

## **African American and Latino Male Youth: Perceived Strengths in Career Exploration**

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*Fifty-one African American and Latino male youth from a high poverty school district in the U.S. shared perceptions of strengths and supports related to their career hopes. Using the lens of intersectionality, five overarching themes resulted through qualitative content analysis. Discussion on the strengths of these African American and Latino male youth is expanded, and implications for school and other counselors working with African American and Latino male youth on career exploration are also provided.*

*Keywords: African American and Latino male youth, low income, middle school, career, content analysis*

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Increased and earlier career exploration, development, and training are critical for all students, but especially for African American and Latino male youth (AALMY; Bryant,

Harris, & Bird, 2013; Magnuson & Starr, 2000) in the U.S. As multiple dimensions of identity develop within AALMY (lifespan, social, cultural, socioeconomic, gender, ethnic/racial, etc.), identity dimensions are further influenced by the environment, family, and community. The intersections of these varying developments have a complex impact on career development (Storlie, Mostade & Duenyas, 2016), which is compounded by disproportionate representation in rates of incarceration, unemployment, death, high school dropouts, poverty and living circumstances (Davis, Kilburn & Schultz, 2009).

Prior research is limited in exploring youth career development, particularly AALMY in K-12 settings. To provide a counter-narrative to the deficits often associated with AALMY, this study explored the perceived strengths and supports of 51 AALMY in relation to their career hopes by way of qualitative content analysis. Since postmodern career approaches (Busacca & Rehfuss, 2016) are salient ways to gather information about complex issues affecting individuals and groups with intersecting identities, it was important for researchers to explore qualitative responses guided by the following research questions: 1) What do AALMY perceive to be their strengths and their family and friends' perceptions of their strengths? 2) Do AALMY feel confident and supported in finding a career, which adds meaning to their life?

### **Career Development and Self-Efficacy Among AALMY**

African American and Latino youth tend to engage in future-oriented career behavior based on their perceptions of career obstacles and misconceptions about various careers (Constantine, Kindaichi, & Miville, 2007). When African American and Latino

youth receive guidance from adults in their career exploration, their career self-efficacy is positively impacted (Phillips, Blustein, Jobin-Davis, & White, 2002). Through this guidance, African American and Latino youth can be provided with information to set career-related goals and orient them to the world of work to include career planning, vocational skill development, and school-to-work transitions (Storlie & Toomey, 2016; Knight & Marciano, 2013; Pizzolato, 2007).

The effectiveness of career preparation efforts by youth educators has been recently scrutinized (Albritton, Cureton, Byrd, & Storlie, 2018; Carnevale, Jayasundera, & Gulish, 2016; Lapan et al., 2016; Storlie, Albritton, & Cureton, 2017) related to the focus on high school students and exclusion of elementary and middle school students. Intentional career guidance is more effective the earlier it begins (Mariani, Berger, Koerner, & Sandlin, 2016) which can positively impact career decision-making self-efficacy. Based on Bandura's concept of self-efficacy (1977), career decision-making self-efficacy refers to the degree of confidence individuals feel in relation to their capacity to execute essential tasks that inform their career-related decisions (Guan et al., 2016). Hence, the development of self-efficacy of AALMY has a direct impact on the choice of academic/career pursuits, the ability to successfully complete those pursuits, and their performance during acquisition of these pursuits (Bandura et al., 2001).

