'm the only one that I know of right now. Um. So, I knew that I would have to seek those types of supports out in. I've been very well; I've put much effort into trying to do that. So, I have an African American female faculty mentor right now at the university who, um, I recently just got in contact with last semester, so I'm excited to start this mentorship relationship with her. Granted, she's not in counselor education, but you know, I don't care. I, just having somebody, like I said, that looks like me. I had experiences going through academia and being successful in getting tenure, obtaining tenure, and all that kind of stuff has been, um, what is important to me. So, I'm excited to start that relationship with her and, um, possibly might have another person as well, um, of actually getting ready to have lunch with this person next week. Um, the other female faculty of color. So I'm like, you know, it takes a village, so, um, you know, whoever I can kind of get around me to kind of help guide me and school me or what it looks like to make it academia as a woman of color is important.

Janet spoke on the power of mentorship by itself, regardless of color or sex, and the sense of purpose it serves in academia:

I don't know of minority women, or doc students know that. I don't know if we have possessed the confidence because maybe we didn't see it or not enough of it or didn't

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have enough people to affirm us in a way and empower and encourage us to move

forward. I was very fortunate, and all my mentors were not African American women or

minority women, they were just sometimes women and sometimes not even women. But

the point is I needed people in my life..they are needed to equip me and empower me and

filling me that I had what it takes to make it in academia.

Sense of community felt amongst colleagues

Within the theme of mentorship, a subtheme of sense of community felt amongst

colleagues emerged. Participants described the importance of having a "support network,"

feeling a "parental or guardianship" over one another, having "somebody who would lookout",

and opportunities to "connect" with both colleagues of color and White colleagues. A sense of

community is often described as interpersonal support for individuals by cultivating a sense of

acceptance, belonging, and benefit from available social support (Cohen, 2013). This theme

resulted in each of the women defining what sense of community looked like at their institutions

and its value. Both Alexis and Sade described the importance of having a supportive network of

individuals within the counseling education discipline to have space for error, be able to lean on

when having feelings of isolation, and someone who was "looking out". Alexis described this

importance:

And so it's really important to have a support network as a counselor educator so that I

don't feel as alone or I don't feel like I'm doing things on my own or I have had the

potential to make a mistake because I didn't know what was going on. And so being

supported wherever I am is extremely important to me.

Sade paralleled this describing the significance of having both an individual that was a colleague

and friend that supported her:

I had the luxury of having a friend, like a close friend, not even just a colleague, that I

work with (…) I had somebody who was looking out for me.

Eden spoke on her ability to foster an environment that creates a sense of community.

There's this understanding that there aren't a lot of us. And so, I think we feel like almost

parental or like guardianship of each other and of others, like of students coming up in

the profession that we need to foster more of us.

Janet described connecting with other women in the profession, even outside of her institution as

a woman and person of color:

I think they're striking numbers and they're connected with both minority colleagues as

well as majority, I guess you could say colleagues, and it's been appreciated having the

opportunity to connect with both sets as a woman and not just be regulated to one or the

other. I needed that, and I benefited from it.

Power & Privilege in Identity

Power, pride, and privilege in identity emerged as participants discussed their roles and

interactions in varying spaces in academia. Many spoke on opportunities that existed by being in

the counselor education profession and how their identities as women of color propelled their

influential agendas forward. The women discussed how their presence, titles, privilege, and

navigation of institutional systems helped them acknowledge the power they held, their pride,

and the privilege that now existed to connect and make an impact. Janet reflected on her journey

from a practicing school counselor to a counselor educator and how the career change was

influential:

You're sitting at the table with the people that are making the decisions that were handed

down to me once before. Now I know the people that are sitting on the board, and I

interact with them. Now I know how these decisions come about. Before I just received

the information, now I'm with the people that are making the decisions, or I can have a

seat at the table to make the decisions.

Nicole discussed how her positionality within the classroom established credibility for her to

raise awareness in marginalized communities:

From a teaching standpoint, having a doctorate gives me the ability to teach in the

classroom, so that type of credibility. Then from a non-teaching standpoint within the

general community at large, it gives me more credibility to talk to different groups about

the need for mental health awareness, especially the African American community.

Sade spoke about the importance she always held in being able to have the title of "Dr.."

Although she eventually sought her Ph.D., she temporarily found solace in her role as a mental

health counselor. This led her to pursue the professoriate for richer reasons:

I always had this desire to want to go for a Ph.D., PsyD something to kind of call myself

a doctor, and that was just out of vanity initially. Then once I got into the field, I started

to do some work in the field and really enjoyed just kind of being a licensed mental

health counselor.

