

The Impact of the Vocational Assessment Process on Juvenile Offender Self Concept

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(ABSTRACT)

Juvenile crime and recidivism continue to be significant, costly issues in American society. Employment contributes to successful reentry and lower recidivism. However, low self concept and problems with exploring careers and identifying options may interfere with juvenile offenders' abilities to plan for employment and successfully carry out their plan. The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of the vocational assessment process on enhancing juvenile offender self concept by helping them learn more about themselves, career interests, and options.

Participants included 61 juvenile offenders in the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice who were predominantly male (98.4%), African-American (57.4%), and 17 years of age (52.5%); half of the participants (50.8%) had not received a prior vocational assessment. The research design was quasi-experimental, pretest-posttest with data gathered using the *Multidimensional Self Concept Scale* (MSCS; Bracken, 1992), *Self-Directed Search Form R* (SDS; Holland, Powell, & Fritzsche, 1997) and focus groups. A 2x1 within-subjects repeated measures ANOVA with pairwise comparisons for pre- and post-tests demonstrated that the process *did not improve* participants' *global* self concept ($t=.000, p>.05$) but *did enhance competence* self concept ($t[60]=-2.35, p<.05$). Although there were MSCS scales significantly correlated to race, it did not significantly affect the statistical outcomes as a covariate ($p > .05$). Focus group responses were audio recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for themes, categories, and connections using a five-step procedure. Participants demonstrated overall favorable perceptions with a major theme that the process was *helpful* and with feelings of *enjoyment* and *fun*. Participants liked acquiring *self knowledge* and *career information and exploration* and liked least the *amount of work* and *duration of the process*. Suggested changes were *less writing, making it computer-based, and addressing specific topics concerning offenders* (e.g., *jobs for offenders*).

Study limitations include generalizability, no comparison group, testing effects, length of the process, and environmental factors. The results contribute to developing vocational assessment process interventions for youth who have been adjudicated and committed to

correctional facilities. Future research will focus on following-up to determine employment status, exploring demographic differences post-intervention, and replicating the study with similar juvenile offender populations.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my dissertation to my loving and supportive family and my amazing friends, supervisor, and colleagues. But first, I would like to give all the glory and honor to God for whom all things are possible. To my husband, Dave, I love you! You are truly heaven sent, and I thank God for giving me such a wonderful man to spend my life with. Thank you for your love, support, and encouragement. I know that it has not been easy, but thank you for putting up with me during this time. To my baby, Davaney, you are such a blessing to me, and I love you! I strive to be an inspiration to you and hope that my accomplishments will encourage you to work hard towards your goals. You are an incredible little girl, and I know that God has great things planned for you. To my stepchildren, Courtney, Keith, and Amanda, I wish the best for each of you. To my mom, Glenda, thank you for your love and prayers. Thank you for lending me your ears and shoulders every time I needed them. You are truly an example of the kind of woman God wants me to be, and I thank Him for choosing you to be my mom. To my dad, Gregory, thank you for instilling in me the value of education and encouraging me to go as far as I could. To my sisters, Deidre and Tierney, who are also my best friends and cheerleaders, thank you for always being there for me. I love you both! And Michaela, you have great potential. Reach for the stars and never give up! Love you too!

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Juvenile crime continues to be a significant and costly issue in American society. Juvenile crime refers to law-violating behaviors committed against people or property by persons under the age of 18 (Harbeck, 2009). Crimes committed by youth have been shown to tax the judicial system, impact victims and their families, and contribute to rising health and community services costs (Cohen, 1998; Unruh, Gau, & Waintrup, 2009).

Arrest data show that approximately 2.11 million juveniles (persons younger than 18 years of age) were arrested in 2008 (Puzzanchera, 2009). Arrests were made for various delinquent offenses, which are offenses that if committed by adults would be prosecuted in criminal court (e.g., murder, rape, robbery, arson, assault, embezzlement), and status offenses, which are law violations due to the youth's status (e.g., running away from home, truancy, alcohol possession, curfew violations). Although there was an overall 3% decline in juvenile arrests from 2007 to 2008 and other positive trends that occurred across offense categories, this is no indication that American society should become complacent. Between 2004 and 2008, there was a 5% increase in violent crimes (murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault) with considerable increases in murder and nonnegligent manslaughter (19%) and robbery (46%). From 2007 to 2008, there was a 5% increase in property crimes (burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, arson) with increases occurring in burglary (3%) and 8 % in larceny-theft (Puzzanchera, 2009).

Following arrests, cases are processed through a number of paths including the law enforcement agency, juvenile court, criminal (adult) court, or another welfare or police agency (Puzzanchera, 2009). The majority of arrested youths are referred to juvenile court. Juvenile court can impose various sanctions, such as informal/formal probation, restitution, community services, waive jurisdiction and transfer to criminal (adult) court, or residential placement (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). Adjudicated delinquency cases usually result in formal probation or residential placement (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). While probation is more likely the outcome (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006), the focus of this study was on juvenile offenders confined to residential placement.

According to the most recent information available in *The Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement Databook*, over 93,000 juvenile offenders were held in a public (operated

by state or local government), private (operated by private non-profit or for-profit corporation or organization), and tribal residential placement facility in 2006. This number includes committed youth (those sent to a facility upon adjudication as a part of a court-ordered disposition), detained juveniles (those awaiting a court hearing, adjudication, disposition, transfer to adult criminal court, hearing or trial in adult criminal court, or awaiting placement at another facility), diverted juveniles (those placed at a facility as a part of a diversion plan), and juveniles whose placements were reported as unknown. Of the 93,000, more than 64,000 juveniles were committed to a residential placement facility as a part of a court-ordered disposition (Sickmund, Sladky, & Kang, 2008). The state of Virginia, from which this study's sample was drawn, had almost 34,000 juvenile arrests in 2009 according to the FBI's most recent *Crime in the United States Report*. According to the most current data available from *The Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement Databook*, there were 2,310 juveniles held in a placement facility; this includes committed, detained, and diverted youth and those youth whose placement statuses were unknown. Of that number, over 1,400 juvenile were committed to a residential placement facility as a part of a court-ordered disposition (Sickmund et al., 2008).

Approximately 100,000 juvenile offenders are released annually after being confined to custody facilities (Snyder, 2004). Over half (55%) of released youth are rearrested 12 months after release (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). Rearrest rates is one way of measuring recidivism (i.e., repetitive criminal behavior; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). Rates of recidivism are measured in different ways depending on the state (Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, 2005): re-arrest (a new delinquent offense for juveniles or criminal offense for adults), reconviction (determination of guilt or conviction for delinquent/criminal offense), and re-incarceration (being recommitted to a juvenile or adult facility after a previous release from confinement). In 2008, almost half (47%) of Virginia's juveniles released from a correctional center (i.e., public residential placement facility) were also rearrested within 12 months post-release (Virginia Performs, 2010). Youth who are released from the correctional system are at risk of recidivating (Bullis, Yovanoff, Mueller, & Havel, 2002; Doren, Bullis, & Benz, 1996; McCord, 1992; Unruh et al., 2009) and "not becoming healthy, productive adults" (Unruh et al., 2009, p. 284). Therefore, policymakers are concerned with the successful reentry of offenders into their communities and the reduction of recidivism (Visher, Winterfield, Coggeshall, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

The cost of repeated offending over a 10 year period, taking into account the costs to the victim and criminal justice system as well as the loss of productivity from the offender, totals between approximately \$1.3 and \$1.5 million per offender (McMackin, Tansi, & Lafratta, 2004; Snyder & Sickmund, 1999). Given the human and financial costs of recidivism, reentry is an important issue among policymakers (Mears & Travis, 2004). Reentry refers to the process of returning to society after being incarcerated for a period of time (Mears & Travis, 2004). However, reintegrating offenders is one of the most challenging tasks for American society, particularly because not much is known about the challenges of youth reentry and ways to improve the likelihood of successful transition (Mears & Travis, 2004).

The federal and state governments have been concerned with reentry of offenders for some time with millions of dollars being provided by the federal government to support reentry initiatives, such as Young Offender Initiative, Department of Labor 2003; and Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative, Office of Justice Programs 2002 (Mears & Travis, 2004). More recently, The Second Chance Act, Youth Offender Reentry Initiative, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, was established in 2009. This initiative provides federal grants to agencies and organizations that offer assistance with obtaining employment, substance abuse rehabilitation, living arrangements, family resources, mentoring, support for victims, and other services that can aid in lowering recidivism (National Reentry Resource Center, 2010). Employment appears to be a common component of past and present reentry initiatives.

Employment has been identified as a factor in the adjustment of juvenile offenders to reentry (Altschuler & Brash, 2004). It is critical to helping offenders to successfully transition into their communities (National Reentry Resource Center, 2010). In addition, employment is important in preventing recidivism (Chartrand & Rose, 1996; Glaser, Calhoun, Bates, & Bradshaw, 2003). For released individuals, gainful employment meets one's basic needs and promotes self-esteem, a traditional lifestyle, and social connectedness (Visher et al., 2005). Employment can be a preventative measure to criminal activity by restricting opportunities to engage in such behavior and encouraging socially acceptable behavior (Rakis, 2005).

There are criminological theories that support the idea that employment should lead to a decrease in criminal activity. Control theorists claim that youth engage in criminal activity due to

feeling disconnected from society and employment strengthens the youth's societal bond (Hirschi, 1969). Strain theorists purport that youth from low socioeconomic statuses commit crimes out of anger and frustration as a result of their struggle to achieve material gain legally (Farnworth & Leiber, 1989; Leiber, Farnworth, Jamieson, & Nalla, 1994; Leiber & Mawhorr, 1995), which could be acquired through money earned from employment.

Although employment is considered a factor in curtailing criminal behavior and assisting offenders upon reentry in successfully reintegrating into society, court-involved youth experience many employment barriers such as low self-expectations and expectations of other people, few basic skills, low educational level, and public safety concerns (Task Force on Employment and Training, 2000). Therefore, several programs have been implemented in order to connect these youth to opportunities for employment. For example, The Workforce Investment Act Formula Funds, Youth Opportunity Movement, Job Corps, Youth Apprenticeship, School-to-Work, and One-Stop Centers are among the most common initiatives (Task Force on Employment and Training, 2000). These programs provide funds or services to support the employability of youth by offering opportunities such as career assessment, career and technical education training, work experience, mentoring, job leads and placement, and leadership skills training. The programs were described further in Chapter II. In addition to the workforce initiative programs, several employment and training programs (e.g., The Gulf Trades Center Program and The Homebuilders Institute's Project Craft) are available to provide employment training among other services to the general youth population, at-risk youth, and court-involved youth and have displayed promising results in lowering recidivism among their participants. These programs were also covered further in Chapter II.

The literature and the examples of employment and training programs support the importance of employment in reducing recidivism. However, employment alone is not sufficient. It is not the only preventive measure for criminal activity (Rakis, 2005).

As a preventative, "keeping youth busy" whether through compulsory education, drafting for service in the armed forces, providing fun through recreation, or early employment, can, at best, only temporarily postpone behavior that is symptomatic of more deep-seated or culturally-oriented factors... (Kvaraceus & Miller, 1959, p. 39).

Homant (1984) emphasized the roles of *self-esteem* and prisonization as significant factors in helping juvenile offenders' adjustment after release. Prisonization is defined as "the taking on, in greater or lesser degree, of the folkways, mores, customs, and general culture of the

penitentiary” (Clemmer, 1940, p. 298; Homant, 1984). *Self-esteem* and prisonization can motivate juvenile offenders to find employment and avoid recidivism. He claimed that individuals with *high self-esteem* and low prisonization are more likely to try to find employment and turn away from crime.

Self-esteem and self concept are used interchangeably in the literature. The term that is most applicable to this research study is self concept; therefore, self concept was the term used for this study. Of particular note is Bracken’s (1992) definition that self concept is “...a learned behavioral pattern that reflects an individual’s evaluation of past behaviors and experiences, influences an individual’s current behaviors, and predicts an individual’s future behaviors” (p. 10). Bracken’s idea of competence self concept is of particular interest for this research study. The competence self concept domain is discussed in Chapter II.

Super (1963) posited that individuals pursue employment as a way of implementing their self concept; therefore, people with positive self concept find appropriate employment based on their self-evaluations, and people with negative self concept make poor employment choices. In addition to having low self concept (Cloward & Ohlin, 1963; Evans, Levy, Sullenberger, & Vyas, 1991; Fitts & Hamner, 1969; James, 1969), youth involved with the court system have difficulty evaluating their career interests and identifying career options (Chartrand & Rose, 1996; Glaser et al., 2003; Young, 1994) and experience limited perceptions of their career options (Glaser et al., 2003). As a result, it would seem that juvenile offenders would make poor employment choices, which would lessen their chances of finding employment or finding satisfying work and increase the likelihood that they will return to crime. Helping offenders to better themselves, become more responsible, and *improve their self-esteem* can foster more job options (Rahill-Beuler & Kretzer, 1997). Therefore, assisting juvenile offenders in learning more about themselves, their career interests and options and, at the same time, enhancing their self concept could be helpful to them by increasing their employment options and potentially lead to employment upon reentry and reduced recidivism.

Results from a meta-analysis of existing research have shown that interventions can enhance self concept (Haney and Durlak, 1998; Hattie, 1992; O’Mara, Craven, and Marsh, 2003). Hattie (1992) surmised that cognitively based interventions are more effective in improving self concept than affective interventions. The Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) approach (Sampson, Reardon, Peterson, & Lenz, 2004) is a process to career problem solving

and decision-making. Sampson et al. (2004) suggested that this approach could bring about confidence (e.g., competence self concept).

Instituting interventions targeting the risk (i.e., circumstances that increase the possibility of negative results; Carr & Vandiver, 2001) and protective factors (i.e., circumstances that decrease the possibility of negative results; Carr & Vandiver, 2001) that reduce juvenile recidivism can lead to a reduction in the costs associated with incarcerating an adolescent (Unruh et al., 2009). Self concept and employment are considered risk and protective factors for juvenile reentry. Therefore, an intervention aimed at these two factors might be helpful in successful reentry and reducing recidivism.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of a vocational assessment intervention on enhancing juvenile offender self concept and to explore juvenile offenders' perceptions of the vocational assessment process. Bracken's (1992) model of self concept, with an emphasis on the *global* and *competence* self concept domains, in conjunction with the CIP (Sampson et al., 2004) approach constituted the theoretical basis for this study. The vocational assessment process was based on the CIP (Sampson et al., 2004) approach to career decision-making and problem solving to help juvenile offenders learn more about themselves, their career interests, and identify career options. The outcome of the process could lead to increased self concept for this population, which may result in to these individuals making more appropriate employment decisions and having the confidence to carry out their employment plans. Enhancing juvenile offenders' self concept may ultimately mitigate reentry concerns by contributing to juvenile offenders' successful reentry into life outside of incarceration through the attainment of appropriate employment. The results of this study can be used to better understand factors that contribute to a more positive self concept among juvenile offenders in an effort to develop strategies to optimize the employment potential of this group, thereby, improving societal reintegration and reducing recidivism.

Research Questions

This research was guided by the following questions:

- (1) What is the impact of the vocational assessment process on the self concept of juvenile offenders?

H1: The researcher hypothesized that the vocational assessment process *would not improve* juvenile offenders' *global* self concept.

H2: The researcher hypothesized that the vocational assessment process *would enhance* juvenile offenders' *competence* self concept.

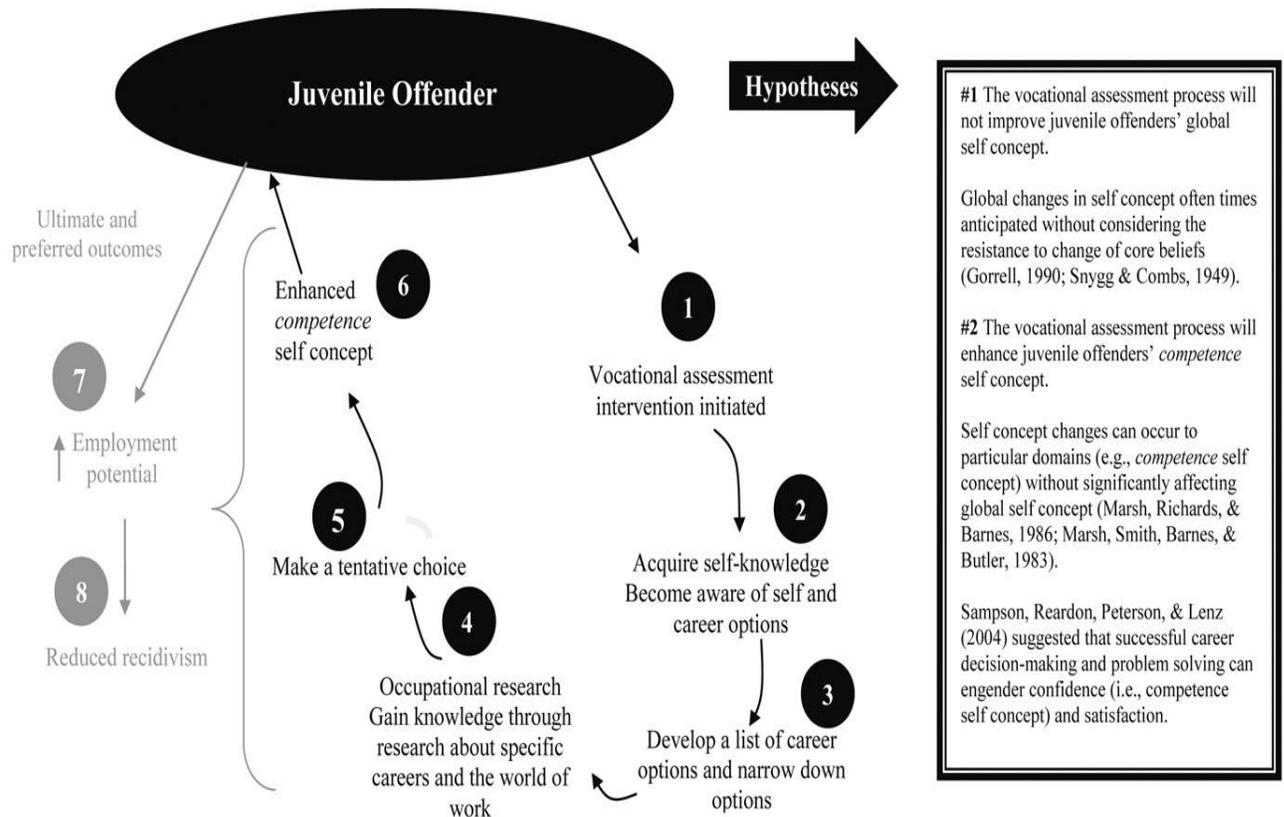
- (2) What are the perceptions held by juvenile offenders about the vocational assessment process?