Career development and support for AALMY are more effective when informed by culturally sensitive frameworks (Hartung, 2002) and theories. Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994) and more recently Relational Cultural Theory (RCT; Jordan, 2010; Miller, 1986) are recognized counseling theories that have been used and applied with career development for youth of color (Fouad & Smith, 1996,

Navarro et al., 2007, Storlie et al., 2017). These use of these theories in research have provided a direct connection to career development and self-efficacy. SCCT (Lent et al., 1994), a framework that acknowledges environmental factors (e.g., systemic barriers, disability status, culture), highlights an individual's capability to guide their own vocational behavior and use of human agency to create their own path. Similarly, RCT (Jordan, 2010; Miller, 1986) illuminates the significance of connections and relationships that are mutually empathetic. RCT challenges traditional theories grounded in western individualistic ideology and promotes positive relational environments to support growth. SCCT, RCT and the present study emphasize the important roles that self-perception and relationships have in career development and in the lives of AALMY. Despite the application of culturally sensitive theories, AALMY may receive messages contributing to race-based and gender-based occupational stereotypes, impacting academic/career expectations (Hughes & Bigler, 2008). Therefore, it is necessary to further examine familial, societal, and systemic influences on the career development of AALMY.

### **Familial and Social Factors/Influences on Career Development of AALMY**

Family and social systems are known to serve as mediators for career development for individuals of color (Storlie, 2016; Jodl, Michael, Malanchuk, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2001). As a result, youth of color may find themselves drawn to specific career interests and options, partially in response to family and social relationships (Jodl et al., 2001; Schultheiss, Palma, Predragovich, & Glasscock, 2002). In general, career development in youth is influenced by parents' descriptions of their own career paths (Alliman-Brissett,

Turner, & Skovholt, 2004), messages regarding careers and emotions toward work (Porfeli, Hartung, & Vondracek, 2008), and support of career dreams (Turner & Lapan, 2002). However, AALMY are less often exposed to various careers by way of job shadowing, work experiences, apprenticeships, or other work-related activities, negatively impacting AALMY's possibilities to obtain future occupations with higher earnings (Bryant et al., 2013) and likely to negatively impact future career aspirations.

### **Academic Factors/Influences on Career Development of AALMY**

Academic factors are strongly correlated to the career development and exploration of AALMY. According to the Schott Foundation report (Beaudry, 2015), most U.S. education institutions do not adequately explore or create nurturing environments to support growth for youth of color. Specifically, African American males do not have equitable access to enriching educational experiences, such as more academically rigorous courses (Holzman, 2010). Ohrt, Lambie, and Leva (2009) identified that African American and Latino students are not well represented in Advanced Placement (AP) courses and have decreased access to these courses. AALMY are overrepresented in special education and underrepresented in gifted education (Ford & Russo, 2016; Wright, Ford & Young, 2017), further contributing to social and ethnic inequalities. Students who successfully complete AP courses have a higher likelihood of successfully obtaining a bachelor's degree (Dougherty, Mellor, & Jian, 2006). Yet, when AALMY do not have equitable access to rigorous coursework, it decreases their likelihood of securing the education needed for a future career with potentially higher earnings.

AALMY continue to dropout and/or fail to complete high school at a higher rate compared to their White counterparts (Bryant et al., 2013). Early warning signs often become visible as early as middle school and can include low school attendance, failing grades, and lack of student engagement (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2010). Approximately 10.9% of Black males and 15.0% of Hispanic males drop out of high school (Addis & Withington, 2016) and the national graduation rate in 2012-2013 was only 59% for Black males and 65% for Latino males compared to 80% for White, non-Latino males (Beaudry, 2015). While these percentages represent an improvement over the last ten years, AALMY may experience tremendous difficulty in successfully obtaining future employment in long lasting careers.

### **Systemic and Societal Factors/Influences on Career Development of AALMY**

AALMY face multiple challenges stemming from institutional and systemic oppression, which permeates into social, emotional, academic and career domains (Storlie & Toomey, 2016; Storlie et al., 2017). Discipline disproportionality continues to negatively impact AALMY. The suspension or expulsion rate for African American males has been noted to be two to three times than their White male peers (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). This is particularly alarming given the insufficient research to suggest that African American males exhibit disciplinary issues that significantly differ from their peers (Lewis, Butler, Bonner & Joubert, 2010). Skiba et al. (2002) found that African American students often received office discipline referrals for more subjective behaviors (e.g. disrespect or loitering), and given much harsher punishments when compared to their

White male peers. Skiba and colleagues also found African American and Latino students were overrepresented in office discipline referrals and suspension/expulsion. When AALMY are removed from school settings at a disproportionate rate, it negatively impacts exposure to the academic curriculum and reduces opportunities for career-related activities.