Other women addressed not knowing their marginalized identities until beginning to operate in

educational systems. Vanessa discussed the projection that was given to her regardless of how

she personally identified and having to empathize with other women of color who had

experienced marginalization their entire lives:

Unlike my women of color colleagues who have faced their marginalization right from

the day they were born, for me, my marginalized identities were a shock that was pushed

onto me, whether I wanted or whether I chose or whether I recognized. Being a woman of

color even in your dissertation, I don't think I consciously chose that identity until more

recently, it was an identity that was slapped on my face that so what do you think in

terms of being another woman of color? That took me some time. Knowing that I'm

going to be a faculty, I knew that I would have to confront some of these choices that

were once again made for me as opposed to made by me. Be that through expressions of

entitlement, expressions of privilege, expressions of ownership, or infantilizing what I'm

doing, or just overly exoticizing whatever I was doing, forgetting that I was not very

different from them, be that through my education, be that through my values. I knew that

that was important, not a decision that I made, but that was a decision that was made for

me when I was choosing my trajectory as a faculty.

Last, Eden talked about the powers that be and understanding the formalities that exist in

academia and how to speak up and out in varying situations:

I think as a woman of color, we're constantly having to navigate, um, these power

structures that are not created for our success. So being a woman of color in counselor ed

means recognizing that and knowing what battles to fight, um, and choosing them wisely

and choosing them where you're not burning yourself out.

Job Selection by Intuition and Fit of University

Many of the women expressed a need to sense the culture at the institutions they were

interviewing with. This included non-verbal communication through body language, feelings

held while visiting, and good "spirit" and "energy" by felt by faculty and students. Others spoke

on appreciating the uniqueness universities offered in their programming and being able to fuel

or contribute to creativity. Sara spoke on the creativity that existed in her department, the

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collaboration that she saw, leading her to appreciate the department, "I really like the department. I like just how creative they are, I like how they work well together".

Some women expressed having positive interactions, and "feelings" about faculty and students as more critical than demographical representation. Vanessa voiced this perspective:

When I was going for interviews, I was watching how people would talk to me, what their body language was, how the students felt around me. That was very important for me in terms of how I felt rather than just the demographics.

Sade echoed this expression, expanding on the placement of value on energy when engaging with others:

So, it's really about the energy that I, that I sense. It's not about the money, it's about how I'm helping people, how I'm, you know, being able to be myself, how I can interact well with other people, all those different things.

"Good spirit" was what Janet needed when summing up selecting a place to work:

When I was looking for- as picking employment as to where to work, it was important for me to have a department or to work within a department at a school, and I didn't really have a specific school in mind when I started interviewing. Things that were important to me were the ability to be able to grow, to be able to really find a good spirit.

Experience as Students in Counseling Programs

When prompted to reflect on their masters and doctoral programs, many of the women expressed mixed emotions surrounding their program experience. Some revealed how significant the support was from faculty and being able to display vulnerability during stressful points of their programs. Women found safe environments that encouraged such vulnerability to be beneficial as they were their authentic selves when personal and professional issues intersected.

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One participant described her decision to leave her institution because she felt marginalized and discouraged, along with increased responsibility. Others reported a lack of attention was given to multicultural issues, having no support, and feeling more connected with clinical faculty or other doctoral students due to their passion for the field. Sara expounded on her experience with her professors and "tone deaf" approach within the classroom and with multicultural issues:

> I don't think that there were a tremendous amount of people that I could turn to for support. I felt it was just all about the numbers and just getting people in, and then you're left on your own in order to graduate. If anything, I feel they put up so many more barriers in your way to get out and prove yourself, I don't know, just in a way that doesn't really mimic what happens [chuckles] in the real world. I feel there was a lot of tone-deafness also when it came to multicultural issues as well. The classes were not very good. Professors did not rely on the most current scholarship or significant work of activists and advocates. They dealt with things in a very anecdotal with a few random peer-reviewed articles thrown in for good measure. Nothing that really pushed you or prepared you for the field in a meaningful of substantive way-- I guess the professors didn't have a lot of very up to date information or perspectives. I thought it was a very superficial way of exploring topics like multicultural counseling. I didn't have much trust in any of the faculty either. That being said, towards the very end, I started to have more connections with some of the clinical faculty. I think that a lot of times the other students, that's been a source of support and learning. It's interesting. Even when I first started my program, the best classes were always taught by doc students, just because they were more relevant, they were more up to date, they were more passionate about the work.