Figure 1.1 is a conceptual model that represents the hypothesized impact of the vocational assessment process on the self concept of juvenile offenders as proposed by this study and in gray, the ultimate impact of enhanced juvenile offender *competence* self concept that may lead to improved employment potential and reduced recidivism. Employment potential and reduced recidivism are in gray so as to keep the focus of the conceptual model on enhancing juvenile offender *competence* self concept through the use of the vocational assessment process.

This conceptual model is based in part on Sampson et al.'s Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) approach (2004), which describes the process of career decision-making and problem solving. The model shows the juvenile offender receiving the vocational assessment intervention (1). In accordance with the CIP approach, the juvenile offender who participates in the vocational assessment process (1) acquires self-knowledge (2) about his or her values, interests, skills, and employment preferences through the vocational assessment process, which includes the use of various measures such as interest inventories, values inventories, and ability tests (Sampson et al., 2004). This self-knowledge is integrated into the individual's self concept (Peterson, Sampson, Lenz, & Reardon, 2002; Sampson et al., 2004; Tulving, 1972, 1984). This self-knowledge also helps the individual to learn more about career options. The youth is able to relate his or her self-knowledge and options knowledge to better understand self in relation to the occupations that are being considered (Sampson et al., 2004). (3) The individual develops a list of career options and narrows his or her options. Several career assessment measures generate lists of potential career options. This list should be narrowed down to a manageable number of viable choices – about three to five (Sampson et al., 2004; Shahnasarian & Peterson, 1988). Options that should be eliminated are those that are incongruent with the individual's values, interests, skills, and employment preferences (Sampson et al., 2004). (4) The youth learns more about specific occupations and the world of work (Sampson et al., 2004). (5) The individual evaluates alternatives to make a tentative career choice, which should lead to enhanced

competence self concept (6). Sampson et al. suggested that experiencing success in problem solving and decision-making can bring about confidence (e.g., competence self concept) and satisfaction. Upon reentry into society, juvenile offenders who have an enhanced *competence* self concept may experience increased employment options (7) and reduced recidivism (8).

Figure 1.1. The Impact of the Vocational Assessment Process on Juvenile Offender Self Concept¹



- Employment is a critical factor in helping offenders to successfully transition into their communities (National Reentry Resource Center, 2010) and reducing their chances of reoffending (Chartrand & Rose, 1996; Glaser, Calhoun, Bates, & Bradshaw, 2003). However, due to juvenile offenders' low self concept (Cloward & Ohlin, 1963; Evans, Levy, Sullenberger, & Vyas, 1991; Fitts & Hamner, 1969; James, 1969;), difficulty in evaluating their career interests and identifying career options (Chartrand & Rose, 1996; Glaser et al., 2003; Young, 1994), and limited perceptions of their career options (Glaser et al., 2003), it would seem that this population would have difficulty in making good employment decisions.
- According to Super's self concept theory of career development (1963), individuals with positive self concept find employment that appropriately matches their self perceptions, while people with negative self concept make poor employment choices. An intervention such as the vocational assessment process would be helpful to juvenile offenders in exploring their career interests and identifying potential career options and, at the same time, enhance their self concept (i.e., competence self concept) and possibly increase their employment options upon release and reduce their chances of committing new crimes.

¹ This conceptual model is based in part on Sampson, Reardon, Peterson, and Lenz's Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) Approach (2004).

Definitions of Terms

The following terms have been specifically identified that define important aspects of the proposed research study. The definition of each term is supported by the professional literature.

Career interests. Career interests are “patterns of likes, dislikes, and indifferences regarding career-relevant activities and occupations” (Lent, Brown, Hackett, 1994, p. 88).

Competence self concept. “The perception of one’s own ability to master and deal effectively with the environment” (Novick, Cauce, & Grove, 1996, p.210). At the core of competence self concept is Bandura’s (1977) theory of self-efficacy and the small amount of research in the literature that claims to study competence self concept typically focuses on career-related behaviors such as career decision-making, determining that judgments of confidence influence career planning activities (Novick et al., 1996; Betz & Hackett, 1986; Lent & Hackett, 1987).

Employment decisions. “...the ultimate outcome of career decision making and the starting point for ongoing choices about occupations, education, training, and employment” (Sampson et al., 2004, p.8).

Global self concept. As implied by Bracken (1992), global self concept is one’s overall self appraisals.

Interest inventory. An interest inventory is a survey used for identifying an individual’s career and vocational preferences (Horne, 1990).

Juvenile. Persons younger than 18 years of age (Puzzanchera, 2009).

Juvenile crime. Law-violating behaviors committed against people or property by persons under the age of 18 (Harbeck, 2009).

Juvenile offender. The Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement (CJRP) and Juvenile Residential Facility Census (JRFC) defines juvenile offenders as individuals younger than 21 years of age who, due to having some contact with the justice system such as being charged with or adjudicated for a crime, are held in a residential placement (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006).

Protective factors. Circumstances that decrease the possibility of negative results (Carr & Vandiver, 2001).

Recidivism. As defined by Snyder and Sickmund (2006), recidivism is repetitive criminal behavior.

Reentry. Reentry refers to the process of returning to society after being incarcerated for a period of time (Mears & Travis, 2004).

Reintegration. A much broader term than reentry. Reintegration is focused on “offenders and their ability to function within society, as well as offenders’ effect on their families, victims, the community at large, public safety, and the corrections system itself...” (Altschuler & Brash, 2004, p.73).

Risk factors. Circumstances that increase the possibility of negative results (Carr & Vandiver, 2001).

Self concept. *Self-concept* is “...a learned behavioral pattern that reflects an individual’s evaluation of past behaviors and experiences, influences an individual’s current behaviors, and predicts an individual’s future behaviors” (Bracken, 1992, p. 10).

Self concept enhancement. Hattie (1992) suggests that self concept enhancement is using some kind of intervention to improve an individual’s self concept.

Vocational assessment. “A systematic, ongoing process designed to help students and their parents understand a young person’s vocational preferences and potential” (Horne, 1990, p. 2).

Summary

Juvenile offender reentry is a central issue among policymakers. Upon reentry, successful reintegration of juvenile offenders into their communities is significant in contributing to lower recidivism rates. Employment has been identified as a factor that can aid juvenile offenders in their transition from the correctional system to their communities (National Reentry Resource Center, 2010) and preventing recidivism (Chartrand & Rose, 1996; Glaser et al., 2003). However, juvenile offenders have low self concept (Cloward & Ohlin, 1963; Evans et al., 1991; Fitts & Hamner, 1969; James, 1969), difficulty identifying their career interests (Chartrand & Rose, 1996; Glaser et al., 2003; Young, 1994), and limited career perceptions (Glaser et al., 2003) that can affect their ability to make good employment decisions (e.g., Super, 1963).

The purpose of this research study was to use a brief vocational assessment intervention based on the Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) approach (Sampson et al., 2004) to career decision-making and problem solving to enhance the self concept of juvenile offenders. Assisting juvenile offenders in learning more about their career interests and identifying career options through the vocational assessment process, and concomitantly improving their self

concept, may help juvenile offenders make more appropriate employment decisions, thereby increasing the likelihood of employment and reducing recidivism.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Individuals' perceptions of themselves or self concept are considered key components in the career development process. In fact, several career theories emphasize the role of self concept (e.g., Gottfredson, 1981; Korman, 1967; Walsh & Osipow, 1994). Super's (1953) theory describes the career development process as a way of "developing and implementing the self concept..." (p. 190). According to Super (1963), people with positive self concept tend to make suitable employment decisions that adequately match their ideas of self or the person they desire to become; while people with negative self concept tend to make poor employment decisions that match their negative self-evaluations.

Research has shown that juvenile offenders have low self concept (e.g., Cloward & Ohlin, 1963; Evans et al., 1991; Fitts & Hamner, 1969; James, 1969). Therefore, it would seem that juvenile offenders would make poor employment decisions. Since employment has been identified as a factor in helping offenders successfully transition into their communities (National Reentry Resource Center, 2010) and in preventing recidivism (e.g., Chartrand & Rose, 1996; Glaser et al., 2003), juvenile offenders would benefit from being able to make appropriate employment decisions in order to increase their employment options. However, their low self concept (e.g., Cloward & Ohlin, 1963; Evans et al., 1991; Fitts & Hamner, 1969; James, 1969), difficulty evaluating and identifying their career interests and options (Chartrand & Rose, 1996; Glaser et al., 2003; Young, 1994), and limited perceptions of their career options (Glaser et al., 2003) could interfere with their abilities to make good employment decisions that could lead to employment. The Cognitive Information Processing (Sampson et al., 2004) approach to career problem-solving and decision-making can be useful in helping individuals make good career decisions. The vocational assessment process based on the CIP theory can be used to assist juvenile offenders in learning more about themselves and their career options, learning more about specific occupations, and making career decisions. The developers of CIP (Sampson et al., 2004) theory suggested that the process can engender confidence (e.g., competence self concept). Horne (1990) concurred that participation in the vocational assessment process can increase confidence and/or self-esteem.

The purpose of the current study was to examine the impact of the vocational assessment process on juvenile offenders' self concept and explore their views of the process. To set the conceptual framework in support of the study, this chapter presents relevant literature and empirical data pertaining to self concept, juvenile offenders, and vocational assessment as it relates to self concept and juvenile offenders.

Self Concept

Self concept is a construct that has been commonly measured in both psychological and educational research. It has been studied in association with other variables, such as academic achievement (e.g., Pajares & Miller, 1994; Pajares & Schunk, 2001; Purkey, 1970) and juvenile delinquency (e.g. Levy, 1997a). Moreover, self concept is considered a vital element in the career development process (e.g., Super, 1963). This section reviews literature related to the following: (a) defining self concept; (b) models of self concept; (c) measures of self concept; (d) self concept and career development and choice; and (e) self concept enhancement.

Defining Self Concept

Self concept has long been studied in social science research (Bryne, 1996). The psychologist William James (1890/1983) has been credited with being a pioneer in the development of a self concept theory (Marsh & Hattie, 1996). Since James (1890/1983), there has been a multitude of research studies conducted on the self concept construct. Much of the research on self concept and like variables investigates its “mediating or facilitating” effects on other outcome variables such as academic achievement (Marsh & Hattie, 1996, p. 38). In addition, attaining a positive self concept is also the desired goal in many educational and psychological disciplines (Marsh & Hattie, 1996). Despite the wealth of research on self concept, defining the construct continues to be elusive. A “clear, concise, and universally accepted” definition of the construct has yet to be established (Bryne, 1984, 1996, p. 2; Wells & Marwell, 1976; Wylie, 1974, 1979, 1989). Self concept definitions tend to be vague and vary from study to study (Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976). For these reasons, the definition of self concept depends on the meaning that the individual researcher attaches to it.

A thorough review of the literature offers several definitions for self concept. Beane and Lipka (1986) define self concept as “the description an individual attaches to himself or herself...based on the roles that one plays and the attributes one believes he or she possesses” (p. 5). According to Coopersmith and Feldman (1974)

[self concept is made up of] beliefs, hypotheses, and assumptions that the individual has about himself. It is the person's view of himself as conceived and organized from his inner vantage [and] includes the person's ideas of the kind of person he is, the characteristics that he possesses, and his most important and striking traits. (p. 198)

Hattie (1992) posited that self concept is “cognitive appraisals of attributes about ourselves” (p. 10). Super's (1963) definition of self concept is “the individual's picture of himself, the perceived self with accrued meanings” (p.18). Finally, Combs, Soper, and Courson (1963) refer to self concept as “...what an individual believes about himself, the totality of his ways of seeing himself” (p. 493).

These definitions are only a sample of the numerous definitions that can be found in the research literature. They represent the typical definition of self concept that conceptualizes it as a cognitive construct. Whether “self” is a cognitive construct or a behavioral construct is an ongoing debate between cognitivists and behaviorists (Bracken, 1996). The cognitive perspective of “self” is that it is an existing, internal structure that encompasses “self” characteristics such self-control, self-esteem, self-concept, and more (e.g., Harter, 1983; Bracken & Lamprecht, 2003). The behavioral view of "self" is an individual's unique behavioral patterns that is the essence of the individual (Bracken, 1992; Bracken & Lamprecht, 2003).

In an effort to reconcile the definitional inconsistencies that exist for self concept, Shavelson et al. (1976), whose multifaceted, hierarchical model of self concept has been the most widely validated multidimensional model to date (Pajares & Miller, 1994), identified key features in a self concept definition. These key components are that self concept is organized; has a multifaceted nature and a hierarchical structure; and is stable, developmental, evaluative, and differentiable. In their broad definition of self concept, Shavelson et al. (1976) referred to self concept as an individual's self-views developed through environmental experiences and interpretations (Marsh & Martin, 2011). Several researchers have utilized the Shavelson et al. theory of self concept as a basis for their conceptualization of the construct. Self concept definitions are centered more on the multidimensional, domain-specific aspects of the construct instead of its global feature (Carroll, Houghton, Wood, Perkins, & Bower, 2007; Levy, 1997b; Trautwein, Lüdtke, Köller, & Baumert, 2006). For example, Bracken's (1992) behavioral conceptualization of self concept and his self concept scale, *Multidimensional Self Concept Scale* (MSCS; Bracken, 1992), are based upon the Shavelson et al. self concept model. Bracken (1992) identified self concept as “a multidimensional and context-dependent learned behavioral

pattern that reflects an individual's evaluation of past behaviors and experiences, influences an individual's current behaviors, and predicts an individual's future behaviors" (p. 10). For the purpose of the current research study, self concept refers to Bracken's (1992) definition. Since Bracken does not consider self concept as "part of a larger cognitive self-system" (Bracken & Howell, 1991, p. 322), self concept is written without a hyphen for this research study unless referencing a measurement that utilizes a hyphen.

Self concept versus self-esteem. The propensity of researchers to use other "self" terms (e.g., self-confidence, self-acceptance, self-worth, self-appraisal, self-perception, self-consciousness, self-identity, self-esteem) interchangeably with self concept adds to the definitional confusion of the term (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991; Byrne, 1996; Hattie 1992). However, self concept is the preferred term used by most researchers (Pajares & Schunk, 2001). *Self concept* has been regarded as one's descriptive self-views, and *self-esteem* is the evaluative dimension of self concept (e.g., Beane & Lipka, 1980; Shavelson et al., 1976).

Self concept is believed to contain an evaluative component similar to self-esteem. Rogers (1947) defined self concept as "...the sum total of all of the characteristics a person attributes to himself, and the positive and negative values he attaches to these characteristics" (p. 146). However, self-esteem consists of an *additional* evaluative dimension that involves a "satisfaction" element with one's degree of esteem for oneself (Calhoun & Morse, 1977). Self-esteem implies "the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy. In short, self-esteem is a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds toward himself" (Coopersmith, 1967, pp. 4-5).

It has also been suggested that self-esteem develops later than self concept as self-esteem comes from "the child's ability to estimate his own strengths and weaknesses" (Calhoun & Morse, 1977, p. 320). In addition, self-esteem may vary according to an individual's successful and failed experiences while self concept is more stable and constant (Calhoun & Morse, 1977). Although conceptual support for the distinctiveness of the two terms exists, empirical evidence validating the discriminability of the terms has been unsuccessful (Byrne, 1996). Therefore, researchers continue to use the terms synonymously in the literature. The results in a study by Bracken and Howell (1991) on 65 fifth and sixth graders using three self concept/self-esteem instruments, namely *Self-Esteem Inventory* (SEI; Coopersmith, 1967), *Multidimensional Self Concept Scale* (MSCS; Bracken, 1992), and *Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale*

(PHSCS; Piers, 1984), indicated that the three instruments essentially measure the same basic construct and that self concept and self-esteem should be considered synonymous terms or very closely related to each other. For this research study, self concept is the preferred term that was used.

Self concept development. According to Super (1963), each person has a self concept. He suggested that individuals begin forming their concepts of self at birth and, as infants explore their worlds, they become aware of themselves and see themselves as distinct from their mothers, fathers, and others. Some theorists, like Anderson (1952) and Rosenberg (1979), believe that self concept develops in early childhood and maintains stability (as cited in Hattie, 1992). In fact, there are a number of authors who believe it is developed before five years of age and essentially remains enduring (Calhoun & Morse, 1977; Perkins, 1975; Wylie, 1961). Anderson (1952) believes that self concept development is most important in the first year and each year that follows “becomes of lesser importance, until the image is essentially completed before adolescence” (p. 224; as cited in Hattie, 1992). A number of theorists (e.g., Dickstein, 1977; Erickson, 1963; Jacobson, 1964; Mead, 1934) consider self concept development as a growth process that occurs in stages and that each stage would have to be successfully mastered prior to moving to the next stage (as cited in Hattie, 1992). Contrary to this view, Hattie’s (1992) position on self concept development is that self concept consists of “loose associations between various events in the development of self concept and age” (p. 119). He described self concept development as “more a process of parallel developments” (p. 119).

Self concept influences. Although the self concept is believed to be relatively stable, it is susceptible to some modification and change. Self concept can be influenced by a number of factors including social relations and social comparison (Festinger, 1954; Rogers, Smith, & Coleman, 1978; Wagner, 1983), environment and interactions with significant others (Bracken & Lamprecht, 2003; Hattie, 1992; Shavelson et al., 1976), culture (Hattie, 1992; Marshall, 2001), race (Hughes & Demo, 1989; Porter & Washington, 1979), age (O’Malley & Bachman, 1983; Savin-Williams & Demo, 1984), and gender (Seidner, 1978).

The notion that social relations influence self concept is frequently discussed in the literature. One of the first theorists to explore the subject was Cooley (1902), whose theory of the “looking-glass” self models the idea that a person’s social interactions influences one’s self. He suggests that individuals view themselves as a reflection of how others’ see them and their

evaluations of the people's views. Mead (1934) also considered the impact of individual's social relations on his or her self, arguing that the individual's self is considered distinct due to its relationship to others. The comparing of oneself to others is another example of the influence of the social environment on self concept. Festinger (1954) purported a theory of social comparison in which people use their comparisons of themselves with significant others in their environment to develop a sense of worth when objective standards of comparison are not available (as cited in Rogers et al., 1978). Social comparison as it relates to academic achievement and its influence on self concept has been examined in numerous studies. For example, Rogers et al. found that the correlation between academic achievement and self concept can be seen within a social comparison group such as a child's classroom.

The interaction with significant others within one's social world also contributes to the developing self concept. Parents play a significant role in the development of self-perceptions (Purkey, 1970). Coopersmith and Feldman (1974) discussed the influence of a child's teacher on the child's self concept. According to them, feeling accepted by their teachers as significant figures promotes the development of positive self concepts in children. Similarly, acceptance by one's peers is important and influences a child's self concept and social skills development (Jackson & Bracken, 1998). Sullivan (1953) affirmed that peer relations are needed for healthy self concept development.