Issues surrounding poverty may also impact career development and self-efficacy for AALMY. The National Center for Children in Poverty report that 58% of African American and 57% of Latino adolescents live with families from low-income backgrounds compared to 26% of White adolescents (Jiang, Ekono, & Skinner, 2016). While there is extensive research documenting the relationship between low income and low academic achievement (American Psychological Association, 2016), poverty has also been linked to career development in which career options become limited due to restricted learning opportunities (Lent et al., 1994). Furthermore, Blustein, Juntunen and Worthington (2000) found that African American and Latino parents who are from low-income backgrounds might experience challenges in providing their children with the information needed to nurture their career development. Due to the aforementioned challenging influences on the AALMY population related to career development, our research team examined narratives related to the strengths and supports of fifty-one African American and Latino male youth from a high poverty U.S. school district.

## **Methodology**

Qualitative content analysis “is one of numerous research methods used to analyze text data” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). In qualitative content analysis, three

approaches are commonly used to interpret meaning from narrative data: conventional, directed, or summative. Directed approaches use predetermined codes derived from established theory and summative approaches define codes/keywords before data analysis. With our strengths-based exploratory inquiry, we chose a conventional content analysis because it allows for themes to emerge from the data, while using an inductive approach in coding (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

## **Participants**

After approval from the Institutional Review Board, participants were recruited from a Midwest school district with a lower 4-year graduation rate (60.5%) compared to the state average (81.3%), and in the 98<sup>th</sup> percentile for child poverty. The demographics in this school district had a dramatic influx, moving from 2% Latino in 1990 to nearly 50% today, with an additional 30% being African American. This cultural shift further supported a dire need for intervention efforts aimed at improving the college and career readiness of marginalized youth. The data set used for this study was a part of a larger year-long study exploring academic risk and resilience, ethnic identity, and career development through the use of quantitative and qualitative assessments. The inclusion criteria for the current study was: 1) self-identified as male; 2) self-identified as Latino/Hispanic and/or African American; and 3) enrollment in grades 6-8 at the middle school. Fifty-one participants met criteria for this study. Forty participants identified as Latino (39 as Mexican, Mexican American, Puerto Rican or Chicano). Three participants identified as mixed race/ethnicity (self-identified part Latino and/or part African American). Nine participants identified as

African American. The average age of the total sample was 12.92 years ( $SD = 1.095$ ). Pseudonyms were assigned to protect confidentiality.

### **Data collection**

With parental consent and student assent, participants provided data electronically in a middle school *Career and Wellness* class using tablets. Participants responded to the following prompts: 1) participants' perceived strengths from family and friends (*My family tells me I am really good at...My friends tell me I am really good at...*) and 2) a self-evaluation of their own perceived strengths (*I am really good at...*). Participants also responded to two closed-ended (yes or no) questions: 1) I feel confident in my ability to identify jobs that will allow me to add meaning to my life; and 2) There are others that support me in choosing a future career that adds meaning to my life. There was an average of 11 words per student response for the first prompt related to family, 10 words per student response for the prompt related to friends, and eight words per student response for the prompt related to their own perceived strengths.

**Intersectionality as an analytic framework.** To explore the complex sociocultural and social identity dynamics among AALMY, we introduce the framework of intersectionality. Intersectionality has been referred to as a theory, lens, framework, paradigm, or methodology (Hankivsky, 2014) and explores the impact of multiple manifestations of oppression based on group belongings, including identity and social group memberships that are historically marginalized (Collins, 2000; Rogers, Scott, & Way,

2015). Grounded in Black feminism and coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991), intersectionality was introduced as a corrective lens to mainstream White feminist and Black liberationist movements that neglected the unique experiences of marginalized women of color. However, researchers such as Collins and Bilge (2016) argue that as an analytic tool, intersectionality can be used to explore the complex experiences among individuals of color and to develop strategies to achieve equality. Race/ethnicity, social class, gender, physical difficulties, and sexuality are group belongings in which individuals daily negotiate potential stigmatizing effects. This is exceptionally true for individuals who do not belong to dominant groups in society (Hurtado & Sinha, 2008).