Alexis began by discussing her lackluster experience in her first doctoral program and the courage she discovered in making the decision to switch programs. She described an opposite experience going from an unsupportive environment into a program that allowed her to be herself, which helped to mold her as a counselor educator

> I got the complete opposite experience and the second program to where I was
> encouraged to be myself. I was encouraged to study and look for things that were
> important to me, and I didn't feel as I guess constricted as I did in the previous program. I
> felt more confident in being myself, and I think that experience has shaped the way that I
> teach now as a counselor educator in terms of not wanting to make my students feel the
> way that I felt in that program but also wanting to encourage them to be themselves and
> to, um, tap into the things that they're interested in, to help them become the best
> counselors that they can be.

Eden expressed feeling challenged while in her programming, yet having the support she needed with faculty who valued cultural issues:

> A lot of the professors, their focuses were on multicultural and social justice issues and
> counseling. So, I felt really supported, and I felt like, you know, it was definitely
> difficult, and I had challenges along the way just personally. Um, but I feel like I was
> really supported, um, in my program as well.

Last, Sade spoke about the safe environment she had amongst faculty in being able to cry and release frustration:

> So I know like I've cried in front of several of my professors before, cause it was either
> just being exhausted, you know, being, being overwhelmed, you know, not understanding
> the material, things like that(…) And having the ability to feel comfortable enough to cry.

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And the keyword there is comfortable enough because sometimes we end up crying and

we still kind of like shame ourselves for doing that in front of other people.

Family Influence

Family influence is a theme that consistently presents itself within studies on women of

color (Chope, 2005; Cooskey & Cole, 2012). Women spoke of their childhood upbringings and

how that shaped their desire to pursue the counseling field. Also, a level of consideration was

given to families both present and hoped for, which was a prevalent theme among women. The

dialogue surrounding their roles as wives and mothers were taken into consideration at their

universities, having a work-life balance, and flexibility in accommodating future families.

Women reflected wanting considerations to be made surrounding motherhood and being able to

play a vital role in their children's day to day life while balancing work. Some also reported a

need to not disrupt their families' lives by making decisions regarding their careers. Alexis added

perspectives on how her title as a mom fostered her decision in knowing what type of place, she

wanted to begin her career as a counselor educator stating:

> My family life or my role as a mom, my role as a wife really helped in terms of me
>
> knowing that it was a place that I wanted to be in, and they kind of welcomed my
>
> opinions.

Janet discussed the importance of having a work-life balance due to her commitment to her

husband and children. She added that her decisions to go into both school counseling and

counselor education were influenced by her family and personal life, knowing she would have

the ability to accommodate all aspects consider of importance:

> I'm a mom, I have a family, I have a husband and children, so I had to-- those are things
>
> that-- and being able to balance family, personal life and professional is very important to

me. Those were factors that I'm absolutely more considered when I initially even left K-12 and wanted to explore additional or future career opportunities, so my family and personal life..

Jordan expressed similar sentiments for the future when considered her desire to have children one day and pursuing a career that would allow her the flexibility needed to attend to both career and family:

I don't have any children right now, but that is that I want the future and I wanted that to be something where I would have flexibility and being able to still, you know be there for my children, whether that's taking them to school or having to pick them up, that flexibility, all of those kinds of things. So, um, that play a pretty huge factor in terms of me going into this route as well.

An understanding that career not only has individual influence but impacts the family unit came from the voice of Nicole. She expressed monitoring her own goals and aspirations was a necessity in prioritizing her children. Nicole stated a need to place her family at the forefront of her decisions and limiting herself in location to ensure the stability of her family:

One of the things that influences my decision-making is just honestly like my family where they're at and developmentally, how is my ambition as an individual, could it impact them. I have four kids. I don't want my career ambition to be something that we'll just pick up and move, and the kids will just have to figure life out. They're just at different stages where I know as a counselor that that type of transition if it can be avoided it should be. We're going to avoid that. That means that I am limited to my immediate surroundings when it comes to finding a position.

Eden reflected on her childhood and how it was influential in her belief in counseling:

I think for me, it's the reason that I like truly strongly believe in counseling with children and adolescents is that I felt that I didn't have a lot of power when I was a child in my upbringing. And, you know, just with my experiences, I felt very out of control. It felt like I was dealing with a lot of trauma, but people didn't feel like I deserved to have a voice. A lot of decisions that were made for me. And so, I really believe that counseling children and adolescents provides that space for them to feel like they have power in a place where we've created a structure where they don't.