Cultural influences on self-views have also been cited in the literature. The self concept is the result of an individual's experiences that has many commonalities with the individual's culture given that his or her experiences transpire within that cultural setting (Combs & Snygg, 1959). Raeff (1997) asserted that children's self-views develop "by participating in interactions that caregivers structure according to cultural values about the nature of human existence through the enactment of independence and interdependence in varied action and interaction settings" (p. 210). Marshall (2001) discussed the influence of children's cultural values on their behaviors and how the interpretation of these behaviors by the children themselves and others, according to their cultural ideals, impacts children's self concept. According to Marshall (2001), being capable of retaining a level of comfort with behaviors valued at home and by society will likely contribute to positive self-views in both cultural environments.

The effects of age, race, and gender on children's and adolescents' self concepts have been examined often in the literature. Ambiguity exists in the study of the influences that these

demographic characteristics have on self concept (Wilson, 1998). Simmons, Rosenberg, and Rosenberg (1973) concluded from their research on third to twelfth grade students in Baltimore City that global self concept declines at adolescence. There are others who concur with the finding in the Simmons et al. study (e.g., Roid & Fitts, 1988). Some researchers have reported that adolescence brings about improvements in general self concepts (McCarthy & Hoge, 1982; O'Malley & Bachman, 1983; Savin-Williams & Demo, 1984); whereas, others have determined that adolescent self concept remains somewhat constant and enduring during adolescence (Dusek & Flaherty, 1981; Engel, 1959; Marsh, Parker, & Barnes, 1985; Osborne & LeGette, 1982). Marsh (1989) and others (Marsh et al., 1985; Marsh, Smith, Marsh, & Owens, 1988; Piers & Harris, 1964; Simmons et al., 1973) suggested a curvilinear model of global self concept in adolescence proposing that overall self concept is more positive in childhood, suffers a decline during preadolescence, reverses in early or middle adolescence, and increases in late adolescence to early adulthood. Wylie (1979), in her summative review of research prior to 1977, found no age differences in global self concept between ages 6 and 50 years. According to Wylie (1979), studies of age-related effects on specific domains of self concept were too varied and sporadic to be generalized (as cited in Crain & Bracken, 1994).

The same ambiguous findings can be found in the research on the effects of race on self concept (Wilson, 1998). A number of researchers have claimed that African-American students have higher global self concepts than Caucasian students (Lay & Wakstein, 1985; Powers et al., 1971). Other investigators have supported the opposing view (e.g., Caplin, 1969; Osborne & LeGette, 1982; Stenner & Katzenmeyer, 1976). Several more studies have documented no racial differences in self concept between Black and White students (Calhoun, Kurfiss, & Warren, 1976; Carpenter & Busse, 1969; Hirsch & Rapkin, 1987; Zirkel & Moses, 1971). Zirkel and Moses (1971) also explored racial effects on the self concept of Hispanic students. They found that, in comparison to African-American and Caucasian students, Hispanic students have lower global self concepts. Wasserman, Rauh, Brunelli, Garcia-Castro, & Necos (1990) agreed with Zirkel and Moses (1971). Healey (1969), on the other hand, measured no differences between the three racial groups.

Differences in self concepts among males and females have been frequently assessed in the literature. Crain and Bracken (1994) and others (Greene & Wheatley, 1992; Hanes, Prawat, & Grissom, 1979; Kokenes, 1974; Marsh et al., 1985; Mullis, Mullis, & Normandin, 1992;

Prawat, 1976; Prawat, Grissom, & Parrish, 1979) supported Wylie's (1979) claim that little evidence exists showing that the total self concepts of boys and girls differ. On the contrary, Seidner (1978) and others (Allgood-Merten & Stockard, 1991; Feather, 1991) found reasonably higher global self concepts for males.

Using the *Multidimensional Self Concept Scale* (MSCS), Wilson (1998) reported finding no gender differences across the domain-specific self concepts among a sample of third through sixth graders. However, a number of other researchers have found differences in domain-specific self concepts between gender groups. For example, Dusek and Flaherty (1981) found small differences between genders in which males scored higher on the achievement/leadership and masculinity/femininity factors than females and females scored higher on the congeniality/sociability factor than males. In addition, males have been found to score more favorably than girls in physical abilities and appearance (e.g., Marsh, Barnes, Cairns, & Tidman, 1984; Marsh et al., 1985; Marsh, Smith, & Barnes, 1985), while differences in reading ability (Marsh, Barnes et al., 1984; Marsh, Smith et al., 1985) and English tend to support a more favorable self concept among girls (e.g., Bryne & Shavelson, 1987; Marsh, Parker et al., 1985). Males also tend to have higher self concepts in math than females (Bryne & Shavelson, 1987; Marsh, Smith et al., 1985).

Models of Self Concept

Prior to the 1980s, self concept as a unidimensional structure was the perspective of many researchers (e.g., Coopersmith, 1967; Marx & Winne, 1978; Piers & Harris, 1964). This perspective led in the research on self concept (Marsh & Martin, 2011). The unidimensional perspective views self concept as a single, global entity (Marsh & Martin, 2011) that includes academic, social, physical, and emotional self concepts, and represents all aspects of a person's life even though it lacks differentiated subcomponents (Byrne, 1996). This perspective has been considered limited in accurately measuring self concept because it does not consider the various components that make up one's self concept. In fact, the global self concept construct may not be particularly useful for researchers (Marsh, 1993; Pajares & Schunk, 2001).

Since the 1980s, the multidimensional perspective has become the more widely accepted perspective. The multidimensional perspective of self concept highlights multiple dimensions that are somewhat distinct (Marsh & Martin, 2011). Recognized for their seminal work in self concept, Shavelson et al. (1976) proposed a hierarchical and multifaceted model of the construct.

In the Shavelson et al. (1976) model, specific self-perceptions are organized at the lower level of the hierarchy, with broader self-beliefs (e.g., physical, academic, social) in the middle and global self concept at the top of the hierarchy (Marsh & Martin, 2011). The Shavelson et al. model of self concept has been accepted by many researchers and has been the basis for the development of a number of multidimensional self concept scales (e.g., Bracken, 1992; Marsh, 1988/1990a).

Bracken's (1992,1996) model of self concept, which is largely based on the Shavelson et al. (1976) model, proposed that children's self concepts develop within the many contexts of their unique environments. He specified six primary contexts of self concept: social, competence, affect, academic, family, and physical. Bracken's model is depicted using a Venn diagram in which global self concept is represented by a center circle with the six primary domains surrounding it (see Appendix K). These six primary contexts are moderately overlapping and intercorrelated. The *social primary context* includes children's interactions with others such as friends, classmates, family members, and teachers in different social settings. Children base their self-evaluations on their perceptions of how others react to them. The *competence primary context* represents children's evaluations of their successes and failures in many different areas of their lives. Competence self concept is "the perception of one's own ability to master or deal effectively with the environment" (Novick et al., 1996, p. 210). Competence self concept was the focus of this research study and was discussed further in the following section. The *affective primary context* symbolizes children's affective responses of their evaluations of their own behaviors or others' reactions to their behaviors. For example, children who accomplish a task or are praised by others usually exhibit positive affective responses (e.g., happiness or satisfaction) and those who experience failure, frustration, or rejection tend to react with negative affective responses (e.g., anger or sadness). Children's evaluations of their academic performance as well as their teachers' and peers' appraisals of their school performance constitute the *academic primary context*. *Family primary context* is characterized by children's perceptions of self that evolve from their interactions with individual family members, their family unit (e.g., traditional, single-parent, stepfamily, foster family), and within various subsystems. Family comprises those people who live with the child or "on whom the child is dependent for care, security, and nurturance" (Bracken, 1996, p.470). The *physical primary context* consists of children's evaluations of their physical attributes (i.e., physical abilities and attractiveness), and direct and indirect feedback from others about their physical

qualities. The six primary contexts as identified by Bracken are “commonly, but not universally identified in the literature” (Bracken, Bunch, Keith, & Keith, 2000, p. 483). Information from each of these context areas is acquired from two different perspectives, one’s personal experiences (personal perspective) and feedback from others (other perspective), and evaluated on different performance standards (i.e., absolute standard, ipsative standard, comparative standard, ideal standard; Bracken, 1992, 1996). Evaluation of individuals’ behaviors is based on clearly successfully or unsuccessfully completing activities (absolute standard), the individual’s performance in one domain compared to one’s overall performance (ipsative standard), the individual’s performance when compared to others in the same domain (comparative standard), and according to their performance expectations or the expectations of others [ideal standard] (Bracken 1992, 1996). Essentially, Bracken’s model focuses on the acquisition of healthy self concepts (see Bracken & Lamprecht, 2003).

Competence Self Concept

Bandura’s self-efficacy theory (1977) is at the center of Bracken’s (1992, 1996) idea of competence self concept. Self-efficacy expectations refer to one’s confidence in having the ability to carry out and achieve a particular task. Self-efficacy functions as an influence on behavior. It determines whether or not the behavior will be attempted, the amount of effort that will be exerted on completing the task, and one’s perseverance or resilience during adversity (Gorrell, 1990). It is a motivational concept that denotes a person’s confidence in his or her ability to be effective in his or her future actions (Harter, 1996). Bandura (1977) postulated four sources to explain the development of and modification of efficacy expectations, which include the following: (a) performance accomplishments; (b) vicarious experiences or modeling; (c) verbal persuasion or encouragement from others to try a specific task; and (d) emotional arousal such as a high level of anxiety which can lead to one feeling incapable.

In the literature, self-efficacy and self concept are used either synonymously; self concept as a broader aspect of self-efficacy; or self-efficacy as a part of self concept (Pajares & Schunk, 2001). However, self concept and self-efficacy embody differing perspectives of self and are not necessarily related (Pajares & Schunk, 2001). Self concept is a description of one’s self-perceptions and includes an evaluative dimension; self-efficacy is one’s confidence in his or her ability. Self-efficacy focuses on a particular task and self concept, while it can be domain-

specific (e.g., academic self concept, social self concept, physical self concept) is not task-specific (Pajares & Schunk, 2001).

The few research studies that have examined competence self concept (e.g., Betz & Hackett, 1986; Lent & Hackett, 1987) have focused on the construct in relation to career decision-making and determined that judgments of confidence influence career planning activities (Betz & Hackett, 1986; Lent & Hackett, 1987; Novick et al., 1996). For example, people who believe that they are competent are more likely to consider more career options and carry out their career plans compared to those who believe that they are incompetent (Novick et al., 1996). People typically pursue tasks in which they have confidence and avoid those in which they lack confidence (Pajares & Schunk, 2001). All types of individuals are likely to get more accomplished if they feel competent, confident, and good about themselves (Marsh & Hau, 2003).

Pioneering the application of Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory to career behavior, Hackett & Betz (1981) were particularly interested in investigating the influence of perceived self-efficacy on women's career development, specifically the impact of societal gender expectations on females' self-efficacy for specific tasks and careers. Betz and Hackett (1986) broadened their focus to include exploring the impact of career self-efficacy, which are self-efficacious views towards career choice and adjustment behaviors. According to Betz and Hackett (1997), self-efficacy expectations pertaining to career-related domains influence one's academic and career choice, performance, and persistence.

Much of the research on the relationship between self-efficacy and interests (e.g., Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994; 2000) has proposed that self-efficacy produces growing interests; Bandura (1997) agrees with the self-efficacy to interest position (as cited in Betz, 2007). However, it is possible for career interests to be related to increased self-efficacy because an individual's interest in a particular area increases the probability of successful accomplishment (Betz & Hackett, 1981). Other researchers such as Tracey (2002) have investigated the inverse relationship of self-efficacy and interests. Tracey (2002) determined from his study of confidence and interests of fifth and seventh-grade students that a reciprocal relationship exists between the two, in which interests led to increased competence and vice versa. Essentially, exploring the interest-competence relationship was the objective of this study. This study examined how learning more about juvenile offenders' interests through the vocational

assessment process would impact their competence self concept, which has been related to self-efficacy.

Standard Measures of Self Concept

As with the many different theories and definitions of self concept, there exist a number of varied self concept measures. Early instrument designers developed instruments that measured the cognitive or affective construct, which classified self concept as unidimensional and focused on its global nature (Keith & Bracken, 1996). Recent developers of instruments emphasizing a cognitive approach conceptualize self concept as part of a larger “self-system” (Keith & Bracken, 1996). In addition, some instruments have been developed from the behavioral conceptualization of self concept (Keith & Bracken, 1996). Most authors of self concept measures have accepted the multidimensionality of the construct and, as of the mid-1970s, most self concept instruments have been developed considering both the multifaceted and global natures of the construct (Keith & Bracken, 1996). A brief overview of the self concept measures found frequently in the literature are presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

Standard Measures of Self Concept

Scales/Domains	# of Items	Age	Reliability Coefficients		Usefulness
			Alphas	Test-Retest	
<i>Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventories</i> ^{1,2}					
Unidimensional; revised to include social, academic, family, and personal experience domains	The School Form – 50 items	The School Form ages 8-15	Total scale:	5 weeks (.88)	assessing individuals, screening for the classroom setting, planning lessons to build self-esteem, evaluating programs, and research
	The School Short Form – 25 items	The Adult Form ages 15 and older	4 th grade (.90)		
	The Adult Form – modified version of the School Short Form		5 th grade (.87) 6 th grade (.88) 7 th grade (.89) 8 th grade (.92)		
<i>Multidimensional Self Concept Scale</i> ^{1,3}					
Multidimensional; six domains: social, competence, physical, academic, family, and affect that work together to comprise the global self concept	150 items: 25 items per scale	ages 9-19	Total scale (.98); subscales (.87 to .97) for the six subscales	4 weeks: total scale (.90); subscales (.73 to .81)	research; comprehensive clinical assessment; measures general and specific self concept domains; theoretically sound, easy to use, easy scoring; nationally representative sample; strong reliability data and correlation with other self concept measures
<i>Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale</i> (2 nd ed., <i>The Way I Feel About Myself</i>) ^{1,4,5}					
Total score; six domain scales: freedom from anxiety, behavioral adjustment, intellectual and school, physical appearance and attributes, popularity, and happiness and satisfaction; two validity scales: inconsistent responding, response bias	60 items	7-18 years of age with at least a second grade reading and comprehension level	Majority above (.70)	3-4 weeks: total scale (.96 and .86 respectively) subscales (not reported)	screening instrument; part of a psychological evaluation; updated norming sample, shortened version, computer scoring
<i>Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale</i> ¹					
Unidimensional; measures global self concept	10 items	Unknown; vocabulary suggests appropriate children as young as 12 years of age	Total scale (.77)	Two-week: Total scale .85 to .88	Brief and easily administered

Self-Description Questionnaire^{1,6,7,8}

3 dimensions: Academic (e.g., Mathematics), Non-Academic (e.g., Peer Relations), Global Self -Concepts (e.g., Total-Self)	SDQ I: 76 items SDQ II: 102 items SDQ III: Section 1 136 items Section 2 12 statements	SDQ I: 5-12 years SDQ II: 13-17 years SDQ III: 16 years- adult	SDQ I and II scales (.80s and .90s) SDQ-III (.76) on the Honesty/Trustworthiness scale	Reliability over four time periods measured in the .70s and .80s for the SDQ-II and III; .61 for younger SDQ-I samples	SDQ-I individual and group assessment SDQs for educational planning; models for developing affective instruments; theoretically and empirically sound
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Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, Second Edition^{1,9,10}

Multidimensional; total scale and six scales: Physical, Moral, Personal, Family, Social, Academic/Work	Adult form – 82 items Child form – 76 items Short version used to obtain total score – 20 items	Adult form: ages 13-90 Child form: ages 7-14	Range from .73 (low) on Social Self concept to .93 (high) on Total Self concept	1-2 weeks (.47 to .82) on Adult form (.55 to .83) on Child form	counseling and research, clinical assessment, selecting personnel; establishing relationships between self concept and other constructs; fewer scoring complications, simpler scales, exceptional resources for interpreting scores
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The Self-Perceptions Inventory^{1,11}

Five sets of forms that measure the self-perceptions of five different groups: students, (1 st to 12 th graders), adults, teachers, nurses, and educational leaders	Younger children: 20 items Other forms: 36-40 items	1 st grade to adult	Range (.78 to .94)	7-8 weeks: student forms (.74 to .89), adult forms (.68 to .86), teacher forms (.51 to .89), nurse forms (.89 to .94), educational leader (.88)	Research purposes; affective descriptions; comparisons between people; identify clinical disorders; easily completed; no extensive training needed for administering; not difficult to complete, expeditious and thorough method of measuring one's self concept and others' perceptions of the individual
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¹ Keith & Bracken, 1996; ² Peterson & Austin, 2004; ³ Archambault, 2004; ⁴ Oswald, 2004; ⁵ Kelley, 2004; ⁶ Gable, 2004; ⁷ Isonio, 2004; ⁸ Atlas, 2004; ⁹ Hattie, 2004; ¹⁰Brown, 2004; ¹¹ Wang, 2004

Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventories. The *Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventories* (CSEI; Coopersmith, 1981), were unidimensional measures of self-esteem and were revised in 1981 based on theoretical improvements in the understanding of the self concept construct. The current version measures one's attitude about self in social, academic, family, and personal experience domains (Keith & Bracken, 1996). The CSEI is comprised of three self-report questionnaires: The School Form, The School Short Form, and The Adult Form (Peterson & Austin, 2004). Subjects respond accordingly to positive and negative statements, using 'like me' or 'unlike me' (Peterson & Austin, 2004). It takes approximately 30 minutes to administer the CSEI, individually or in a group setting (Keith & Bracken, 1996).

The School Form includes 50 items and is intended for children 8 to 15 years old (Peterson & Austin, 2004). The School Short Form is made up of the 25 items from the School Form with the highest item-total correlations (Peterson & Austin, 2004). The normative sample for the School Form is based on Kimball's (1973) research which included 7,593 fourth through eighth grade students from one state, of various socioeconomic backgrounds, approximately the same number of boys and girls and the same number of participants in each grade level, and "Black and Spanish surnamed students" [Coopersmith, 1981, p. 17] (as cited in Keith & Bracken, 1996). In regards to the reliability of the School Form, acceptable reliability for Grades 4 and 8 were found for total scale internal consistency according to Kimball's (1973) research with coefficients of .90 for fourth grade and .92 for eighth grade. The coefficients for fifth, sixth, and seventh grades were .87, .88, and .89 respectively (Keith & Bracken, 1996). A sample of 103 college students displayed lower internal consistencies for the Short Form at .74 and .71 (Bedian, Geagud, & Zmud, 1977; Keith & Bracken, 1996). The test-retest correlation over a short-term (5 weeks) was .88. The coefficients were constantly lower for longer periods of time (Keith & Bracken, 1996).