When examining the career development through the qualitative responses of these low income AALMY, the lens of intersectionality considers both oppressed identities (race/ethnicity and poverty). That is to say, the experiences of African American male youth and those of Latino male youth are not monolithic but we recognize there are, indeed, shared outcomes. Some shared outcomes include, but are not limited to: colorism (Fergus, 2017; Kizer, 2017), over policing (Rengifo & Pater, 2017), treatment in academic spaces (Bryan, 2017), and familial dilemmas (Carey, 2017). These outcomes illustrate that various circumstances and relationships contribute to AALMY worldview, the way the world sees them, and how their career development may look different from their White counterparts.

**Data analysis.** The first author (Latina counselor educator) served as the initial primary coder because 1) she had been immersed in the data from the parent study, and 2) had engaged in data organization to prepare the narrative data for coding (Saldaña, 2013). This study was not a “larger fieldwork project” that required a team of coders, hence, the

first author served as the primary coder (Saldaña, 2013, p. 34) until working with the peer reviewer later in the coding process. Microsoft Excel was used to organize all 51 narratives and was thoroughly read by the first author to get a sense of the whole data set. The first author began first round coding (Saldaña, 2013) and highlighted text in Excel that encapsulated important concepts, words and phrases. Analytic memos (Saldaña, 2013) were made in Excel about potential codes. Through this initial coding scheme (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), we utilized intersectionality as a lens in which to examine the narrative data. This was completed by ensuring that codes represented intersecting experiences which include interconnected systems of discrimination, social inequalities, and academic and career challenges (Collins, 2000; Hankivsky, 2014). We further recognize our biases within from our own intersectional identities (Latina counselor educator, Black female school psychologist, Euro-American female counselor educator and Black female counselor educator, respectively) and acknowledge there may have been biases present in the coding. We addressed credibility by having audit attestation completed by a peer reviewer.

Next, emergent themes and subthemes were generated from the exact language from the narratives. Once the themes were refined and thoroughly identified (second cycle coding methods; Saldaña, 2013), narratives were again read to ensure that the themes reflected participant meaning. To support trustworthiness and credibility, we used a peer reviewer (second author) to complete an audit attestation (Miller, 1997) to review the data analysis process and its alignment to intersectionality. Within the audit attestation (Miller, 1997), the peer reviewer performed an initial frequency count to validate the primary coder's emergent themes. Due to the demographic similarities between participants and the

first author (primary coder; a Latina counselor educator) and second author (peer reviewer; an African American female school psychologist), ongoing discussions and bracketing were engaged to enhance credibility and discuss prior experiences with AALMY regarding familial and social influences impacting career development. The peer reviewer also compiled questions from Schwandt and Halpern (1998) and Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) to guide the audit attestation. Themes and subthemes were further refined as a result of the audit process. Final themes occurred through ongoing meetings between the first and second author in which 100% agreement was reached before a theme was finalized. The peer reviewer performed a final frequency count to ensure the trustworthiness of the coding. Below we expand on the findings from our analysis.

## **Findings**

The results of our conventional content analysis revealed the following five themes: sports related, school related, technology and gaming, helping and relationship oriented, and creative endeavors. In the following paragraphs, a detailed discussion of each theme is provided as well as frequency counts. Results from closed ended questions are also reported.