Post-Masters Experience: Pushing Beyond Clinical Practice

Reflection on clinical experience and its influence on driving women into academia was evident, emerging across voices. Stories of being burnt out, lack of training, and flexibility arose. Through their work within the field, women saw a need to do more for themselves. Some described how they were able to make amends within themselves and their decision to pursue their doctorates, as their professional identities had always encompassed their roles as clinicians. Furthermore, being able to take preventative measures for counselors-in-training to minimize burnout proved to be an incentive for women to move beyond their clinical jobs into education. Sade spoke on how inadequate supervision and support on her career led to her burning out and seeing a need for more training for beginning counselors:

So, majority of my caseload were adolescents who were high risk. So this was not something that was. Uncommon for my clients to be experiencing some suicidality. So the idea that I didn't get the adequate support and supervision that I wanted to, um, really led me to say, nah, something's to happen. Something's gotta give. There needs to be better training. There needs to be better. Um, focus on like how to support our counselors are now novice counselors and all that. So I found counselor education, which was really

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fitting because I think initially when you think about being a counselor or this, you think about clinical psych programs or counseling psych programs but finding a counselor ed program was... resonated with me 100%.

Jordan reverberated feelings of being "drained" and a decreased desire to do full-time clinical work:

I was honestly just mentally and emotionally drained. So I knew for, for certain, I didn't want to do clinical work full time. Um, I didn't want to completely neglect that aspect of it, cause that it was, it's important to me, and I do love to see clients, but for me, it was just too much to be seeing clients every day, nine to five type of type of job.

Janet depicted her decision to move from school counseling after some many years of work and growing weary of the daily tasks:

I work as a school counselor for approximately 14 years, right at 15 years, 14 and a half years. I think I'm burned out on the day-to-day of working as a school counselor. I wanted to continue my work because I enjoy school counselor, so it took me a while to, I guess, convince myself that I'd actually burned out. It was well after I left that profession and then moved into my doc program that I was able to come to terms with the word burnout for something that I held so dear to my identity, professional identity, and just what I feel like I was called to do.

Discussion of Research Findings

Mentorship

Ultimately, women of color expressed the importance of mentorship in their trajectories into their respective faculty position, the continuance of mentorship in their roles, and the reciprocation of being able to do the same for other aspiring students interested in the counseling

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profession. CACREP (2016) calls that counselor educators to be competent in leadership in counselor education programs. Lockard et al. (2014) suggested that "doctoral students may be better prepared to be leaders if they know they are expected to be leaders from the start" (p. 237). The women of color who participated in this study found value and meaning in leadership through their early and ongoing experiences of mentorship, leading them to expand their reach into making an impact and influence on their students and beyond.

Power & Privilege

Bradley (2005) stated that suppression of Black female faculty "voice" could lead to senior faculty and promotion and tenure committees in counseling departments drawing their own conclusions regarding the career experiences and challenges of African American women. Having earned their Ph.D., many of the women of color had a desire to be seen for their expertise and contributions to the profession. women of color communicated an understanding of the power they carried and the privilege of it, while still working to establish their presence at their institutions. From the voices of participants, permeating throughout the data was a need to be heard and respected.

Intuition and Fit of University

Malewska (2018) described prevalent characteristics accepted as the intuitive process that includes "intuition is a thought process that occurs automatically, the process is based on knowledge structures formed as a result of various types of learning, occurs in part unconsciously, and its outcomes can include feelings, signals or interpretations" (p.33). What is illustrated here parallels with what women of color ascribed meaning to in the positive's exchanges needed to make career decisions. Women of color expressed a need to sense good "spirits" and "energy" in their exchanges at their future departments of employment. This

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included both verbal and non-communication in how they were received upon their initial interactions and visits at their institutions. What women seemingly described was intuition which is defined as "an ability to understand or know something immediately based on your feelings rather than facts" (Cambridge Dictionary) Scholars have cited the merit intuition may have on ethical decision-making and conscious reasoning (Liao, Chung, Huang, 2018; Rest, 1986). Ultimately individuals have and will continue to use intuition as a means to make personal and professional decisions, and despite the lack of scientific support, literature continues to permeate the nature of intuition (Malewska, 2018)

Sense of Community Amongst Colleagues

Sense of community is defined by McMillan & Chavis (1986) as "a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (p.9). Throughout the data, women of color described a need to be supported, have individuals who would "lookout" and protect them, and ultimately connect with others more intricately. Participants described a need for acceptance, belonging, and social support from their departments, all of which Cohen (2013) defines as a sense of community through interpersonal support. This sense of belonging is often needed for people of color at predominately White institutions (Johnson, 2012).