The Adult Form is a modified version of the School Short Form and intended for individuals older than 15 years of age (Peterson & Austin, 2004). The normative sample for the Adult Form consisted of 226 community college and state university students in Northern California with an average age of 21.5 years (Keith & Bracken, 1996). Due to data that suggests that adolescents score somewhat lower on this form, the sample is divided into two groups based on age: 16-19 year olds and 20-34 year olds (Keith & Bracken, 1996). The number of participants for each age group is not indicated; therefore, the adequacy of the sample size is

impossible (Keith & Bracken, 1996). This sample is not representative of a national sample because it focuses on one part of U.S., does not include persons of varying educational levels, and some demographic characteristics (e.g., race, gender, ethnicity) are excluded from the information (Keith & Bracken, 1996). No information regarding the technicality of the Adult Form was provided in the examiner's manual (Keith & Bracken, 1996). As for the validity of the CSEIs, a number of studies have been conducted to assess its validity; however, the studies provide scarce support to confirm the claims of the authors (Keith & Bracken, 1996). The CSEIs are useful for assessing individuals, as a screening tool for the classroom setting, planning lessons to build self-esteem, evaluating programs, and research (Keith & Bracken, 1996). They are "among the best known and most widely used" self-esteem measures (Johnson, Redfield, Miller, & Simpson, 1983; Peterson & Austin, 2004, ¶2). In addition, the CSEIs are brief and easy to score (Peterson & Austin, 2004).

Multidimensional Self Concept Scale. A 150-item Likert-scale self-report measure, *The Multidimensional Self Concept Scale* (MSCS; Bracken, 1992) assesses global and multidimensional self concept in children and adolescents ages 9 to 19 years old (Keith & Bracken, 1996) and is designed for clinical and research purposes (Archambault, 2004). The MSCS is comprised of six domains (i.e., social, competence, physical, academic, family, affect) made up of 25 items each that work together to constitute the global self concept (Keith & Bracken, 1996). The six dimensions are somewhat interrelated and overlapping (Bracken, 1992). The MSCS, which has a suggested 3rd grade reading and comprehension level, can be administered individually or in groups in approximately 20 to 30 minutes though there is no time limit (Bracken, 1992). Examinees rate their responses using *strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree* to describe how well they believe the statements on the scale apply to them (Bracken, 1992). The subscales of the MSCS can be administered collectively or independently along with other instruments for a more thorough assessment (Archambault, 2004).

The MSCS has a nationally representative normative sample comprised of 2,501 children ranging in ages from 9 to 19 years old and closely matching the 1990 U.S. Census data with respect to gender, ethnicity, race, and geographic region (Keith & Bracken, 1996). The reliability for the MSCS displayed the following internal consistency alphas: total scale (.98) and six subscales [.87 to .97] (Archambault, 2004). Test-retest reliability at a four-week interval for a sample of 37 8th grade students was .90 (total scale) and .73 to .81 [subscales] (Archambault,

2004). Standard errors of measurement for the total scale and subscales are moderately low (Archambault, 2004). Evidence of validity data have shown that the MSCS measures aspects of self concept similar to other self concept scales [i.e., The CSEI, Piers-Harris, SDQ-II] (Archambault, 2004). Significant correlations, ranging from .57 to .73 and .66 to .77, were found between the MSCS and the Coopersmith Total Scale and the Piers-Harris, respectively (Archambault, 2004). The MSCS's theoretically sound foundation, easy use and scoring, research and clinical uses, nationally representative sample, strong reliability data, and correlation with other self concept measures are considered appealing features of the assessment (Archambault, 2004).

Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, Second Edition. The *Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, Second Edition* [The Way I Feel About Myself] (*Piers-Harris 2*) is a revision of the 1969 and 1984 versions of the instrument. The 60-item scale (Kelley, 2004) measures general self concept and domain specific self concept in children and adolescents ages 7 to 18 years of age with at least a 2nd grade reading and comprehension level (Oswald, 2004). Examinees respond to whether or not the item is true of them (Kelley, 2004). The *Piers-Harris 2* is easy to read and interpret and is available in English and Spanish (Kelley, 2004). This scale can be administered in 10-15 minutes in groups or individually (Oswald, 2004). Although the instrument can be administered by minimally trained personnel, interpretation must be done by appropriately trained persons (Kelley, 2004). The *Piers-Harris 2* includes a total score, six domain scales (Intellectual and School, Physical Appearance and Attributes, Popularity, Happiness and Satisfaction, Freedom From Anxiety, and Behavioral Adjustment), and two validity scales [i.e., Inconsistent Responding, Response Bias] (Oswald, 2004).

The *Piers-Harris 2* has been re-standardized on a national sample of 1,387 students, ages 7-18 years old, from U.S. school districts (Oswald, 2004). In terms of reliability, the majority of Cronbach alphas for the total and domain scores were above .70 (Kelley, 2004). Correlations between domain scales ranged from .30 to .69 (Oswald, 2004). The test-retest reliability data, which is based on the earlier scale, are 8 to 12 months (.42 and .51 respectively) and 3 to 4 weeks [.96 and .86 respectively] (Keith & Bracken, 1996). For convergent validity, the authors examined the correlation of *Piers-Harris 2* scores and scores on other measures for anger, aggressive attitudes, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms, and views associated with obesity (Oswald, 2004). The *Piers-Harris 2* is useful in evaluating the self-perceptions of

children; as a clinical screening instrument in psychological assessments for children; as part of comprehensive evaluations in the clinical setting; and for research (Keith & Bracken, 1996). The updated norming sample, shortened version, along with computer scoring are considered improvements to the earlier versions of the *Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale* (Kelley, 2004).

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Considered “the forerunner of modern self concept instrumentation” (Keith & Bracken, p. 96), the *Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale* (RSES; Rosenberg, 1979) is one of the first instruments developed for measuring global self concept (first published in 1965). The 10-item, unidimensional scale, that can be administered in a group or individually, measures individuals’ positive and negative views of self (Keith & Bracken, 1996). The age range for which this instrument is most appropriate is unknown; however, the level of vocabulary in the items suggests that it is appropriate for children as young as 12 years of age (Keith & Bracken, 1996). The examiner’s manual does not include standardized instructions for administration, an approximate reading level, and administration time (Keith & Bracken, 1996). Raw scores ranging from zero to six identify high, medium, and self-esteem (Keith & Bracken, 1996).

The norming sample, collected in 1965, consisted of 5,024 eleventh and twelfth graders from 10 “randomly” selected New York high schools, stratified according to the size of the community (Keith & Bracken, 1996, p. 96). The outdated sample makes it difficult to use and generalize the norming sample to modern examinees (Keith & Bracken, 1996). The alpha coefficient for the total score was .77 and the total score exhibited a large amount of error that should be taken into consideration when interpreting scores (Keith & Bracken, 1996). Test-retest reliability for a two-week interval was reported in two studies on small college samples with coefficients of .85 and .88 [e.g., Silber & Tippett, 1965; McCullough, cited in Rosenberg, 1979] (Keith & Bracken, 1996). The usefulness of the RSES for clinical and research purposes has been questioned due to “incongruence with current theory, its relatively poor psychometric quality, and its outdated normative sample” (Keith & Bracken, 1996, p. 97). However, it continues to be administered because of its brevity and easy administration (Keith & Bracken, 1996).

Self-Description Questionnaire. *The Self-Description Questionnaire I, II, III* (SDQ I, II, III; Marsh, 1988, 1990a, 1992) is a self-report measure of self concept in children and young

adults using three instruments (Isonio, 2004). The dimensions of self concept measured by the SDQ are Academic (e.g., Mathematics), Non-Academic (e.g., Peer Relations), and Global Self concepts [e.g., Total-Self] (Gable, 2004). The three instruments are for preadolescents (5-12 years of age), adolescents (13-17 years of age), and young adults [16-adult years] (Gable, 2004). The format of all of these instruments is Likert-scale and each form can be administered in approximately 15 to 25 minutes (Gable, 2004). Hand-scoring the assessment is the only available method of scoring for the three instruments (Isonio, 2004).

The SDQ-I consists of 76 items (Gable, 2004) and is used with children in fourth through sixth grades (Isonio, 2004). This scale has a general self concept facet, four nonacademic facets (Physical Abilities, Physical Appearance, Peer Relations, and Parent Relations), and three academic facets [Reading, Mathematics, and General School] (Keith & Bracken, 1996). The standardization sample for the SDQ-I consisted of 3,564 (1,971 boys and 1,593 girls) Australian elementary school students from Grades 2 through 6 (Keith & Bracken, 1996). Generalization is problematic due to the lack of demographic information on the sample (Keith & Bracken, 1996).

The SDQ-II comprises 102 items and contains the same scales as the SDQ-I; however, a peer scale and an Emotional Stability and Honesty/Trustworthiness scale have been added (Isonio, 2004). This scale is given to seventh through tenth grade individuals (Isonio, 2004). The norms for the SDQ-II were derived from a sample of 5,494 Australian boys and girls (2,658 boys and 2,836 girls) from different socio-economic levels and coed or same-sex Catholic and public school settings (Keith & Bracken, 1996). Like the SDQ-I, generality for the SDQ-II sample is difficult given that no other demographic information is presented (Keith & Bracken, 1996).

The SDQ-III is aimed at assessing the self concept of adults; however, it fails to address many of the issues pertinent to adult self concept (Isonio, 2004). It is divided into two sections (Section 1 and Section 2). The first section is made up of 136 items and Section 2 includes 12 statements (Gable, 2004). The SDQ-III encompassed 2,436 sets of responses from Australian persons ranging in ages between 13 and 48 years old with a mean age of 20.9 (Gable, 2004).

With respect to the reliability of these instruments, the majority of the reliability estimates had coefficient alphas that measured in the .80s and .90s, except for the SDQ-III with an alpha of .76 on the Honesty/Trustworthiness scale. Test-retest stability estimates over different time periods (not mentioned) were in the .70s and .80s for the SDQ-II and SDQ-III, and

a mean of .61 for the SDQ-I over a 6-month interval. The SDQ's author has contributed to numerous articles furthering the theoretical grasping of the self concept construct. Both his contribution and being grounded in the Shavelson et al. (1976) multidimensional, hierarchical model of self concept lend strong support to the SDQ's content validity (Gable, 2004). Its construct validity is supported in two ways: (a) through numerous exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses on the composition of self concept and, of which provides a sound empirical basis for the instruments; and (b) through theoretically sound connections with other variables [e.g., academic achievement, age, gender, and self-efficacy] (Gable, 2004). The SDQ is considered a sound self concept measurement, both in theory and research. However, its friendliness to the user is compromised due to its overwhelmingly detailed manual and complicated scoring procedures (Isonio, 2004). Additionally, the cross-cultural validity of the instrument has been questioned (Isonio, 2004). The SDQ is useful for individual and group assessment (Keith & Bracken, 1996). The SDQ measures are useful for educational planning (Atlas, 2004) and can be used as models for developing affective instruments (Gable, 2004).

Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, Second Edition. Initially published as a unidimensional measure in 1965 (Keith & Bracken, 1996), the most recent version of the *Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, Second Edition* (TSCS-2; Fitts & Warren, 1996) measures multidimensional self concept based on six major scales, including Physical, Moral, Personal, Family, Social, and Academic/Work, which collectively provide a total score as well as a conflict score [‘balanced self-view’ versus a conflicting self] (Hattie, 2004). It is comprised of two forms: The Adult form and the Child form. The Adult form is administered to individuals ages 13 to 90 years and consists of 82 items. The Child form is for children and adolescents ages 7 to 14 years and contains 76 items. The respondent answers questions on a five-point scale, with responses ranging from ‘*always false*’ to ‘*always true*’ (Brown, 2004) in order to establish a picture of self (Keith & Bracken, 1996). The TSCS-2 can be administered individually or in a group setting in 10-20 minutes (Brown, 2004). A 20-item short version (first 20 items on the forms) can be used to obtain a total score (Brown, 2004). The TSCS-2 can be hand-scored or scored by computer (Brown, 2004).

The TSCS-2 was renormed using 1,944 adults and 1,396 children (Hattie, 2004). In regards to reliability, the internal consistencies using Cronbach's alpha ranged from .73 (low) on Social Self concept to .93 (high) on Total Self concept (Brown, 2004). Test-retest reliability

(one to two-week time period) was somewhat lower, ranging from .47 to .82 on the Adult form and .55 to .83 on the Child form (Brown, 2004). The internal and test-retest reliability ranges are adequate, contributing to low standards of error (Hattie, 2004). The manual provides sufficient evidence of construct validity. Concurrent validity is supported by the correlations of the TSCS-2 with other psychological measures (Brown, 2004). The TSCS-2 is useful in counseling, assessment and diagnosis, in selecting personnel and research (Keith & Bracken, 1996). It will continue to be popular because of fewer complications in scoring, simpler scales, and exceptional resources for interpreting scores (Hattie, 2004).

The Self-Perceptions Inventory. Originally published in 1972, The Self-Perceptions Inventory (SPI) is based on a multifaceted model reflecting the different dimensions (e.g., varying roles and demands) of the individual (Keith & Bracken, 1996). The instrument is useful for research purposes; providing affective descriptions of children and adults; making comparisons between people; along with larger assessments; and in identifying clinical disorders (Keith & Bracken, 1996). The SPI (Soares & Soares; SPI, 1999) is comprised of five sets of forms that measure the self-perceptions of five different groups: students (first graders to twelfth graders), adults, teachers, nurses, and educational leaders (Wang, 2004). Included in each set are a number of forms that allows the individual to provide a self-perception rating (e.g., ideal self, reflected self, role-related self) and forms for significant others to use to evaluate the individual (Wang, 2004). In addition to the English version, the SPI is also available in Spanish, Italian, and French (Clare, 2004). The SPI can be administered in groups and individually (Wang, 2004). Twenty items make up the forms for younger children, and 36-40 items make up the other forms (Clare, 2004). Estimated administration time is five to twenty minutes, which is contingent upon the subject's age and reading level (Keith & Bracken, 1996). The format of the scale is a "forced-choice semantic differential format," (Clare, 2004, ¶1) with four choices on a continuum between two poles of terms (Keith & Bracken, 1996). An example that is given is happy/unhappy and possible responses would be very happy, more than unhappy, more unhappy than happy, and very unhappy (Clare, 2004).

No updated norms of the original standardization sample were noted (Clare, 2004). The original normative sample showed that the Student Form included 10,712 subjects that included grades 2 through 12 and for the Adult Form 2,650 subjects were identified consisting of ninth graders through "working adults" (Keith & Bracken, 1996, p. 114). No detailed information

about the samples is provided in the manual (Keith & Bracken, 1996). Regarding the reliability of the SPI, the internal consistency range was .78 to .94. The test-retest reliability coefficients over a seven to eight week period for some of the forms ranged .74 to .89 (six student forms), .68 to .86 (seven adult forms), .51 to .89 (five of the teacher forms), .89 to .94 (four nurse forms), and .88 [educational leader form; number of forms unknown] (Wang, 2004). Varying validity indexes are reported for different forms. For example the student forms correlated with the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI) was determined to be .68 (Wang, 2004). Correlation of the adult forms with the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) was .72 for the self concept form and approximately .52 for the remaining forms (Wang, 2004).

The SPI can be easily completed (Wang, 2004). There is no extensive training needed for individuals interested in administering the assessment (Wang, 2004). The SPI is not difficult for subjects to complete and it is an expeditious and thorough method of measuring one's self concept and others' perceptions of the individual (Wang, 2004).

Other instruments. Among these instruments are a number of other types of measures used to evaluate individuals' self concepts. For example, semantic differentials present a list of bipolar terms and encourage individuals to rate themselves on each bipolar scale (Hattie, 1992). In addition, adjective checklists provide an alphabetized list of 300 adjectives that allows individuals to select the adjectives that best describe the individual's self (Hattie, 1992). Q-Sorts (personality items placed in groups and arranged according to the extent in which the items represent the examinee's self), self-drawings (one's own drawings of himself or herself used to evaluate his or her perception of self), and projective tests (e.g., *Rorschach*, *Thematic Apperception Test*, *Behavior Interpretation Inventory*) are other self concept measures (Hattie, 1992).

Self Concept and Career Development and Choice

Donald Super's self concept theory has been influential in emphasizing the important role of self concept in career development. Super (1953) described the vocational development process as "developing and implementing a self concept" (p. 190). Super (1963) defined self concept as "the individual's picture of himself, the perceived self with accrued meanings... a picture of the self in some role, some situation, in a position performing some set of functions, or in some web of relationships" (p. 18). Similar to the Shavelson et al. (1976) multidimensional self concept model, Super believed that individuals have not one self concept but multiple self

concepts that make up what Super called a *self concept system*. Super declared that complexities of self concept exist from a simple level to one of a more complex nature. He referred to the dimensions and metadimensions of self concept. The dimensions of self concept are the personality traits attributed to self, such as gregariousness and dogmatism, and the metadimensions of self concept are characteristics of dimensions of self concept like consistency and stability (Super, 1992). The multidimensional self concept consists of a variety of self-percepts that emerge in different roles and situations (Super, 1963).

In addition to his work on self concept, Super also focused on the *vocational self concept*, which is an individual's perception of self in work roles (Super, 1992). Super posited that individuals fulfill their self concept through their career choices (Super, 1963). He provided a systematic explanation of the key elements in a self concept theory of vocational development, which was identified as (a) self concept formation, (b) translation of self concept into occupational terms, and (c) implementation of self concept.

Self concept formation. Individuals begin forming their concepts of self at birth. As they explore their worlds, they become aware of themselves and see themselves as distinct from their mothers and fathers, and others.

Translation of self concepts into occupational terms. Super identified several ways in which individuals translate their self concepts into occupational roles. For example, individuals might identify with an adult in a particular career and desire to pursue a similar occupational role due to their identification with that adult. Individuals might also acquire experience in a particular occupation, which could lead to translation of their self concepts into that occupational role. Finally, individuals might discover that they have abilities that match those needed to pursue a specific occupational role and choose to enter a particular career based on their ability level and interest.

Implementation of self concept. The implementation of self concept occurs when individuals take action, such as entering a college program, taking courses, or receiving training, to achieve occupational roles and make their self concepts reality. During this period, individuals have an opportunity to test and re-test their translations of self concept into occupational terms in an effort to find a "suitable occupational translation of this favorable picture of himself, and turn it into reality" (Super, 1963, p. 14).

Self concept plays a major part in the career development process as it influences the individual's career choice (Super, 1990). For example, individuals with a well-defined self concept might believe that they are capable of pursuing a career in the field of engineering and, therefore, elect to pursue a career in engineering based on their perception of self. Conversely, if a person has a poor self concept, then he or she is likely to make poor career choices based on

low self-perceptions. Individuals achieve satisfaction with their career choice when they are able to live out their self concept in an occupational role (Super, 1963).