**Sports Related.** The first theme included statements from participants' strengths related to playing sports such as soccer, basketball, football and tennis. There were a total of 123 statements/phrases in sum that were sports related. Overwhelmingly, these AALMY reported their strengths related to team based sports, such as soccer, basketball, and

volleyball. Team sports were mentioned within the family perceptions of strengths 36 times (ex: My family thinks I am great at soccer); friend perceptions of strengths 31 times (ex: My friends think I am good at baseball); and self-perceptions of strengths 29 times (ex: I am good at basketball). Participants also identified individual sports such as tennis, swimming, and track. Individual sports were mentioned within the family perceptions of strengths three times (ex: My family tells me I am good at karate); friend perceptions of strengths 13 times (ex: My friends say I am good at wrestling); and participants expressed their own strengths 11 times (ex: I am good at boxing).

**School Related.** The next theme centered on school related responses to perceived strengths from family and friends (n=91). Phrases or statements within this category include specific school subjects, such as science and social studies. Participants reported 28 phrases/statements related to school subjects their family identified as their strengths (ex: My mom tells me I am good at mathematics). There were 22 statements/phrases where participants identified that friends had pointed out they were “good” in a particular school subject area. Likewise, participants shared 16 statements/phrases where they evaluated themselves as strong in a school subject (ex: I am really good at English and Math). Participants also used phrases or statements that referred to school based skills, such as working, reading, studying, and writing. Participants shared 15 statements that related to family identifying skills needed for school and only one statement from friends. In addition, participants used nine statements to self-identify strengths related to skills for school (ex: I am good at writing and working hard).

**Technology and Gaming.** Technology and gaming resulted in 45 statements/phrases from this data set. Statements such as “I am good on the computer” and “My friends have told me I am really good at video games” were common. Technology related statements referring specifically to computers included three statements from family and two statements from friends. Four statements were identified where participants self-identified they were good at technology (coding/programming). Gaming statements/phrases appeared in the data more frequently than technology. Participants reported that their families told them they were good at “gaming” or video games through 10 statements. Thirteen statements referred to friends sharing that participants were good at video games. Participants also self-reported their strengths in gaming in 13 different phrases.

**Helping and Relationship Oriented.** This theme included participants discussing strengths related to helping others and their ability to have good relationships. Thirty-one statements were included in this category. Ten statements referred to family perceptions of participants being good at helping or with chores and three statements referred to friend perceptions. Eight phrases/statements referred to participants self-identifying that they are a good helper. Relationship statements, based on family perceptions included two statements (ex: My family tells me I am good at making friends). Participants shared, from friend perspectives, four statements related to being a good friend. Four statements referred to participants self-identifying that they are a good friend.

**Creative Endeavors.** Creative endeavors were also a theme that emerged from this data set. Creative endeavors took the form of statements related to creating, doing artwork, singing and dancing. Participants shared five statements related to family identifying strengths in arts and creativity. Nine statements referred to friends' perspectives on participants' strengths in art, singing and dancing. Participants identified 12 statements/phrases on their strengths in creative endeavors.

**Career Hopes Questions and Results.** In addition to the qualitative open ended questions that participants were asked, we also added two yes/no questions to get a clear picture of participants' career hopes. These questions were: 1) Are you confident in your ability to identify jobs that add meaning to your life? and 2) Do others support me in choosing a job adding meaning to life? Forty-five of 51 participants answered "yes" to question one, resulting in 88.2% of the sample reporting that they feel confident in their ability to identify jobs that add meaning to their life. Forty-three of 51 participants answered "yes" to question one resulting in 84.3% of the sample reporting that they feel supported by others in choosing a job that adds meaning to their life.

## **Discussion**

Unfortunately, there continues to be limited research examining career development and exploration among AALMY in K-12 settings. In the current study, we explored the narrative data of 51 AALMY on their perceived strengths and supports in relation to career hopes by way of conventional content analysis. Examining the perceived

strengths and supports of AALMY may assist counselors in developing career-related activities that address the complex challenges faced by these particular youth. Our discussion includes the results within the context of existing literature and within the framework of intersectionality.