Experience as Students

Research studies have proposed that doctoral students with faculty career goals should be informed about the pros and cons of a future career in academia (Betrand-Jones, Wilder, & Osborne-Lampkin, 2013). Many women of color are informed solely by their experiences within their programs alone. Having knowledge of experiences women of color during their studies should be considered by faculty, administration, and hiring committees as it can affect their

willingness and desire to apply for faculty positions post-degree. Dortch (2016) discussed the importance of academic self-efficacy of women of color in their doctoral programs, which can contribute to future success as faculty. Furthermore, from the data, it is clear that although the needs of students may vary during their programs, what counselor educators do or do not do to meet the needs of their students will remain influential well into their careers.

Family Influence

Family influence was of significance for women of color in their career decision-making. More so than the family of origin, many discussed the desire to have children and the flexibility that would be attributable to a faculty position. Other women found importance in consulting their families regarding prior to making career decisions, placing their needs as a priority, and having the balance and flexibility to be an integral part of their life. Research has shown that qualitatively assessing family influence in career decision-making can be quite challenging with the constant changes that occur within family systems (Chope, 2005).

Clinical Work

Prior to entering doctoral programs, CACREP (2016) states prior counseling experience as fundamental in admission criteria (Farmer, Sackett, Lile, Bodenhorn, Hartig, Graham, & Ghoston, 2017). Discovered in the data was how previous experience in counseling propelled women of color into counselor education. From their clinical experience, the women described the ways in which they desired to make an impact in the areas of research, supervision, teaching, and counseling. Research has found that faculty in counselor education share the notion that there is significance in clinical work forming research interests as well as corroborating credibility in teaching (Farmer et al., 2017; Sackett, Hartig, Bodenhorn, Farmer, Ghoston,

Graham, & Lile2015). Evident in the data was an agreement of the role of clinical practice informing the decision to pursue the professoriate. Each of the women expressed feelings of burnout prior to seeking their degrees in counselor education. Research has cited numerous times the burnout counselors are exposed to in various clinical settings (Fye, Gnilka, & McLaulin, 2018; Nelson, 1988; Allan, Owens, & Douglas, 2019). Despite burnout, women of color found meaning within their clinical positions leading them to seek opportunities to advance the profession through research, scholarship, teaching, and supervision, which are positive outcomes (Allan et al., 2019).

Implications for the Counseling Profession

Additional research into implementation of mentors for new faculty of color would be helpful in identifying how more conducive environments can be created for women of color. Researching the effectiveness of mentorship programs could be beneficial to incoming graduate students looking at pursuing careers as counselor educators. Creating policies to promote inclusion of incoming faculty into programs that lack diversity should be prioritized; such changes could be monumental in combating negative experiences of women of color in counselor education. Programs could benefit from evaluating and revisiting current systems to minimize the effects of women of color feeling isolated and misunderstood in their respective roles.

The profession must advocate to ensure the findings in studies such as those related to the recruitment and retention of faculty of color fall on open ears that are inspired and eager to do the work it takes for women to have a comfortable space in academia. It is crucial as the profession continues to advance that those who fight for the same vision and standards in the field, feel a sense of belonging. Social justice and advocacy are central to who and what counselor educators are and what they do. If we fail to advocate against disparities for our colleagues, we fail at what

we are called to do. As part of our responsibility to social justice, we must encourage continuous engagement in professional development, training, and dialogue about the concerns and considerations women of color have in their career-decision making processes in counselor education.

Mentorship as Essential

The women of color included in this study exude the power of resilience in making decisions to pursue faculty positions in counselor education. Despite obstacles, women highlighted significant factors that influenced their decision-making that can assist the counseling profession in supporting students and faculty of color. Enrollment rates are continuing to increase in graduate programs as it relates to women of color, therefore, highly suggested is mentorship and professional guidance to support these numbers (Remaker, Gonzalez, Houston-Armstrong, & Sprague-Connors 2019). As institutions take steps to diversify faculty, it is essential that those who are present begin to do the needed mentorship newly admitted faculty and students require to be successful (Noy and Ray, 2012). Many institutions must begin to examine their ability to foster cross cultural mentorship. White faculty must consider how race, racism, and intersectionality play a role in their mentee's life, in order to develop trust and rapport (Johnson-Bailey and Cervero, 2004). Each participant discussed mentorship as pivotal to their decision-making in pursuit a faculty role. Important components in mentorship relationships from the voices of participants included a. the ability to be vulnerable, b. acknowledgement and consideration of racial identity, c. having a genuine connection with mentors, and d. instilling the importance of mentorship through others.