In addition to reviewing the theoretical contributions of Super's theory of self concept to career development, Betz (1994) discussed other theoretical and empirical contributions in explaining self concept theory. For example, Korman's (1967) research suggested that persons with low self-esteem tend to make poor matches between self and vocational role (as cited in Betz, 1994). Betz (1994) also referred to Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) and Walsh and Osipow (1994) who reported that career-oriented women have higher levels of general self-esteem and more positive self concepts than home-oriented women. Gottfredson's (1981) theory focused on the comparing of self concept and occupational concepts through the processes of circumscription (narrowing career options) and compromise (choosing between occupational preferences and realistic employment options). Her theory centers on self concept-job compatibility in terms of occupational sex-type, prestige, and field of work and the influence that these factors have on individuals' career choices (as cited in Betz, 1994). Additionally, Betz (1994) related self-efficacy theory to Super's theory of self concept in a number of ways, stating that self-efficacy theory relates specific self concepts (e.g., career self-efficacy perceptions) to career-related behaviors. Self-efficacy theory also integrates the self concept and learning theory as emphasized by Super and encompasses Super's fundamental ideology of self concept (Betz, 1994).

Self Concept Enhancement

Self concept enhancement is considered an important factor for individuals to achieve their maximum potential early on in development and academic success, physical and mental health and general welfare, future goals and productive employment, and in making other societal contributions (Craven, Marsh, & Burnett, 2003). Poor self concept can inhibit individuals' potential (Craven et al., 2003). Therefore, having a positive view of self is a practical goal for everyone's life (Bracken & Lamprecht, 2003).

Self concept enhancement programs. An important dilemma in self concept research is the difficulty that exists for self concept to be completely stable and, at the same time, react to sudden life events and systematic interventions (Marsh, 1990b). This poses a problem because a great deal of research on self concept focuses on exploring self concept changes and enhancing self concept using some type of intervention. Often times, researchers anticipate global changes

in self concept from limited, brief interventions without considering the resistance to change of core beliefs (Gorrell, 1990; Snygg & Combs, 1949). The results of a study by Marsh, Smith, Barnes, & Butler (1983) suggested that self concept changes can occur in particular domains of self concept without having as significant of an effect on the general self concept.

Hattie (1992) utilized meta-analysis to examine self concept change. He analyzed 89 studies and found that self concept can be enhanced using some kind of intervention; however, he believed that the magnitude of the change was not as significant as reported by several researchers. Hattie categorized the programs that exist to enhance self concept. He organized the programs into three categories: (a) cognitively oriented (e.g., cognitive therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy, behavioral therapy, personal development programs, communication skills, and transactional analysis); (b) affectively oriented (e.g., client-centered therapy, Gestalt therapy, self-awareness groups); and (c) neither cognitively nor affectively oriented programs (e.g., academic programs, physical fitness programs, and environmental programs). Cognitively oriented programs are based on cognitive therapies that focus on changing the client's maladaptive thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Affectively based programs focus on the client-therapist relationship, and the client's ability to work through his or her emotions to become aware of his or her situation. Programs that are not directly related to cognitively or affectively based programs are either a balance between the two (e.g., Outward Bound Courses) or are not associated with cognitions or emotions (e.g., environmental programs). Hattie's meta-analysis on the effectiveness of self concept enhancement programs showed that more cognitively based programs appeared to be more effective compared to affective programs.

More recently, Haney and Durlak (1998) and O'Mara et al. (2003) conducted meta-analytic reviews of interventions used to change self concept and self-esteem. The former reviewed 102 studies, and results of the meta-analysis supported Hattie's (1992) view concerning the relevance of self concept and self-esteem interventions (Haney, & Durlak, 1998). The results suggested that it is possible to use interventions to considerably increase the self concept of children and adolescents and at the same time contribute to improvements in other aspects of adjustment (Haney & Durlak, 1998). The results also showed that the interventions that are most effective are those aimed at specifically measuring self concept change, instead of measuring self concept parenthetically through another means (Haney & Durlak, 1998; O'Mara et al., 2003). The latter, which extended somewhat on the Haney and Durlak (1998) study, reviewed 154

studies with their main focus being on including multidimensional self concept (O'Mara et al., 2003). In general, the results of the study showed that interventions could result in enhanced self concept/self-esteem (O'Mara et al., 2003). Like Haney and Durlak (1998), the results of the study showed that interventions aimed at specifically measuring self concept/self-esteem should be used as opposed to those that incidentally measure self concept and self-esteem (O'Mara et al., 2003). Of particular interest are the results that emphasized the importance of taking into account the multidimensionality of self concept when measuring self concept change. The authors advised that multidimensional instruments be used for assessing interventions that measure specific dimensions so as not to hide the actual benefits of the intervention by "inappropriately global scales" (O'Mara et al., 2003, ¶25). Global self concept does not adequately measure self concept in different dimensions because a person can demonstrate positive self concept in one dimension and negative self concept in another. If researchers are interested in a specific dimension of self concept, global self concept measures and those that measure other dimensions may not be particularly relevant (Marsh & Hau, 2003).

Psychotherapy (e.g., Shore, Massimo, & Ricks, 1965), educational programs (e.g., Craven, 1996; Craven, Marsh, and Debus, 1991), and physical fitness programs (e.g., Marsh & Peart, 1988) are among some of the programs that have been implemented to improve self concept. The Outward Bound Program is one of the most frequently discussed self concept enhancement programs. It is a physically and mentally challenging program that encompasses rigorous outdoor activities. According to Richards (1977), its purpose is to provide an atmosphere for "the person to recognize and understand his own weaknesses, and strengths, and resources and thus find within himself the wherewithal to master the difficult and unfamiliar" (p. 69). Marsh, Richards, and Barnes (1986) investigated the effects of participating in the Outward Bound Program on individuals' self concepts. Their sample included 361 Outward Bound participants, ranging in ages from 16 to 31. Using a time-series design, the participants of the study were administered the Self-Description Questionnaire (SDQ-III) and The Rotter LOC Scale at four different times in the study (before the start of the program, during course registration, first day of the course, and on the last day of the 26-day course). Their overall results concluded that the Outward Bound Program is an effective intervention with the capacity to change domain specific self concepts related to the program goals and locus of control.

Juvenile Offenders

Juvenile crime (law violating behaviors committed by persons under 18) and recidivism (repetitive criminal behavior) are important, costly issues in American society. Over two million juvenile (persons under 18 years of age) arrests occurred in 2008 (Puzzanchera, 2009). Although arrest data show that there was a 3% decline in arrests among juveniles from 2007 to 2008, Puzzanchera (2009) warns that encouraging trends should not be “a pretext for a misplaced sense of complacency” (p. 1). Puzzanchera (2009) highlighted the statistics to follow. Juvenile offenders made up 16% of all violent crime arrests (murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) and 26% of all arrests for property crimes (burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson) in 2008. The murder arrest rate for juveniles rose 17.7% (3.8 arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17) from 2004. The male arrest rate for simple assault declined 6% and increased 12% for females during the period of 2004 to 2008. African-American juveniles comprised only 16% of the juvenile population (ages 10-17) in 2008, however, made up 52% of juvenile arrests for violent crimes and 33% of juvenile property crime arrests. African-American juvenile arrest rates in 2008 were disproportionate to other ethnicities. Black youth arrest rates for violent crimes were five times higher than Caucasian youth, six times higher than American Indian juveniles, and 13 times higher than Asian youth. Black youth arrest rates for property crimes were twice as high as white and American Indian youth and six times higher than Asian juveniles (Puzzanchera, 2009).

Once arrested, the cases are processed within law enforcement agencies, referred to juvenile court, waived to criminal (adult) court, or referred to a welfare agency or another police agency (Puzzanchera, 2009). In 2008, referral to juvenile court was most common with 66% of juvenile arrests being referred (Puzzanchera, 2009). If referred to the juvenile court system, the juvenile court has the authority to impose various sanctions including dismissing the case, informal/formal probation, restitution, community services, waive jurisdiction and transfer to criminal (adult) court, or residential placement (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). Adjudicated delinquency cases generally result in placement in a residential facility or formal probation (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). Although formal probation is most likely sanction of the two (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006), nationally in 2006, more than 64,000 juvenile offenders were committed to a residential placement facility as a part of a court-ordered disposition (Sickmund et al., 2008). The state of Virginia had almost 34,000 juvenile arrests in 2009 according to the

FBI's most recent *Crime in the United States Report*. According to the most current data available from *The Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement Databook*, there were over 1,400 juveniles committed to a residential placement facility as a part of a court-ordered disposition (Sickmund et al., 2008).

It costs the American people billions of dollars each year in the arrest, processing of cases, incarceration, and treatment of juvenile offenders (Greenwood, 2008). Roughly, about 100,000 juvenile offenders are annually released after being confined to placement facilities (Snyder, 2004). Upon release, these youth are typically rearrested at an average rate of 55% at 12 months post-release (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). Virginia's recidivism rate trails the national average with 47% of their juveniles who were released from a correctional center (i.e., public residential placement facility) being rearrested at 12 months post-release in 2008 (Virginia Performs, 2010). Reentry for released youths is a central concern among policymakers (Mears & Travis, 2004).

Successful reentry would contribute to lower recidivism rates. Identifying each offender's various risk factors and protective factors is essential in reintegration, which focuses on "offenders and their ability to function within society, as well as offenders' effect on their families, victims, the community at large, public safety, and the corrections system itself..." (Altschuler & Brash, 2004, p.73). Risk factors are circumstances that increase the possibility of negative results and protective factors are circumstances that decrease the possibility of negative results (Carr & Vandiver, 2001). Examples of risk factors include low self concept, diminished self-esteem (Brook, Whiteman, Balka, & Cohen, 1997; Carr & Vandiver, 2001; Lerner & Galambos, 1998; Werner, 1993), poor social interactions (Brook et al., 1997; Carr & Vandiver, 2001), low educational expectations (Brook et al., 1997; Carr & Vandiver, 2001; Lerner & Galambos, 1998), unsatisfactory school performance, inconsistent school attendance, and continual reckless behavior (Carr & Vandiver, 2001; Lerner & Galambos, 1998), and employment (Altschuler & Brash, 2004; Unruh, Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2009). Protective factors include the conditions of strong self-worth and high self-esteem (Carr & Vandiver, 2001; Parker, Cowen, Work, & Wyman, 1990), a strong social bond in school (Battistich, Schaps, Watson, & Solomon, 1996; Battistich & Hom, 1997; Carr & Vandiver, 2001), family unity and effective communication between children and parents (Carr & Vandiver, 2001; Grossman et al., 1992), participation in leisure activities (Carr & Vandiver, 2001), and employment (Altschuler &

Brash, 2004; Unruh, Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2009; Waintrup & Unruh, 2008). Knowledge of the risk and protective factors improves the possibility of developing interventions to prevent delinquent behaviors (Simões, Matos, & Batista-Foguet, 2008). Furthermore, instituting interventions aimed at the risk and protective factors that reduce juvenile recidivism can lead to a reduction in the costs associated with incarcerating an adolescent (Unruh et al. 2009). In their discussion concerning the risk and protective factors of drug abuse among adolescents, Hawkins, Catalano, and Miller (1992) addressed the need for strategies focused on reducing risks in preventing drug abuse and other adolescent problem behaviors (e.g., delinquency). Risks can be addressed by enhancing protective factors (Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992) as protective factors buffer the impact of being exposed to risk factors (Cowen & Work, 1988; Garnezy, 1985; Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992; Rutter, 1985; Werner, 1989). According to Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller (1992), interventions designed to decrease the negative effects of specific risk factors should emphasize the potentially positive impact from the protective factors that are associated with those same risk factors. For example, this study was designed to address the risk factors, self concept and employment, and enhance their potentially positive effects as protective factors. Utilizing such an intervention in delinquency prevention programs, correctional education and training, and reentry services can contribute to successful reentry for juvenile offenders. Recommendations for the use of a vocational assessment intervention in prevention, education and training, and reentry are provided in Chapter V.

Self concept and employment have been identified as potential risk and protective factors. This part of the chapter reviews literature and research on the connection between self concept and juvenile delinquency, the juvenile offender's self concept, the role of employment in reducing recidivism, and enhancing juvenile offenders' self concept. Understanding more about the juvenile offender and the juvenile offender's self concept is important in developing effective interventions to improve self concept in order to enhance its influence as a protective factor for juvenile offenders. Additionally, enhancing juvenile offenders' self concept could maximize employment as a protective factor for them by increasing their employment options, which could possibly lead to their employment and reduced recidivism.

Juvenile Delinquency and Self Concept

A number of theories have been proposed that explicate the etiology of juvenile delinquency (e.g., Becker, 1963; Braithwaite, 1989; Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Cohen, 1955;

Fagan, 2001; Lemert, 1951; Reckless, 1961; Regoli & Hewitt, 2004). Many juvenile delinquency theories focus on the biological, sociological, and psychological explanations to the problem. The focus of this literature review is on theories that emphasize the importance of self concept in juvenile delinquency (e.g., Braithwaite, 1989; Cohen, 1955; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Kaplan, 1975, 1977, 1978, 1980; Lemert, 1951; Reckless, 1961). The assumption is that good self concept is associated with less delinquency and poor self concept is associated with more delinquency (van Welzenis, 1997).

Levy (1997a) reviewed some of the earlier theorists (e.g., Lemert, 1951; Cohen, 1955; Reckless; 1961; Kaplan, 1975, 1977, 1978, 1980) who considered the relationship between self concept and juvenile delinquency including Lemert (1951) who proposed that the labeling effects of police and court involvement and institutional confinement convinces individuals that they are delinquent, in turn affecting their self concept and behavior. On the contrary, while labeling can initially lead to decreased self concept, it could ultimately result in status that turns out to be “socially self-enhancing” (Bernberg & Krohn, 2003; Bernberg, Krohn, & Rivera, 2006; Carroll et al., 2007, p. 239; Levy 1997a) because youth who are labeled and potentially incarcerated change their frame of reference and compare themselves with a different social circle (Bernberg et al., 2006). Also, Cohen (1955) who theorized that delinquency is an attempt to attain a particular status by fitting in with the delinquent subculture. He asserted that pressure on those who were not privy to the values and goals desirable to society would lower self concept, and participation in law-violating behaviors would fit into subcultural norms and allow one to gain a particular status, thereby enhance self concept (as cited in Levy, 1997a). The containment theory developed by Reckless (1961) focuses on the interaction between inner and outer controls that influence normative behavior, which Reckless describes as “sociolegal conduct norms” (p. 42). He claimed that when one possesses internal controls (e.g., self-control, *a positive self concept*, “ego strength,” high tolerance for frustration, responsibility, goals) and outer controls, termed “structural buffers” in one’s environment to maintain reasonable limits, it insulates against delinquency. Kaplan’s esteem enhancement theory (1975, 1977, 1978, 1980) suggested that negative self concept is an underlying factor that contributes to delinquency and youths’ participation in delinquent behavior is a way of enhancing their self concept (Carroll et al., 2007; Leung & Lau, 1989; Mason, 2001). Participation in delinquent behavior decreases negative self-

views and increase positive self-perceptions (Carroll et al., 2007; Kaplan & Lin, 2005; Kaplan, Martin, & Johnson, 1986).

In addition, Levy (1997a) reviewed more recent theorists such as Braithwaite (1989), and Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) who incorporated a “self” component into their theories of juvenile delinquency. Braithwaite (1989) proposed a comprehensive theory that includes labeling theory, control theory, and learning theory and one in which the interaction between people and society and the effects on self concept are central. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) stressed that people with low self-control are inclined to engage in behaviors, both criminal and noncriminal, that demand immediate gratification.

Using these ideologies as theoretical support for his study, Levy (1997a) investigated the differences in self concept among youth with varying classifications of juvenile delinquency and posited that higher self concept would be associated with lower delinquency. He administered the *Tennessee Self-Concept Scale* (Roid & Fitts, 1991) to 230 Australian high school students in 9th through 12th grade from different socioeconomic statuses and ethnicities and 54 institutionalized youth from state institutions for delinquents. Subjects were classified as nondelinquent, noninstitutionalized delinquent, and institutionalized delinquent using Mak’s (1990) *Self-Report Delinquency Scale*, a scale used specifically with Australian youth. The results showed the nondelinquents as having higher self concept, followed by the noninstitutionalized delinquents, and then the institutionalized delinquents. These results validated the hypotheses of the study, which suggested that nondelinquents would have the highest levels of self concept, with noninstitutionalized delinquents being next, and institutionalized delinquents with the lowest and that higher self concept could be equated to lower delinquency. Thus, also supporting the claims of many theorists on the relationship between self concept and juvenile delinquency.

Edwards (1996) also found a relationship between low self-esteem and delinquent behavior. He conducted research with 426 male and 106 female juvenile delinquents and 174 male and 180 female nondelinquents. The subjects completed a self-reported crime index and a Likert-scale questionnaire about their experiences in different social situations related to five sociological or criminological theories (i.e., anomie, social control, differential association, labeling, self-esteem). Results showed a strong link between anomie (disappointment and isolation as a result of not satisfying one’s goals) delinquency for the delinquent sample, a

reciprocal effect between labeling and delinquency, and a relationship between low self-esteem and delinquency.

Some theorists do not recognize self concept as the cause of delinquency but rather a means of regulating juvenile delinquency (e.g., Kaplan, 1975, 1977, 1978, 1980). They consider self-esteem an important element in studying, preventing, and resolving juvenile delinquency (e.g., Goldsmith, 1987). Still there are other researchers who have found no relation between self concept and juvenile delinquency. For example Bryd, O'Connor, Thackrey, and Sacks (1992) found no support for a direct relationship between the two in their study of 40 institutionalized youth.

The Juvenile Offender's Self Concept

“Low self concept has been linked to a wide range of maladaptive behaviours, including suicide, substance abuse and juvenile delinquency” (O'Mara et al., 2003, ¶2; Marsh & Craven, 1997). Research has shown that juvenile offenders tend to have lower self concept than non-offenders. In their research on self concept, juvenile delinquency, and positive peer culture, McKinney, Miller, Beier, and Bohannon (1978) wrote that the juvenile offender is regarded as unsure in his view of self, and lacking in self-worth and self-respect when compared to equivalent adolescents. According to them, the delinquent possesses an external locus of control and looks to others for evaluation of his behavior as well as lacks the coping abilities to maintain self-esteem and is unable to deal with stress and outside pressures. In a research study conducted by Lund and Salary (1980), a group of 43 non-institutionalized, adjudicated juvenile offenders and 40 randomly selected juveniles with no prior criminal records were administered the *Tennessee Self-Concept Scale* (Roid & Fitts, 1991). Results of the study displayed significant differences between juvenile offenders and non-offenders in self concept subscale scores. The juvenile offenders exhibited “weaker egos,” poor internalized locus of control, acting out tendencies, lower self-esteem and confidence, depression, unhappiness, and discontentment with self. Evans et al., (1991) conducted a study of 223 institutionalized delinquent males and females also using the *Tennessee Self-Concept Scale* (TSCS). Similarly, the results of their study showed that compared to non-delinquents, delinquents experience low self-worth and confidence, anxiety, dissatisfaction with self, depression, and unhappiness. The results showed that the scores of the delinquent youth were not only lower than those of non-delinquent youth, the scores were significantly lower than normal standardized scores for the TSCS.