### **Sports, School, and Technology Strengths**

The two themes with the most statements involved sports and school strengths, which each contained more statements than the other three themes combined. Narrative responses most often indicated sports-related strengths, with participants providing 108 statements in relation to either team or individual sports. Though sports-related strengths emerged as the most re-occurring theme, it is important to note that individual sports only represented a small number of statements: 21 out of 118. The primary focus on team-based sports could be due to intersecting identities of age, socioeconomic status, race, and gender. Schools with socioeconomic challenges may not have financial and structural resources to support some individual sports (e.g. tennis courts). Some individual sports such as tennis and swimming may be viewed by AALMY as “White sports,” in part due to a history of disparities in athletic programs and racial discrimination by sports organizations and facilities (Martin, 2015). Conversely, team sports such as basketball and soccer are typically very popular among African American and Latino males (Martin, 2015) and their race/ethnicity is heavily reflected in professional sports teams.

Interesting frequency patterns emerged within school strengths, partly aligning with the existing literature. Narratives contained more subject-specific phrases (e.g., science or

social studies) than those about general academic skills (e.g., reading or writing). Family narratives contained many more statements about general academic skills (n=17) than those in self narratives (n=8). Friend perceptions for more than 50 participants contained only two statements indicating a student's peers acknowledged his academic skills. These disparities seem to suggest that (a) family, friends, and students focus more on success within school subjects compared to general academic skills; (b) family members acknowledge students' school skills more often than students do so for themselves; and (c) family acknowledges such strengths much more often than students point out each other's school skills. This echoes published research about the need for and benefit of focusing on AALMY's general academic skills (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014).

As for technology/gaming, it is often considered a traditionally male area (Lee, Lawson, & McHale, 2015). Therefore, it is somewhat surprising that technology/gaming did not rank higher than third among the five major themes of this study. Even though adolescent boys may be more guided toward technology careers than girls, children from low income families and in high poverty districts may have less access to the latest technology with which to develop their strengths and technical self-efficacy. They may also lack technology-focused career development support, awareness of career paths, and access to role models.

### **Helping and Creative Strengths**

The themes with the least statements were helping/relationships and creativity. Both of these academic/career areas are considered traditionally female (Lee et al., 2015).

Students' self narratives had as many statements about their own creative strengths as did family and friend narratives combined. This may suggest that these students highlight their own creative strengths more than their families and friends do. This finding on self-perceived skills contributes to the literature on parental and peer influence on youth's career interests and how adolescents may value familial perspectives but also may begin to place more emphasis on their own self-perceptions which may sometimes differ from those of their parents and/or families (Jodl et al., 2001).

### **Career Hopes**

Results to the two career hopes questions were quite positive, with over 80% of students indicating their confidence in identifying jobs that add meaning to their lives and their support from others to choose such a job. Despite the district's economic and academic realities (high poverty and low graduation rate), students feel able to find and receive encouragement for selecting meaningful jobs. Early job identification and exploration in career and class activities, may build confidence in their ability to make intentional selections about potential occupations.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

As with all research, we acknowledge this study also had limitations. We recognize that the developmental levels of our participant youth may have contributed to the depth of their responses. Additionally, participants completed their responses during the school day

and it is possible that the classroom setting (peer dynamics, interactions with teachers, etc.) could also influence the qualitative responses. Although electronic data collection has been noted to increase participant anonymity and be more cost and time effective (Jowett & Peel, 2009), we were unable to capture participants' nonverbal communication to responses which may have enhanced the depth of responses. Studies including interviews, focus groups, and observations can be considered to address this limitation and be an opportunity for future research.

We recommend researchers interested in this topic further explore the role of family members and their influence in preparing AALMY for future careers and college readiness. It is possible that certain family members may have a stronger influence over students. Additional research exploring the effectiveness of strategies K-12 schools use to address career preparation is also warranted. We also encourage researchers to examine the roles of community agencies who partner with schools and families to facilitate career and college exploration.