Diversification of Programs

Consideration to commit to the diversification of programs is needed amongst the counselor education profession and has been long advocated for at post-secondary institutions (Viernes-Turner, Gonzalez, Wood, 2008). Those in leadership positions must prioritize the recruitment and retainment of people of color. Evident from the participants was an increased value of institutions that committed to implement changes improve to the lack of representation in departments. Failure, to take into account the diversity women of color value can result in their dissatisfaction and feelings of exclusion. Women of color may be forced to seek support outside of their department which may contribute to feelings of isolation. As voiced by participants in this study having a sense of community includes colleagues considering the unique needs women of color have as a minority group in academia, strengthening interpersonal relationships.

Additionally, counselor educators must be mindful that tokenism may be an end result of the deficiencies that exist in representation. Programs are called to diversify departments and due to the disparity of women of color they are often looked as a means to resolve the issue of lack of diversity upon securing roles as faculty (Bryant, 2002). Over visibility can adversely impact women of color being undermined and reduced to the color of their skin. Women of color desire to be respected, make an impact, and have opportunities to continue their advancement as shared from the voices of participants in this study. As counselor educators it is important remember that diversifying programs and fostering inclusivity is an ongoing process and commitment that is "active, intentional, and ongoing". Furthermore, addressing issues of diversity may increase the satisfaction and attainment of women of color in counselor education.

Retention of Women of Color: Work-life Balance

Retention of women of color goes beyond visibility of people of color within departments into addressing professional and personal needs. Women of color need to be heard and understood in their institutions of employment by implementing essential factors that contribute to work-life balance. Gathered from this study was the importance of both personal and professional components women valued in their roles as faculty. Personal factors included attention given to their current and future roles as mothers, which calls for flexibility and autonomy in juggling work responsibilities. In addition, programs should give consideration to the duties as tasks assigned to beginning faculty of color as they make adjustments to faculty life. Women of color not only have the tasks of adjusting to faculty life, they may often have to adjust to being one of few people of color.

Programs should also consider of the lack of opportunities that have historically for women of color in academia. Intentionality is suggested on collaboration with colleagues on topics that are within their interests. Participants in this study wanted to have a connection with their colleagues in which they come together professionally in research, leadership and beyond. Opportunities for advancement and growth that are explicitly available and offer women of color the ability to be heard and respected as experts in counselor education may assist in the desire for respect valued by participants (Dade, Tartakov, Hargrave, and Leigh, 2015). Furthermore, taking into consideration the exclusive barriers women of color face in academia that may contribute to their dissatisfaction is critical in retainment (Constantine, 2008).

Limitations of the study

Lack of representation in diversity of participants was a limitation of this study. Although participants were recruited from a national counseling listserv, women of color included in this study were Black and Asian. There was no representation of Hispanic or Latino, American

Indian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander women. The researcher sought to get representation across multiple groups of women of color, however, was not successful. Therefore, this study does not include representation on the lived experiences of women of color identifying in groups beyond Asian and Black. The difference between other groups could be significant or insignificant as it relates to career decision-making processes. In addition, most participants fell between 0-1 years as faculty, which may impact the stage of development in career decision-making.

An additional limitation is the response rate for member checking in which all participants did not respond. Out of the nine participants five responded, confirming the credibility and accuracy of emergent themes and their words. The four participants who did not respond may have provided additional insight in regard to the themes and potentially their voices. Although the researcher did not hear from all participants, feedback was implemented from the five who provided revisions or clarity to their words to preserve the trustworthiness and credibility of the study.

Recommendations for Future Research

The experiences gathered from this study create several opportunities for future research. From the nine women of color who participated in the study the researcher was able to hear the lived experiences in career decision-making which is highly under researched in counselor education. Additional studies that address the career decision-making of women may include the following: 1. Include white women to do a cross comparison of decision-making between groups 2. Extend study to include counselor educators who are men of color and white men 3. Examine the experiences of counselor educators who have been in the field longer than 3 years 4. Examine the impact of mentorship overtime for new faculty in counselor education and 5.

Examine what fosters career satisfaction of women of color in counselor education. The following suggestions surrounding career decision-making have been included due to the lack research in counselor education on this topic.

Additional topics to research would include understanding more significantly the "intuition" process for counselor educators who pursue faculty roles. Many of the women in this study expressed a need to sense the universities they were seeking employment were a good fit. Counselor educators have unique roles as clinicians, therefore, exploring their thoughts on how or if their intuition is influenced by the nature of the clinical work in conceptualizing their institutions through the behaviors of individuals. Last, studying the impact of clinical burnout on the trajectory into counselor education is warranted. Across all participants, women discussed reaching their threshold in their clinical roles before the pursuit of a doctorate. Research is needed on how to create conducive environments for counselors in-training transitioning into roles as full-time clinicians.