The feelings that juvenile offenders experience can be attributed to their negative social interactions. At-risk youth experience many negative experiences in school, with social services, employers, and court systems that lead to negative self concept (van Welzenis, 1997; Vettingburg, 1988). Juvenile offenders who possess negative thoughts and feelings and feelings of inadequacy like the subjects in the Lund and Salary (1980) and Evans et al. (1991) studies often resort to socially unacceptable behavior. According to Roid and Fitts (1988), “the individual’s self concept has been demonstrated to be highly influential in much of his or her behavior and mental health. Those people who see themselves as undesirable, worthless, or ‘bad’ tend to act accordingly. Those who have very deviant self concepts tend to behave in deviant ways” (p. 1).

Juvenile Offenders and Employment

Gainful employment has been linked to positive results in reentry, especially for older youth (Altschuler & Brash, 2004). Employment offers several benefits for the adolescent worker. For instance, working provides the youth with the opportunity to acquire independence, display responsibility, attain “real-world experience” (Bachman & Schulenberg, 1993, p. 220), and money that is usually used as the youth chooses (Bachman, 1983; Bachman & Schlenburg, 1993). Employment is equally, if not more, advantageous for ex-offenders. Employment provides ex-offenders with the support needed to avoid trouble and be successful upon return to the community (Rahill-Beuler & Kretzer, 1997). Gainful employment could potentially prevent unlawful behaviors by restricting opportunities to commit criminal acts and encouraging acceptable behavior through social rewards (Rakis, 2005). In addition, employment enables ex-offenders to meet their basic needs, improves self-esteem, helps ex-offenders to gain a traditional way of living, and allows them to feel like they fit in with others in their communities (Visher et al., 2005). Furthermore, working provides daily structure of activities and interactions and acts as an “informal social control” for ex-offenders (Sampson & Laub, 1997; Uggen, 1999; Uggen & Staff, 2001; Visher et al., 2005, p.296; Wilson, 1997). However, it is not just any kind of work that is important. Uggen (1999) emphasized the importance of high quality employment on minimizing criminal activity and substance use. According to Uggen (1999), high quality jobs provide “greater legitimate opportunities and stronger informal controls” (p. 135), which should lead to the reduction of unlawful behavior. He suggested that people with higher quality jobs are less likely to recidivate while those persons with menial jobs are more likely to participate in crime.

Several criminologists have purported theories that support the idea that employment reduces crime. For example, control theories suggest that a youth commits criminal acts when the youth's connection with society or social bond is weakened or broken (Hirschi, 1969). Both the *commitment* and *involvement* components of Hirschi's (1969) social bond theory explicate the influence of employment on crime. According to the *commitment* part of his theory, employment reinforces the youth's bond to society and establishes a commitment to conformity that the youth does not want to risk by engaging in criminal activity (as cited in Thornberry & Christenson, 1984). The *involvement* component suggests that participation in a conventional activity such as work does not allow time to participate in criminal behavior (as cited in Thornberry & Christenson, 1984). Additionally, strain theories propose that lower-class adolescents enter into delinquency as a result of anger and discontent with their struggle to legitimately acquire material gain, which seems to come more easily for middle and upper class youth (Farnworth & Leiber, 1989; Leiber et al., 1994; Leiber & Mawhorr, 1995). Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) strain theory posits that lower-class youth resort to illegal means when their occupational opportunities have been blocked.

Employment is considered a factor in curtailing criminal behavior and assisting offenders upon reentry in successfully reintegrating in society. However, youth involved in the justice system encounter many barriers to their participation in the work world (e.g., low self-expectations and expectations by others, few basic skills, low educational level, poor interpersonal skills, negative influences of peers, and public safety concerns; Task Force on Employment and Training, 2000). The Workforce Investment Act Formula Funds, Youth Opportunity Movement, Job Corps, Youth Apprenticeship, School-to-Work, and One-Stop Centers are among several initiatives to connect youth, including youth involved in the court system to the workforce (Task Force on Employment and Training, 2000).

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Formula Funds. The WIA youth formula funds provide funding for various in-school and out-of-school activities for youth 14 to 21 years old. Services must be based on an individual appraisal of one's basic skills, work skills, previous work experience, abilities, need for supportive services, and developmental needs. Services must consist of a variety of services such as tutoring and dropout prevention, alternative education program, counseling, adult mentors, summer employment, work experience, job skills training, leadership training, and support and follow-up services.

Youth Opportunity Movement. Provides grants to assist qualifying communities (i.e., Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community-designated areas and tribal/State-designated

high-poverty areas) in establishing one-stop centers. The goal of the program is to reduce youth unemployment rates in poor communities in order to reduce crime, youth gang activity, the illegal use of drugs, and the dependence on welfare.

Job Corps. Nationally recognized as a residential education and vocational training program for youth ages 16 to 24 that are considered severely disadvantaged. The program provides preparation for employment, vocational/technical school or junior college entry, military enlistment, or entrance into other education or training institutions.

Youth Apprenticeship. Programs that allow youth to receive education and training by skilled workers. These programs are beneficial for youth who are involved in the justice system because it helps to replace “unhealthy peer attachments with attachments to employers and coworker apprentices” (p. 16).

School-to-Work (STW). The goal of the Federal STW Opportunities act is to reduce school drop-out rates and decrease the number of high school graduates who leave school without a career plan, viable skills, and an understanding of what is expected of them in the workplace. STW consists of academic and vocational training, career exploration in work settings, mentoring, work experience, and structured training, student-employer matching, mentor training, opportunities to learn work, and making connections between school and work.

One-Stop Centers. These Centers offer services to adults and youth; however, funding for youth who do not come from low income families must be provided by other sources not WIA. WIA requires the development of one-stop systems in local areas to provide employment and training. A variety of services are provided, including career assessment and counseling, career and technical education and training, job leads and placement, unemployment financial assistance, vocational rehabilitation, adult education and literacy, Job Corps, and assistance to trade-affected workers, and other services.

Several employment and training programs have been identified as useful for the general youth population, at-risk youth, and those involved in the court system (Task Force on Employment and Training, 2000). The superior programs allow youth to “feel connected to caring adults, receive positive, consistent, and constructive support, develop a sense of group membership, cooperate with family and peers, are promoted as resources, build a sense of responsibility and leadership skills, develop a sense of who they are, engage in a range of age and stage-appropriate activities, and/or have access to support services over time” (Task Force on Employment and Training, 2000, p. 29).

The Gulf Coast Trades Center (GCTC) Program in New Waverly, Texas, is considered an exemplary program for youth in residential facilities. GCTC is a 168-bed residential program for adjudicated youth ages 16 to 18. The program provides social skills and work attitudes training, skills for specific jobs, GED preparation, drug abuse education, referrals for jobs, driver’s education training, and service planning for discharge and aftercare. Outcome

information for the program showed that 65% of program participants earned GED's and 90% became employed. There was a 22% recidivism rate over twelve months for GCTC participants receiving parole services through the program (Task Force on Employment and Training, 2000).

A second employment and training program instituted by the Homebuilders Institute (HBI) for juvenile offenders in five states (Florida, Maryland, North Dakota, Tennessee, and Texas) is Project Craft (Community Restitution and Apprenticeship Focused Training). This program offers vocational training and career and support services (e.g., employability and social skills training, case management). The program's objective is to confront delinquency and unemployment among the youth population and lower juvenile recidivism by helping at-risk youth and juvenile offenders to attain financial rewards and avert crime (Hamilton & McKinney, 1999). Results of a program evaluation conducted over a four year period and published in 1999 by Resource Development Group showed that, in September 1998, of the 140 Project Craft graduates at the three original demonstration sites (Bismark, ND; Nashville, TN; Sabillasville, MD), 94 adolescents had been placed in jobs in the home building field (Hamilton & McKinney, 1999). The recidivism rate for program participants at the three demonstration sites was 26% (Hamilton & McKinney, 1999).

The literature concerning employment and the examples of promising employment and training programs support the importance of employment in reducing recidivism. Obtaining gainful employment upon release could be helpful to juvenile offenders in reintegrating into their communities and reducing their chances of recidivating. Therefore, interventions that could lead to increased employment options for juvenile offenders would be beneficial to juvenile offenders' adjustment to reentry into their communities and recidivism. This research study examines using a vocational assessment intervention to enhance juvenile offender self concept, which could potentially impact juvenile offenders' employment potential and decrease recidivism.

Juvenile Offenders and Self Concept Enhancement

“As emphasized by Branden (1994, p.xv), low self concept can lead to personal and social ineffectiveness such as disadvantage, academic failure, depression, suicide, violence, criminality, and many other social problems” (as cited in Craven et al., 2003, ¶6). Self concept enhancement has been recognized as an essential element in dealing with the social injustices that underprivileged groups face (Craven et al., 2003; Marsh & Martin, 2011). Consequently,

improving individuals' self concept might be helpful in handling today's most important societal issues (Craven et al., 2003), one of which is juvenile crime and recidivism.

Although dated, there have been studies conducted that examined the impact of systematic interventions on the self concept of juvenile offenders. Somewhat more recent studies investigating the impact of career guidance programs on juvenile offender self concept are discussed later in the chapter. Maskin and Flescher (1975) studied the effects of two institutional correction programs on the self concept modification of 60 male juvenile delinquents. A work-oriented program and a parent-child interaction program were each introduced to 30 male juvenile delinquents. The work-oriented program consisted of training in personal hygiene, survival skills, maintaining the ranch, and leisure and sport/exercise activities. The goal of the program was to help the juveniles to become more independent through individual, vocational, and personal development. The parent-child interaction program included individual and group counseling to enhance communication between parent and child and strengthen family togetherness. The subjects of the study encompassed 60 first-time, male juvenile offenders ages 15 to 17 years old with no prior admittance in a formal correctional program. The subjects were grouped according to age, race, academic achievement, and reading score attained from the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT). The subjects were administered the *Tennessee Self-Concept Scale* (TSCS) at admission and for a second time 120 days later at the end of the intervention therapy. Emphasis was placed on three separate scores of the TSCS, including the Total Positive Score (global self-worth), Personal-Self Score (individual's self-esteem), and Family Self-Score (self-perceptions within one's family unit and among one's circle of intimate friends). The results suggested positive change in self concept in participants in both programs; however, subjects in the parent-child interaction program demonstrated greater positive change.

In another study conducted by Fryrear, Nuell, and White (1977), photographed social interactions were used as an intervention to enhance social self concepts in male juvenile delinquents. The participants in the study included 30 incarcerated males ranging in age from 14 to 16 years, of different socioeconomic levels, and with various offenses. Selection of subjects was based on the subjects' scores on the Social and Total Self concept subscales (T-scores at 50 or below were accepted) on the *Tennessee Self-Concept Scale* (TSCS). The results of the study showed that successful social interactions using photography could effectively initiate positive

change in certain male delinquents. The subjects were divided into two groups: an experimental group and control group. Over a five-week period, the groups were photographed “engaging successfully in pleasant, socially acceptable interactions” (p. 835) that were identical to each other. The experimental group was given their set of about 12 pictures to be placed in personal scrapbooks each week. The control group did not receive their pictures; instead, they were provided with a variety of magazines (e.g., motorcycle, sports car, boat, airplane, popular music) that they were to use to cut out their favorite pictures to put into their scrapbooks and label the way they wanted. The results of the study showed an increase in the experimental group’s Total Self concept score on the TSCS. There was no such improvement in self concept for the control group. Therefore, the results of the study showed that successful social interactions using photography could effectively initiate positive change in certain male delinquents.

Some authors have suggested that enhancing one’s self-esteem or self concept contributes to improvement in a number of areas with behavioral functioning being one of them, along with educational and personality functioning (Delugach, Bracken, Bracken, & Schicke, 1992; Gurney, 1986; Haney & Durlak, 1998; Shirk, 1988). Therefore, improving juvenile offenders’ self concept would be helpful in enhancing their overall functioning in different areas.

Vocational Assessment

The vocational assessment process allows individuals to learn more about themselves in regards to their vocational interests, skills, abilities, values, and other career related factors. According to the literature (e.g., Horne, 1990), the vocational assessment process can lead to increased confidence and/or self-esteem. This section of the chapter consists of information on: (a) the definition and components of vocational assessment; (b) the impact of vocational assessment on self concept; and (c) the use of vocational assessment with juvenile offenders.

Definition and Components of Vocational Assessment

Vocational assessment is defined as “a systematic, ongoing process designed to help students and their parents understand a young person’s vocational preferences and potential” (Horne, 1990, p. 2). The objective of vocational assessment is to gain information regarding an individual’s employability that can help the individual and those working with the individual in making career decisions about employment and training or services needed to obtain employment (Horne, 1990). Clarification of a student’s self concept should occur through vocational assessment as well, which is essential in an individual’s educational and vocational

functioning (Horne, 1990). There are several methods for gathering vocational assessment information including situational assessments, interest inventories, temperament inventories, learning styles inventories, on-the-job try-outs, curriculum-based vocational assessment, work samples, observations, functional assessments, aptitude tests/screenings, and achievement tests (Horne, 1990). Situational assessments involve the systematic observation of the individual in real work situations using behavioral observations methods such as rating scales or checklists (Sitlington, 1988). Interest inventories and/or surveys can be used to measure an individual's work preferences (Horne, 1990). Information about one's temperament or worker style preferences (e.g., preferences for working with people, things, or data; the individual's behavior, emotional reactions, and decision-making) can be collected through temperament inventories, observations, and talking with the individual (Horne, 1990). Learning styles inventories determine the method (e.g., auditorily, visually, tactilely) in which the individual prefers to collect and process information (Horne, 1990). On-the-job try-outs allow an individual's technical skills for specific jobs to be observed while the individual essentially attempts to perform parts of the job (see Horne, 1990). Curriculum-based vocational assessment is considered an alternative approach to vocational assessment in which teachers develop and conduct performance-based evaluations using their course curriculums (Horne, 1990). This type of assessment allows the teacher to collect relevant vocational information pertaining to the individual's task performance and interaction in the classroom or vocational setting (Horne, 1990). Work samples consist of simulated job duties, representative or not, of a real job or part of a job (Sitlington, 1988). Observations by persons such as teachers, parents, and evaluators can be useful in gathering relevant vocational information concerning an individual's temperaments; learning preferences; vocational or occupational skills; and the individual's traits, attitudes, work habits, social skills. Functional assessment relates to the individual's skills and interactions in his or her natural environments (e.g., home, school, community; Horne, 1990). Aptitude tests/screenings can be administered to assess an individual's ability to do and learn specific skills (e.g., mechanical, spatial, numerical, and clerical; Horne, 1990). Achievement tests are used to evaluate an individual's academic knowledge and knowledge acquired from experience (Power, 2006).

The methods of assessment can occur on three different levels.

Level One. A screening using methods such as interviews, records, or interest inventories to collect information regarding the individual's functional skills and career planning status (Horne, 1990).

Level Two. The "clinical or exploratory" level using standardized assessments or career exploration activities for additional information to develop the individual's career profile and clarify his or her career plan (Horne, 1990, p. 6).

Level Three. A comprehensive assessment or vocational evaluation conducted by a professional vocational evaluator using formal (e.g., work samples, standardized instruments) and informal assessment methods (e.g., interviews, class work, on-the-job try-outs, situational assessments) to collect data often times during a specific time period. While formal assessment methods are used most often in *Level Three*, informal methods such as interviewing, observations, and job try-outs are also vital at this stage (Horne, 1990).

For the purpose of this research study, subjects participated to some extent in a *Level Two* assessment in which a standardized interest inventory was used to assist juvenile offenders in evaluating their career interests and options.

Vocational Assessment and Self Concept

Horne (1990) reported that vocational assessment provides information on youth and their work-related attributes including the youth's development, interests, aptitudes, special needs, learning styles, work habits and behaviors, personal and social skills, values and attitudes toward work, and work tolerances. Information regarding youths' self concept is also acquired during the vocational assessment process. This information allows youth to learn more about themselves and become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses.

Jordaan (1963) addressed a concept that he called *vocational exploratory behavior*, which he referred to as the activities undertaken by individuals that allow them to learn more about themselves and their environment, and to use the self-knowledge gained making career decisions. Vocational assessment is a process for gaining information and making decisions related to employment and training; individuals learn more about themselves through the vocational assessment process and can use the information to make career decisions. Jordaan suggested that several changes for individuals and their self concept occur with vocational exploratory behavior. For example, with regards to self concept, he identified changes in the individual's self-perceptions. These changes consisted of "a more realistic self concept; a clearer and better differentiated self concept; a more integrated self concept; an expanded self concept; greater confidence in his self concept; and a clearer sense of identity" (p. 60). According to Horne (1990), when youth participate in the vocational assessment process, they desire to

discuss their vocational or career futures or specific education plans; are able to say things they can do; may show excitement about the vocational activities on which they are working; may enthusiastically talk with their families and friends about what they are doing in school; may develop new, realistic career interests; *may show more self-confidence and/or self-esteem*; and may show more interest in school and in their academic performances (p. 2)

Cognitive Information Processing (CIP)

For this research study, a vocational assessment intervention based on Sampson et al.'s (2004) Cognitive Information Process (CIP) approach to career problem solving and decision-making was implemented. The CIP approach includes the development of self-knowledge and occupational knowledge and acquiring career problem solving and decision-making skills. It centers on making suitable career choices and developing career problem solving and career decision-making skills (Sampson et al., 2004). The approach can be conceived as a pyramid made up of three domains, which include the knowledge domains, the decision-making skills domain, and the executive processing domain (Peterson, Sampson, & Reardon, 1991; Peterson, Sampson, Lenz, & Reardon, 2002; Peterson, Sampson, Reardon, & Lenz, 1996; Sampson et al., 2004; see Figure 2.1). The knowledge domains, which consists of self-knowledge and occupational knowledge, make up the base of the pyramid, while the decision-making skills domain is over the knowledge domains, and the executive processing domain comprises the apex of the pyramid (Sampson et al., 2004).

The self-knowledge domain relates to helping people gain self-knowledge through the use of various measures (e.g., interest inventories, values inventories, skills tests). It focuses on one's perceptions shaped by several factors including values, likes and dislikes, abilities, and preferences, which are discovered through maturity and personal experiences (Sampson et al., 2004). Self-knowledge clarification occurs through an individual's reflection of learned information about oneself and broadening one's personal experiences as well as with the help of a professional in interpreting vocational assessments or through the professional's recommendation of further personal experiences (e.g., academic courses; Sampson et al., 2004). Self-knowledge is integrated into episodic memory structures that consist of life experiences occurring in episodes of time and the individual's personal perceptions of his or her life experiences, which makes up the self concept (Peterson et al., 2002; Sampson et al., 2004; Tulving, 1972, 1984).