## **Implications**

### **School and Career Counselors**

Despite study limitations, the findings offer directions for viewing career development within the intersectionality framework (Crenshaw, 1991). We support the continued work of counselors to ensure equity in access to services (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2013, 2015) and advocacy for youth (Storlie, 2016).

Diverse youth from low-income families may have less access to technology to develop their strengths and sense of self-efficacy. They may also lack career development support/awareness of career paths related to technology. Low-income AALMY may experience career-limiting self-and-other perceptions, such as greater focus on traditional over nontraditional career areas and on specific subjects over general academic strengths. School and career counselors can explore various career paths and relevant transferable skills, as well as the realities of career oppression and mechanisms for success.

**Targeted groups.** We suggest counselors provide career group experiences that integrate academic/career content with contextual topics such as cultural identity, pride, and peer support. Connecting this content with culturally sensitive support is relatively unique and would appear to address some of the potentially limiting and/or discrepant perceptions AALMY and their families and friends may have about their strengths. Counselors can establish career groups by emphasizing the peer support, which may serve to maximize the peer influence among AALMY (Vega, Hines, Mayes, & Harris, 2016) as well as expand peer supports beyond friends who may limit occupational factors (Sinclair, Carlsson, & Bjorklund, 2014).

Based on the study's findings concerning strengths aligned with traditional career interests, we recommend group facilitators use normalizing, focus on transferable skills, and even sports-based metaphors and group activities. Group work with individuals with similar intersecting identities can begin to give each other feedback on developing skills over time, normalizing skill areas that initially seem undesirable or inapplicable. Counselors can facilitate informative discussions about how to channel specific and

transferable skills into varied occupations (e.g., helping/relational for jobs in nursing or social work; technology skills for jobs in medical imaging). Adapting Turner and Lapan's (2005) model for expanding nontraditional career interest and self-efficacy can show promise with diverse low-socioeconomic status (SES) middle schoolers. Pérez-Gualdrón, Yeh, and Russell's (2016) *Boys II Men* groups is also a good model to meet the needs of AALMY. Sports-related activities seem particularly fitting.

**School-Family-Community Partnerships.** School-family-community (SFC) partnerships have positive outcomes on academic and social, emotional, behavioral development (Brandt et al., 2014) and target improvement for youth of color and/or from high poverty homes (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). Our findings implicate SFC partnerships as a fitting avenue for “promoting all students’ successful academic, career and social/emotional development” (ASCA, 2016, p. 53). Namely, the findings that most students feel supported to pursue meaningful career options and that students’ perceptions of overlapping self, family, and peer views indicate a readiness for SFC-based efforts (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006). If students and parents are not aware of career potentials for gaming and related strengths or do not value youth’s people-oriented and artistic strengths, SFC partners with career expertise in these areas (i.e., technology, helping, and creative occupations) would be particularly worthwhile to involve.

Based on our findings, we recommend partnerships focus on intersectionality and how to harness transferable skills and hobbies for potential career paths. SFC partnerships address the career needs of low-SES AALMY related to their intersecting identities in the context of cultural pride and values, potential generational differences, and oppression such

as Mellin, Belknap, Brodie, and Sholes' (2015) application of social capital theory to SFC partnerships. It may be helpful for counselors to consider how to directly address the economic and academic realities in a particular district while strengthening student, family, and community resilience in the face of these challenges. SFC partners for low-SES AALMY can address transferable skills in career development and technology strengths as potentially valuable beyond just entertainment.

### **Conclusion**

The results of this study illustrate the critical need for more career development approaches to address the unique needs of AALMY. Our findings support the interrelated roles of racial, gender, and socio-economic identity development and reinforce the roles that families, peers, school and community-level practitioners have in this development. As school, career, and community mental health counselors continue to explore avenues to best work with youth like AALMY, understanding intersectionality helps to vividly illustrate AALMY circumstances, the full impact identity has on the developmental process, and inform intervention and preventative programming with youth and families.

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