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Appendix A

(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS AN IRB APPROVAL STAMP WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN APPLIED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

INFORMATION LETTER
for a Research Study entitled
"A Phenomenological Study: Exploring Career Decision-Making of Women of Color in Counselor Education"

You are invited to participate in a research study as part of my dissertation I am seeking participants for my study examining the lived experiences of women of color who have pursued and obtained positions as counselor faculty in counselor education. The study is being conducted by Shanel Robinson, Doctoral Candidate, under the direction of my faculty supervisor, Dr. Jamie Carney in the Auburn University Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling at Auburn University. You are invited to participate because you are 1.) A woman of color 2.) Counselor Education faculty in a CACREP accredited program with three years of experience or less 3). Willing to commit to one audio recorded interview reflecting your career decision-making during the data collection process. 4.) and are age 19 or older.

What will be involved if you participate? If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire, informed consent document, and one audio recorded semi-structured interview. Your total time commitment will be approximately 1.5 hours. Your identity and responses will be kept confidential. Your personal narrative will be collected and analyzed for themes of your lived experience. All data collection and transmission will be protected by secure technology.

Are there any risks or discomforts? The risks associated with participating in this study are minimum. To minimize any unforeseen risks, I will stop the interview at any time you would like. During the interview minimally invasive questions will be about your career decision-making in counselor education, however, discomfort may come in reflecting on your experiences. The protocol is developed to probe questions relating directly to the participants' decision to pursue or obtain a role as a faculty member. Due to this being a qualitative study where interviews will be completed, there is a risk for breach of confidentiality. In an effort to protect your confidentiality during the study provisions have been made for additional precautions. The demographic information will be reported collectively as group data. Information collected through your participation will be used or future publication in a professional journal, dissertation, and/or professional conference.

Are there any benefits to yourself or others? Your participation in this study, will help to inform students and faculty of color approaching the career-decision making process. You will assist in contributing to the literature on best practices to support doctoral students of color throughout counseling programs. We/I cannot promise you that you will receive any or all of the benefits described.

Will you receive compensation for participating? There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Are there any costs? No, there are no costs to participate in the study.

If you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw at any time during the study. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw at any time during the study. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw, your data can be withdrawn as long as it is identifiable.   Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University or the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling. Should you choose not to participate simply notify the researcher. If you do wish to withdraw, please contact Shanel Robinson sbr0019@auburn.edu

Any information collected in your participation in this study will remain confidential. Your privacy and data provided will be protected. All audio recorded interviews will be deleted immediately following transcription by the researcher. The records will be maintained in a secured technology platform, Box, houses by Auburn University which is protected electronically with a two-factor authentication password. No individual identifiable information about you or provided by you during the research will be shared with others without your permission, unless required by law. You will be given the opportunity to select a pseudonym or be assigned one, for the purpose of data collection, analysis and reporting. The pseudonym code will be maintained in a password protected electronic document in the researchers' computer files and will be destroyed after the final report has been completed. The recordings of the interviews and pseudonym code will be destroyed after data collection is complete. Information obtained through your participation may be published in in a professional journal, dissertation, and/or professional conference, however, your name and identifying information will not be used.

If you have questions about this study, please ask them now or contact Shanel Robinson via email at sbr0019@auburn.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334)-844-5966 or e-mail at IRBadmin@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT. IF YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE, THE DATA YOU PROVIDE WILL SERVE AS YOUR AGREEMENT TO DO SO.   THIS LETTER IS YOURS TO KEEP.

 "**The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from January 6, 2020 to ------- Protocol #19-543 EX 2001, Robinson"**

Appendix B

RECRUITMENT Email
Research Study entitled
"Exploring the Career Decision-Making of Women of Color in Counselor Education"

Hello,

My name is Shanel Robinson and I am a doctoral candidate in the Counselor Education program within the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling at Auburn University. As part of my dissertation I am seeking participants for my study examining the lived experiences of women of color who have pursued and obtained positions as counselor faculty in counselor education. The purpose of this study is to explore the career decision-making of women of color in who choose careers as faculty in counselor education. I am completing this study under the direction of my faculty supervisor, Dr. Jamie Carney.

You are invited to participate if you meet the following selection criteria: 1.) A woman of color 2.) Counselor Education faculty in a CACREP accredited program with three years of experience or less 3). Willing to commit to one audio recorded interview reflecting your career decision-making during the data collection process. 4.) and are age 19 or older.

This study will contribute to the researcher's efforts to help inform students and faculty of color approaching the career decision-making process. Participants will assist in contributing to the literature on best practices to support doctoral students of color throughout counseling programs in their career decision-making processes.