The occupational knowledge domain encompasses knowledge of different careers and an organized concept of work (Sampson et al., 2004). Knowledge of academic, training, and work options, which can be gained through personal experiences, observations of others, and media sources, is equally important as occupational knowledge in resolving career problems and making career decisions (Sampson et al., 2004). Occupational knowledge is integrated into semantic memory structures that consist of verifiable facts as opposed to individual perceptions (Sampson et al., 2004). Unlike episodic memory, an individual's perception of past events and the individual's current emotional state does not have a significant impact on semantic memory. Having a good concept of work alleviates overwhelming feelings for individuals by helping them to organize their knowledge about individual occupations and offering suitable career options for exploration (Sampson et al., 2004). The Holland Hexagon (Holland, 1997) has been identified as a useful world-of-work schema by Sampson et al. *The Self-Directed Search* (SDS; Holland, Powell, & Fritzsche, 1997), which is based on Holland's Typology (1992) was the career assessment tool used in this study.

The decision-making skills domain in CIP involves a process of problem-solving and decision-making. The CASVE cycle, a conceptual framework for solving career problems and making decisions, can be used during the decision-making skills phase (Sampson et al., 2004). With better decision-making skills, individuals can enhance their ability to make better career decisions (Sampson et al., 2004).

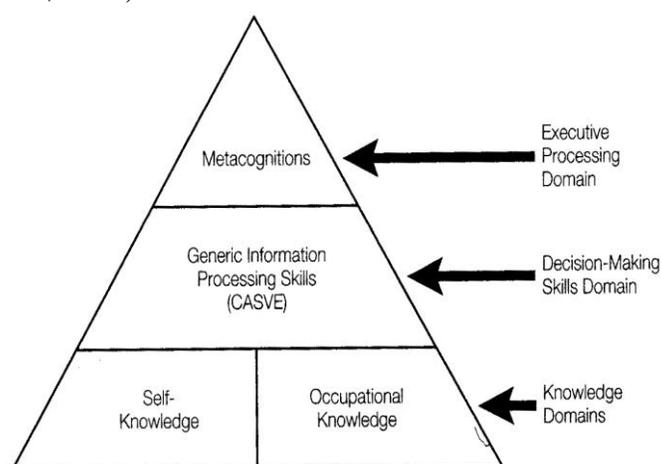


Figure 2.1. Pyramid of Information Processing Domains. From SAMPSON/PETERSON/REARDON/LENZ. Career Counseling and Services, 1E. © 2004 Wadsworth, a part of Cengage Learning, Inc. Reproduced by permission www.cengage.com/permissions

CASVE Cycle

The phases of the CASVE cycle are comprised of the Communication, Analysis, Synthesis, Valuing, and Execution phases. The *Communication* phase helps the individual to understand the discrepancy between his or her reality (where he or she is) and his or her desires (where he or she wants to be). The individual realizes that there is a problem and that assistance is needed in solving the problem (Sampson et al., 2004). The *Analysis* phase involves the individual learning more about the cause and components of the problem (Peterson et al., 2002). This phase encompasses the individual learning more about self regarding values, likes and dislikes, competencies, and preferences; learning more about his or her options; and enhancing the individual's occupational, academic, and job knowledge (Sampson et al., 2004). A variety of assessments and career guidance programs, individual experiences, and significant interactions in the individual's life can contribute to the analysis (Sampson et al., 2004). During the *Synthesis* phase, the individual looks at all of his or her options and narrows down the options to a few reasonable alternatives. At the end of the phase, the individual should have about three to five viable alternatives (Sampson et al., 2004; Shahnasarian & Peterson, 1988). The *Valuing* phase is when the individual evaluates the advantages and disadvantages of the alternatives and prioritizes according to his or her level of importance. After evaluating and prioritizing, the person selects one or two tentative choices (Sampson et al., 2004). In the *Execution* phase, the individual determines the steps that need to be taken in order to begin implementing the first tentative choice. This phase can take only a brief time or a number of years (Sampson et al., 2004).

At the conclusion of the CASVE cycle, the person will return to the Communication phase to decide if the problem has been resolved. If so, the problem-solving and career decision-making process is complete. If the problem has not been resolved, the individual will go back through the process. An individual may go through the CASVE cycle several times in order to solve a problem or make a career decision. Factors such as a person's mental health and style of decision-making, or a new problem could influence the person's progress through the CASVE cycle (Sampson et al., 2004).

The executive processing skills domain includes metacognitions, which "control the selection and sequencing of cognitive strategies to solve a career problem through *self-talk*, *self-awareness*, and *monitoring and control*" (Sampson et al., 2004, p. 24). *Self-talk* is the brief,

silent conversations that individuals have with themselves about their progress in completing a specific task (Sampson et al., 2004). Self-talk can be positive or negative. Positive self-talk motivates one to complete the process of making career decisions and solving career problems and negative self-talk interferes with one completing the process (Sampson et al., 2004). *Self-awareness* is having self-understanding during the process of problem solving and decision-making (Sampson et al., 2004). *Monitoring and control* is knowing where one is in the problem solving and decision-making process and containing the information that is needed during the process (Sampson et al., 2004).

In their study, Osborn and Reardon (2006) used the *Self-Directed Search: Career Explorer* (SDS: CE; Holland & Powell, 1994) with high-risk middle school students within a structured group counseling setting based on the CIP framework. Ninety-one students, 41 boys and 50 girls, completed the entire SDS: CE and participated in a six-week, 30-minutes-per-session group counseling experience. Students learned more about themselves, gained occupations knowledge, and learned about decision-making, and self-talk in accordance with CIP theory. The results of the study showed that Holland's Artistic and Realistic types were most common for boys and Social and Artistic for girls. Comments provided by the participants at the conclusion of the study suggested that students became more aware of their career interests, occupations, educational options, decision-making, and increasing positive self-talk. Several of the youth in the study also stated that they enjoyed participating in the groups. Other students have experienced more confidence in the career decision-making and more congruent career selections after participating in a career program that included completing the SDS: CE (e.g., O'Brien, Dukstein, Jackson, Tomlinson, & Kamatuka, 1999).

The CIP approach (Sampson et al., 2004) is an example of a cognitively oriented approach, which according to Hattie (1992) can be used as an intervention to enhance self concept. It was suggested that CIP can bring about confidence (e.g., competence self concept) and satisfaction, which can be connected to experiencing success in problem-solving and decision-making (Sampson et al., 2004). According to Hattie's (1992) meta-analysis on self concept enhancement programs, cognitively oriented programs are more effective than affectively oriented programs in improving self concept. This research study used a vocational assessment intervention based on the CIP framework to enhance the self concept of juvenile offenders.

Vocational Assessment and Juvenile Offenders

Super's (1957, 1980) theory emphasized career development throughout the lifespan and the importance of career exploration and decision-making in adolescence. Parallel to Super's theory is Erikson's (1968) theory of identity development in adolescence, which also has contributed greatly to the study of the identity construct and career development. Erikson (1968) recognized the importance of establishing an occupational identity in successfully mastering the adolescent identity crisis. He stated, "In general it is the inability to settle on an occupational identity which most disturbs young people" (Erikson, 1968, p. 132). The process of developing self concept (Carroll et al, 200; Durkin, 1997; Salmivalli, 1998) and exploring careers (Glaser et al., 2003; Zunker, 1998) are important parts in identity development in adolescence. Super (1957) declared that arriving at a career choice is the time in a young person's life in which the individual makes known his or her self concept. In a study on the relationship between having career goals and self-esteem among adolescents, Chiu (1990) found that adolescents with career goals demonstrated higher self-esteem than adolescents who had no direction after high school.

Court-involved youth may experience more employment barriers than traditional high school students and have more difficulty in evaluating their career interests and identifying career options due to lacking access to educational and vocational opportunities (Chartrand & Rose, 1996; Glaser et al., 2003; Young, 1994). Adjudicated adolescents' perceptions of their career options are limited due to a lack of exposure to a variety of career options and insufficient self-knowledge (Glaser et al., 2003). Some adjudicated adolescents' perceptions of their career options are also affected by their low socioeconomic statuses (Glaser et al., 2003; Weinger, 1998). Additionally, they may encounter barriers due to educational problems and discrimination (Glaser et al., 2003; Weinger, 1998) and developmental delays (Chartrand & Rose, 1996; Glaser et al., 2003). Furthermore, as demonstrated in the literature, juvenile offenders tend to have poor self concept that can interfere with their abilities to see themselves in meaningful occupational roles and make positive career decisions. For these reasons, vocational assessment is an important part of the career development process for juvenile offenders. It is an essential in the initial stage of career counseling for juvenile offenders (Glaser et al. 2003). Better knowledge of the value of interest inventories and career guidance with juvenile offenders is greatly needed (Glaser et. al., 2003; Hansen, 1992). A sharper insight into the career interests and abilities of this population will assist professionals working with juvenile offenders in making relevant

academic and employment recommendations (Glaser et al., 2003). However, there is minimal empirical literature on assessing juvenile offenders' interests and career guidance for this population (Glaser et al., 2003). Moreover, there appears to be a limited amount of research that explores the impact of the vocational assessment process on juvenile offender self concept. The few research studies available seem to focus on the impact of an entire career guidance program, consisting of a vocational assessment component, on juvenile offender self concept (e.g., Munson, 1994; O'Brien et al., 1999; Pavlak & Kammer, 1985). The current study focused on the direct impact of the vocational assessment on juvenile offender self concept. O'Brien et al. (1999) investigated the effects of a career intervention program on 57 at-risk, seventh grade students. The career program occurred for 6 hours a day for one week during the summer on a university campus. During that time, the subjects participated in several classes on career exploration and awareness, health and physical education, and recreational activities. The results of this study exhibited increased confidence in career exploration and planning, academic and career development, number of career options, and consistency between interests and career choice. Munson (1994) conducted a field test of a career development program on two groups of male youth offenders. Numerous lessons on self, leisure, and occupational awareness were presented for a 50-minute period, twice a week for approximately 20 weeks for 21 male offenders (10 in the experimental group; 11 in the control group) and for a 50-minute period three times a week for approximately 13 weeks to a second group of 21 male offenders (12 in the experimental group; 9 in the control group). The results of the field test displayed increased self-esteem for the experimental group and decreased self-esteem for the control group. Pavlak and Kammer (1985) employed a career guidance program with 40 delinquent males. The career guidance program was administered over an 8-week period for approximately two hours per week and consisted of several sessions in which the subjects explored their interests, skills, and values, studied their career options, learned about decision-making, and developed the skills to act on their educational or career plans. While the results showed no significant differences in the self concepts of the treatment and control groups, the treatment groups displayed higher scores in self concept than the control groups.

Employment is considered key in preventing re-offending behaviors or recidivism (Chartland & Rose, 1996; Glaser et al., 2003). As research indicates, viable employment upon release from the correctional system reduces the likelihood of re-offending, especially among

those ex-offenders with higher quality jobs and higher pay (Harer, 1994; Sampson & Laub, 1997; Visher et al., 2005). According to Munson and Strauss (1993), employed youth are more likely to remain in school and less likely of being arrested or placed in state care than unemployed youth. Therefore, it would seem that juvenile offenders would greatly benefit from participating in a vocational assessment intervention to learn more about themselves through the exploration of their career interests and identifying career options, which could be helpful in making good career decisions that could lead to gainful employment and reduced recidivism.

Summary

Self concept has been associated with a number of variables such as academic achievement and juvenile delinquency. It is believed that low self concept contributes to juvenile delinquent behaviors. In fact, research shows that juvenile delinquents tend to have lower self concepts than non-delinquents. There are self concept enhancement programs that have proven to increase self concept (e.g., The Outward Bound Program). This research study focused on using the vocational assessment process based on the Cognitive Information Processing Theory (Sampson et al., 2004) to enhance the self concept of juvenile offenders. Enhancing juvenile offender self concept could ultimately lead to increased employment options and reduced recidivism.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Juvenile crime and recidivism in the United States are significant social issues that cost the U.S. an enormous amount of money each year. Of the thousands of youth committed to residential placement facilities nationally each year, over half (55%) of them are re-arrested at 12-months post-release. Virginia's re-arrest rate trails the national average with nearly half (47%) of its juveniles released from correctional centers being re-arrested within 12 months of release. It is for these reasons that successful reentry and reintegration of juvenile offenders into their communities to aid in the reduction of recidivism is a key concern among policymakers.

Employment is considered essential in successful reentry for offenders (National Reentry Resource Center, 2010). However, juvenile offenders' low self concept (Cloward & Ohlin, 1963; Evans et al., 1991; Fitts & Hamner, 1969; James, 1969), difficulty evaluating their career interests and career options (Chartrand & Rose, 1996; Glaser et al., 2003; Young, 1994) and limited perceptions of their career options (Glaser et al., 2003) could interfere with their ability to make good employment decisions leading to employment. Therefore, there is a need to assist juvenile offenders in learning more about self, exploring career interests, identifying career options, and at the same time, enhancing self concept in order to increase their opportunities for employment. The vocational assessment process can be used to help individuals acquire information and evaluate their career options. This study explored the use of a brief vocational assessment intervention to enhance the self concept of juvenile offenders.

This chapter outlines the research methods and procedures that were implemented in this study. The chapter includes descriptions of the research design, population and sample, instruments that were used, and the data collection and analysis procedures. The methods and procedures in this study were used to examine the following research questions: (1) What is the impact of the vocational assessment process on the self concept of juvenile offenders? (2) What are the perceptions held by juvenile offenders about the vocational assessment process? It was hypothesized that the vocational assessment process *would not improve* the *global* self concept of juvenile offenders. However, it was hypothesized that the vocational assessment process *would enhance* the *competence* self concept of juvenile offenders.

Research Design

A quasi-experimental, pretest-posttest design without a comparison group was used to answer the research questions. The purpose of this particular design is to examine the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable (Heppner, Wampold, & Kivlighan, 2008). In reference to this study, the purpose of the design was to assess the effect of the vocational assessment intervention (independent variable) on the *global* self concept and *competence* self concept (dependent variables) of juvenile offenders.

Over a four-day period, the participants provided demographic information and completed a self concept pretest measure; received a standardized vocational assessment intervention; took a self concept posttest measure; and participated in a focus group. Focus groups are “formally organized, structured groups of individuals brought together to discuss a topic or series of topics during a specific period of time...that can be an extremely useful technique for obtaining individuals’ impressions and concerns about certain issues, services, and products” (Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger, 2005, p. 154). For this study, the researcher used focus groups to find out more about the participants’ perceptions of their experience in the vocational assessment intervention.

This study utilized both quantitative (i.e., self-concept measure; MSCS) and qualitative (i.e., focus groups) measures to enhance the understanding of the vocational assessment process on the self concept of juvenile offenders and their perceptions of the process. Obtaining both qualitative and quantitative data is known as mixed methods research (see Sheperis, Young, & Daniels, 2010). Using both methods of research allows the researcher to broaden his or her understanding of the research by applying various sources of data and clarifies research that would remain unclear with the application of only one research method (Sheperis, Young, & Daniels, 2010). Such a design also allows “researchers to use two types of data to verify findings (Sechrest & Sidana, 1995; Sheperis, Young, & Daniels, 2010, p. 188), more deeply develop their theoretical frameworks, and produce a richer dataset” (Jick, 1979; Madey, 1982; Sheperis, Young, & Daniels, 2010, p. 188). Triangulation, which is a mixed methods research design, involves gathering quantitative and qualitative data at the same time, combining the data, and understanding the research using the results (Creswell, 2005; Sheperis, Young, & Daniels, 2010). This type of design was applied to the current study.

The approval of the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB) was obtained prior to the commencing of the study (see Appendix B). In addition, to conduct research within the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (VADJJ), the researcher was required to become familiar with Administrative Directive Number 07-006.3 “Review and Approval of Research Proposals,” which outlined the steps to acquiring approval and conducting research within the Department. The researcher was also required to submit a Research Proposal Summary Form and a Research Agreement Form to the VADJJ in order to obtain approval for research to be conducted in the Department. Upon receipt and review of all required materials, the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice granted approval for this study (see Appendix A).

Participants

The population for this study was youth ages 11 to 21 who were adjudicated and committed to the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (VDJJ) and were being housed at the Reception and Diagnostic Center (RDC), the Department’s intake facility. Youth committed to the VDJJ are transferred to the RDC where the typical stay is up to 30 days prior to being placed at one of the state-operated juvenile correctional centers or, when deemed necessary, to a private residential program. While at RDC, youth receive medical, educational/vocational, psychological, and behavioral evaluations that are used to determine custody status, length of stay, treatment needs, and correctional facility placement (Virginia’s Department of Criminal Justice Services, 2009).

Purposive sampling was used to obtain participants from the population who met specific inclusion criteria for the target sample. The sample for the study was selected from the VDJJ/RDC population using the following criteria: (a) 16 years and older (of legal working age), (b) no significant educational deficiencies (e.g., intellectual disability, extremely low reading level), (c) no significant mood/emotional disturbances (e.g., depression, bipolar disorder), and (d) first time commitment to the VDJJ. This information was obtained by the project supervisor from the youth’s social history and other documentation located in the youth’s commitment packet, which is an exhaustive collection of records from the youth’s community, school, and court contacts compiled by the youth’s probation/parole officer. The project supervisor identified candidates for the study according to the study’s eligibility criteria. Based on a power analysis, it was determined that in order to obtain an estimated beta of .95 at .05 alpha, a total of

54 participants was needed for the study. In an effort to account for invalid or missing variables, the researcher decided to include 60 participants in the study.

All information regarding the youth was kept confidential. The only persons who had access to the youth's information were the researcher, Talisha McAuley-Davis, and the project supervisor (Jusolyn Bradshaw, Director of Assessment with the Department of Juvenile Justice, formerly the Department of Correctional Education at The Reception & Diagnostic Center). Participants' study materials (i.e., Demographic Information Form, permission/assent forms, and assessment instruments) were numbered without names and a list of names and numbers were maintained by the researcher. The list of names and numbers, and study materials were maintained separately in locked storage containers. At the conclusion of the study, after the posttest and after all study materials were matched according to assigned numbers, the list of numbers and names were destroyed. All other study materials were destroyed at the completion of the entire project.