If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire, informed consent document, and one audio recorded semi-structured interview. Your total time commitment will be approximately 1.5 hours. Your identity and responses will be kept confidential. Your personal narrative will be collected and analyzed for themes of your lived experience. All data collection and transmission will be protected by secure technology.

Your participation is voluntary. Should you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw at any time during the study.

My contact information is listed below for your reference if you have any questions or concerns.
Shanel Robinson, MS, LPC, NCC, CCMHC
Doctoral Candidate
Auburn University
Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling
Email: sbr0019@auburn.edu

Please distribute and share with others who may be interested in participating in this study.

Best,
Shanel Robinson, MS, LPC, NCC, CCMHC

Appendix C

RECRUITMENT Social Media Post
Research Study entitled
"Exploring the Career Decision-Making of Women of Color in Counselor Education"

Hello,

I would like to invite you to participate in a qualitative research study exploring the lived experiences of women of color who have pursued and obtained positions as counselor faculty in counselor education. The purpose of this study is to explore the career decision-making of women of color in who choose careers as faculty in counselor education. I am completing this study under the direction of my faculty supervisor, Dr. Jamie Carney.

You are invited to participate if you meet the following selection criteria: 1.) A woman of color 2.) Counselor Education faculty in a CACREP accredited program with three years of experience or less 3). Willing to commit to one audio recorded interview reflecting your career decision-making during the data collection process. 4.) and are age 19 or older.

This study will contribute to the researcher's efforts to help inform students and faculty of color approaching the career decision-making process. Participants will assist in contributing to the literature on best practices to support doctoral students of color throughout counseling programs in their career decision-making processes.

If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire, informed consent document, and one audio recorded semi-structured interview. Your total time commitment will be approximately 1.5 hours. Your identity and responses will be kept confidential. Your personal narrative will be collected and analyzed for themes of your lived experience. All data collection and transmission will be protected by secure technology.

Your participation is voluntary. Should you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw at any time during the study.

My contact information is listed below for your reference if you have any questions or concerns.

Shanel Robinson, MS, LPC, NCC, CCMHC
Doctoral Candidate
Auburn University
Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling
Email: sbr0019@auburn.edu

Please distribute and share with others who may be interested in participating in this study.

Best,
Shanel Robinson, MS, LPC, NCC, CCMHC

Appendix D

Participant Demographic Questionnaire

Please respond to the following questions and do not provide any identifying information.

1. Age
   o Under 18
   o 18-24
   o 25-34
   o 35-49
   o 50-64
   o 65+
2. Race/Ethnicity (select all that apply):
   o Black/African American
   o Hispanic/Latino
   o Asian
   o White/Caucasian
   o American Indian/Alaska Native
   o Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander
3. Gender Identity:
   o Cisgender Female
   o Transgender Female
4. Length of time as counselor educator faculty:
   o 0-1 years
   o 1-2 years
   o 2-3 years
5. Role/Rank (adjunct, assistant, associate, or other):
   o Assistant Professor (tenure-track)
   o Assistant Professor (non-tenure track)
   o Associate Professor (tenure-track)
   o Associate Professor (non-tenure track)
   o Clinical Professor (tenure-track)
   o Clinical Professor (non-tenure track)
   o Adjunct Professor
6. Employment Status:
   o Full-time
   o Part-time
   o Seasonal or temporary
7. Type of Institution: (ex: R1, R2 or Teaching):
   o Research I
   o Research II
   o Teaching Institution
   o Other (please specify in space below)
8. Graduated from CACREP Accredited Program:
   o Yes
   o No

Appendix E
Interview Protocol

Opening Script*: "I am conducting a study to explore the experiences of women of color working as faculty and influences in selecting a career as counselor education faculty. At any time, you would like to discontinue this interview you can. This information will be used to complete research for my dissertation and will last approximately 45 to 60 minutes. This interview will be recorded, and you can select or be assigned a pseudonym. The information contained in this interview is confidential and measures will be taken to ensure any information you share is not identifiable to your persons in the analysis process. Do you have any questions?*

Prompt*: Tell me about your current career as faculty in counselor educator*

Prompt:

1. What was your reason for pursuing a doctorate in counselor education?

2. What experiences have contributed to your decisions on your job/career?

3. What are the most significant factors that have impacted your career selection?

4. What does it mean to be a woman of color who is a counselor educator?

5. How would you describe your education/career experience thus far?

6. What experiences influenced your career-decision making and/or career trajectory?

7. How did you make decisions on what career path to pursue?

8. What major factors do you consider when selecting a career?

9. What value do you place on meaning and sense of purpose in career selection?

10. What do women of color value in the careers they select?

11. Is there anything about your experience in selecting a faculty role as a career choice that you would like to share that we did not discuss?