Typically, youth arrive weekly at the RDC. As youth arrive at the intake facility and were determined to meet the eligibility criteria for the study, the researcher mailed the youth's parent/guardian a *Parental Permission Form* (see Appendix G) that was to be signed, dated, and returned in a self-addressed, stamped envelope within 7-10 days of the date on the letter. The researcher hand delivered consent forms to the participants who are 18 years of age and older (see Appendix I). These youth were given an opportunity to review the consent form and ask questions and were given approximately 3-5 days to consider whether or not they want to participate in the study. As parental permission forms were returned, the researcher visited the minor to inform the youth of the study and obtain the youth's assent (see Appendix H) for the study. The assent forms were read aloud to minor participants and they were given an opportunity to ask questions. These youth also had approximately 3-5 days to consider their participation in the study. The youth who opted to sign consent (for those 18 and older) or assent forms continued on in the study. When the forms were returned, signed and dated, the youth was included in a small group. Each group was comprised of five participants or less until a total number of at least 60 participants was reached.

Instrumentation

This section describes the instruments and resources that were utilized for the research study. The instruments included a *Parental Permission Form* (see Appendix G), *Youth Assent*

Form (see Appendix H), *Letter of Consent for Participants 18 and Older* (see Appendix I), *Demographic Information Form* (see Appendix J), the *Multidimensional Self Concept Scale* (MSCS; Bracken, 1992; see Appendix L), and *The Self-Directed Search Form R* (SDS; Holland, Powell, & Fritzsche, 1997; see Appendix M). The following career resources were used to obtain career information: *The Occupational Outlook Handbook* (OOH; Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, 2010-2011 Edition, Bulletin 2800; see Appendix N), *The Career Exploration Worksheet* (see Appendix O), and *Virginia's Mid-Atlantic Guide to Information on Careers* (MAGIC, Virginia Employment Commission, 6th Edition; see Appendix P) and focus group permission to record form and questions (see Appendices S & T). These instruments and resources were used to acquire relevant information about the youth's background, self concept, career interests and skills, and potential career options; to facilitate career research and exploration; and to provide current career information related to career development and planning, education and training, financial aid, descriptions of occupations, job search tips, suggestions for completing applications and interviewing, and budgeting tips.

Parental Permission Form

The *Parental Permission Form* (Appendix G) was mailed to the parent/guardian of all youth who met the eligibility criteria for the study and were under the age of 18 years old. The form provided information regarding the study and the youth and parent's rights pertaining to the youth's participation or refusal to participate in the study. The researchers' contact information was also included on the form. The parent/guardian was given specific instructions on signing and returning the form. They were given 7-10 days to read and return the signed permission form.

Youth Assent Form

The *Youth Assent Form* (Appendix H) was used to acquire the minor's voluntary agreement to participate in the study. The form provided pertinent information about the study to the youth. It included the following: the name of the study, the person(s) in charge of the study, what the study is about, why the participant is being asked to participate in the study, whether or not the person would be paid, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality, and what would happen if the person did participate in the study. Information regarding whom the youth should contact with questions about the study was also provided. These forms were hand delivered to the youth and read aloud. Opportunities to ask questions were allowed at any point

prior to the signing of the form and at any point during and after the study as well. The youth were given 3-5 days to consider their participation in the study. If a youth were to turn 18 years of age during the study, the researcher planned to have the youth sign a Consent for Participants 18 and older; however, there were no youth to become 18 years of age during the study.

Consent for Participants 18 and Older

This consent form (Appendix I) was for participants who are 18 years old and older. The consent provided information about the study so that these individuals could make an informed decision about whether or not they wanted to take part in the study. The consent informed the individuals of their rights should they choose not to participate in the study. Information on how to contact the researchers was provided. The researcher hand delivered the consent forms to these individuals. They were provided adequate time to read the consent form with the researcher present and ask questions of the researcher. Questions were permitted at any point of the study; before, during, and after. The youth were given approximately 3-5 days to consider whether or not they want to participate in the study.

Demographic Information Form

Demographic information on each youth was obtained using a *Demographic Information Form* (Appendix J) designed by the researcher for the purposes of this research study. Each youth was asked to complete a *Demographic Information Form* during the initial session. The requested demographic information included the following: the subject's age, gender, inquiry into prior vocational assessment participation, previous work experience and/or vocational training, career goal, employment of others in the household (e.g., parents, guardians, siblings), family/household makeup, age first involved in legal system, and social connectedness (e.g., church, community involvement, youth groups, sports team). The project supervisor collected information on race and the youth's last known residence using the youth's commitment packet in order to prevent discrepancies in this information by the youth.

Multidimensional Self Concept Scale (MSCS)

A hierarchical and multifaceted model with an emphasis on specific self concept dimensions was used for this study. The best fit model for this study was Bracken's multidimensional, context-dependent model of self concept, which was assessed using the *Multidimensional Self Concept Scale* (MSCS; Bracken, 1992; Appendices K and L). The MSCS is a 150-item, Likert-scale self-report measure that assesses global and multidimensional self

concept in children and adolescents ages 9 to 19 years old, grades 5-12 (Keith & Bracken, 1996). It is unlikely that a significant difference in self concept exists in youth who are one and a half years older than the recommended age for the instrument (B.A. Bracken, personal communication, May 28, 2011). Therefore, it was decided that this instrument was appropriate to use with youth in this study up to approximately 21 years of age. The MSCS is made up of six scales (i.e., social, competence, physical, academic, family, and affective), each with 25 items that work together to comprise the global self concept (Keith & Bracken, 1996). The six scales are moderately interrelated and overlapping. Examinees respond to the items using *strongly agree*, *agree*, *disagree*, or *strongly disagree* to describe how well they believe the statements on the scale apply to them. The scale can be administered individually or in groups in about 20-30 minutes. The suggested reading and comprehension ability level is third grade (Bracken, 1992).

A number of research studies have been conducted using Bracken's (1992) MSCS. Several studies conducted by Bracken and his colleagues have used the scale to look at the comparison of the MSCS to other self concept/self-esteem instruments and the multidimensionality of self concept (Bracken et al., 2000; Bracken & Howell, 1991; Delugach et al., 1992). Other studies using the MSCS have explored age, race, and gender differences in children and adolescent self concept (Crain & Bracken, 1994; Wilson, 1998); the self concept of students with disabilities (Montgomery, 1994); the influence of social status on global and domain-specific self concepts (Jackson & Bracken, 1998); and differences in global and domain-specific self concepts between adolescent runaways and nonrunaways (Swaim & Bracken, 1997). Numerous research studies also used the MSCS to study self concept change or enhancement (Butler, 1999; Rawson & Cassady, 1995; Wilson, Rhymer, Landis, & Skinner, 2001)

Validity. There is support for the content, construct, concurrent, contrasted groups, and divergent validity of the MSCS. Support for the content and construct validity was found in a five-instrument factor analysis (e.g., Bracken et al., 2000) including the MSCS and four other scales based on similar theory, namely *Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory*, *Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale*, *Self-Esteem Index*, and *Tennessee Self-Concept Scale*. The results of the factor analysis yielded six factors equivalent to the six domains on the MSCS (Keith & Bracken, 1996). A number of other scales also assess one or more of the MSCS domains; however, the MSCS is the only scale that measures all six domains (Bracken, 1992). To study

the MSCS's concurrent validity which determines the extent to which the MSCS correlates with similar tests and the similarity of the MSCS mean scores with those tests, the MSCS Total Scale Score was compared with the total test scores from the following instruments with all displaying fairly strong correlations: *Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory* (.73); *Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale* (.85); *Self-Description Questionnaire, I* (.69); and *Self-Description Questionnaire, II* [.80] (Keith & Bracken, 1996). Bardos (1991) provided evidence of validity among contrasted groups with his study of students who had been identified as having low self concepts and a randomly selected group of students from the same school (as cited in Keith & Bracken, 1996). The study showed that those students who had been identified as having low self concept scored considerably lower on the MSCS scales than the randomly selected group (Keith & Bracken, 1996). In Bardos' (1991) second study of contrasted groups, he found that students identified as needing additional assessment on the *Draw A Person Screening Procedure for Emotional Disturbance* (DAP: SPED; Naglieri, McNeish, & Bardos, 1991) scored significantly lower than a group of students not been identified as needing further assessment on all MSCS scales, with the exception of the Academic scale (as cited in Keith & Bracken, 1996). In support of the MSCS's divergent validity, the MSCS was compared with the *Assessment of Interpersonal Relations* (AIR; Bracken, 1993), which assesses the quality of relationships in social, family, and academic contexts assessed by the MSCS (Keith & Bracken, 1996). A moderate Total Scale Score correlation (.55) with the AIR suggested that the two instruments measure different constructs (Bracken, 1992).

Reliability. The MSCS Total Scale internal consistency was well above the .90 level as recommended by Bracken (1987) and the .95 desired standard set by Nunnally (1978) [as cited in Bracken, 1992]. All of the MSCS subscales, except for the Competence Scale, also exceeded the .90 criterion. The Competence Scale internal consistency fell just below the .90 criterion, reflecting adequate reliability (Bracken, 1992). Refer to Table 3.1 for a glance at the internal consistency coefficients for the MSCS.

Table 3.1

Reliability for the MSCS (Bracken, 1992)

Scales	# Items	Alpha Coefficients	Test-Retest 4 weeks
Social	25	.90	.79
Competence	25	.87	.76
Physical	25	.92	.81
Academic	25	.91	.81
Family	25	.97	.78
Affect	25	.93	.73
Total	150	.98	.90

Self-Directed Search Form R (SDS)

The Self-Directed Search (SDS; Holland, Powell, & Fritzsche, 1997; Appendix M) is considered a strong vocational interest inventory that can be used in career development in a variety of ways (Brown, 2004). As a career counseling tool that can be administered, scored, and interpreted by the test taker, the SDS helps people to identify careers that match their interests and skills. The SDS assists people with a variety of vocational questions including those who are ambivalent about the career to pursue, individuals who desire support for the career choice that they are considering, and those who want to make sure that they are considering all career possibilities (Holland et al., 1997).

The SDS is based on Holland's Typology (1992), which explains the interaction between a person's personality and environment. This typology assumes that individual's can be categorized into six personality types (i.e., Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, Conventional) and that the individual's personality type indicates the type of environment (i.e., Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, Conventional) preferred by the individual (Holland et al., 1997). People tend to look for environments with others who share similar interests, skills, and world view and environments that will allow them to express their personalities (Holland et al., 1997). The scales on the SDS demonstrate the degree of compatibility of the individual's interests to others in that particular code area (Holland et al.,

1997). Descriptions of the personality and environment types as described by Hood and Johnson (1997) are found below (as cited in Power, 2006).

Realistic (R) – Individuals who prefer and perform competently in mechanical or physical work, and outdoor tasks.

Investigative (I) – Individuals who have scientific, mathematical, analytical, and academic interests and abilities.

Artistic (A) – Individuals who enjoy or perform competently in musical, artistic, literary, and dramatic areas as well as other areas that allow them to be creative.

Social (S) – Individuals who enjoy or have the ability to work with, help, teach, or counsel others.

Enterprising (E) – Individuals who enjoy or have the ability to be in charge, speak in public, and have business, management, and sales interests and skills.

Conventional (C) – Individuals who are interested in maintaining records, working with data and details, and complying with instructions.

The SDS is comprised of an *Assessment Booklet* and *Occupations Finder*, which is an occupational classification booklet that matches summary codes to occupational titles (Holland et al., 1997). The SDS has four forms: Regular Form (Form R), Easy Form (Form E), Career Planning Form (Form CP), and SDS Career Explorer. The *Assessment Booklet Form R* consists of 228 items and has several sections, including Section One, Occupational Daydreams, is a personal history of the occupations that the individual is considering or has considered. Section Two, SDS scales and ratings, includes six scales (R, I, A, S, E, C) of 11 items each that assess the individual's preferences for activities; six scales (R, I, A, S, E, C) of 11 items each that measure the individual's competence in a variety of activities; six scales (R, I, A, S, E, C) of 14 items each that measure the individual's interest in different kinds of work; and 12 self-estimates in which the individual rates himself or herself in different skills or ability areas – two self-estimates in each of the six areas (R, I, A, S, E, C). Section Three, How to Organize Your Scores, instructs the individual on scoring and helps the individual to obtain a three-letter summary code that shows the person's similarities with the six personality types. Section Four, What Your Summary Code Means, details how the individual uses the *Occupations Finder* in order to explore the Summary Code. The *Occupations Finder* lists over 1,300 occupations arranged by types and subtypes that are organized according to the general education development (GED) level required for the occupation as suggested by the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* (Employment and Training Administration, 1991). Section Five, Some Next

Steps, offers suggestions on ways of finding more information regarding making career decisions and preventative measures to protect against negative outcomes. Section Six, *Some Useful Books*, provides a list of resources for exploring careers and career planning (Holland et al., 1997).

The SDS is used most with people ages 12 and over. There is an approximate reading level of 7th to 8th grade. The instrument can be administered individually or in a group career counseling setting in about 40 to 50 minutes (Holland et al., 1997). The SDS Examiner's Manual suggests that the SDS be taken in private or, if necessary, in very small groups because the testing session may become a "social event" if taken in a large group, which could lead to errors and less involvement (p. 48).

There have been several studies conducted using the *Self-Directed Search*. The studies have varied in their use of the SDS. Some studies explored the use of the instrument with different populations such as, at-risk youth (Osborn & Reardon, 2006); adjudicated male adolescents (Glaser et al., 2003); undecided freshman college students (Miller & Woycheck, 2003); learning disabled and nonlearning disabled high school students (Cummings & Maddux, 1987); Native American high school students (Gade, Fuqua, & Hulburt, 1984); and high school students (Zener & Schnuelle, 1976). Others explored such topics as the use of components of the SDS as predictors of vocational choice in men and women (e.g., Gottfredson & Holland, 1975); using the SDS with other career assessment instruments (e.g., Vernick, 2002); using the SDS to determine the personality type of American Indian high school dropouts (e.g., Gade & Hulburt, 1992); and the relationship between SDS responses and career self-efficacy (e.g., Feehan & Johnston, 1999).

Validity. Holland et al., (1997) indicated that the high point codes of the SDS significantly correlate with other career interest measures, which is supportive evidence for concurrent and predictive validity. Also, studies conducted by Dumenci (1995) and Helwig & Myrin (1997) supported SDS convergent and divergent validity and a high stability of codes for individuals, respectively (as cited in Osborn, 2002).

Reliability. As reported in the SDS Technical Manual, the internal consistency coefficients (KR-20) for Activities, Competencies, and Occupations Scales ranged from .72 to .92 and .90 to .94 for the summary scale. The test-retest reliability of the summary scales was conducted on a small sample of 73 subjects, with coefficients ranging from .76 to .89 over a four

to 12- week period (Brown, 2004). Refer to Table 3.2 for a glance at internal consistency coefficients for high school students.

Table 3.2

Reliability Coefficients (KR-20) for High School Students on the SDS (Holland, Powell, & Fritsche, 1997)

Section	# Items	KR Coefficients		Test-Retest 4-12 weeks n=73
		Female n= 475	Males n=344	
Activities	66	.77 to .85 (.83)	.80 to .85 (.85)	-
Competencies	66	.73 to .82 (.80)	.77 to .85 (.82)	-
Occupations	84	.83 to .90 (.87)	.86 to .92 (.88)	-
Self-Estimates	12	-	-	-
Summary		.91 to .92 (.91)	.91 to .93 (.93)	-
Total	228	-	-	.76 to .89 (.85)

Note. Dash (-) indicates that data were not reported. Value enclosed in parentheses represents the median.

The Occupational Outlook Handbook

The Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH; Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, 2010-2011 Edition, Bulletin 2800; Appendix N) is a nationally recognized career information resource manual that provides current descriptions for more than 300 occupations. The handbook describes the worker's job duties, working conditions, necessary training and education, employment outlook, and earnings for a variety of occupations. The OOH is considered a valuable resource in helping individuals to make career decisions. The information in the OOH is revised every two years. The participants completed a *Career Exploration Worksheet* (see Appendix O) using the OOH to obtain specific information pertaining to the job responsibilities, earnings, education and training requirements, the job outlook, and additional sources for information.

Career Exploration Worksheet

The *Career Exploration Worksheet* (Appendix O) allows individuals to collect information about occupations. The worksheet includes the following information categories:

(1) Occupation Name; (2) Salary; (3) Working Conditions; (4) Outlook; (5) Education and Training Requirements; (6) Number Employed in This Occupation; (7) Nature of Work; (8) Other Important Information; and (9) Related Occupations. The worksheet can be used with a career resource manual such as the OOH.

Virginia's Mid-Atlantic Guide to Information on Careers

Virginia's Mid-Atlantic Guide to Information on Careers (MAGIC, Virginia Employment Commission, 6th Edition; Appendix P) is a booklet of occupational information released by the Virginia Employment Commission as an exchange of information between educators, state employment offices, administrators, counselors, students, businesses, and job seekers. The booklet provides information on career development and planning, education and training, financial aid, descriptions of occupations, job search tips, suggestions for completing applications and interviewing, and budgeting tips. The MAGIC is available at no cost and was given to each participant. The researcher explained the purpose of the MAGIC and provided a brief overview of the information in the MAGIC so that it could be used as a reference.

Focus Groups

Focus groups were conducted with the participants to find out their thoughts and feelings about the vocational assessment process (Appendix T). Focus groups allowed the participants to share their honest opinions about their experiences in a comfortable environment. The participants responded to questions concerning their thoughts about the process; part of the process that they liked best; part of the process that they liked least; what they felt they gained from the process; what they learned about themselves in the process; and changes they would make to the process. Each focus group lasted from 20 to 30 minutes. The comments shared in the focus groups remained anonymous. Focus groups were recorded with the permission of the participants and tapes were destroyed at the completion of the study (Appendix S).

Data Collection Procedures

Each study participant was assigned a random number and that number was written on the individual's study materials. A list of participants' names and the assigned random numbers were kept confidential by maintaining the list of names and numbers separate from the study materials in locked containers. Only the researcher had access to this information. At the conclusion of the study, after the posttest and after all study materials were matched according to random numbers, the list of names and numbers were destroyed.

The participants participated in the study over a four-day period. On the first day, the participants completed the *Demographic Information Form* (see Appendix J) and the *Multidimensional Self Concept Scale* (MSCS; Bracken, 1992, see Appendix L). The project supervisor assisted the researcher in administering both the pretest and posttest and in other areas of the research as needed.

On the second day, the researcher explained to the participants that they would be participating in the vocational assessment process. A brief explanation of Sampson et al.'s Cognitive Information Process Approach (2004; see Appendix Q) and its relevance to the vocational assessment process was provided. During the vocational assessment process, the researcher clarified how CIP theory fits in with each component of the vocational assessment process. Prior to administering the *Self-Directed Search* (SDS; Holland, Powell, & Fritzsche, 1997, see Appendix M), the researcher shared information on the instrument and its purpose (see Appendix R). The researcher guided the youth through completing the SDS by reading aloud the directions for each scale and providing further explanation of the assessment items if necessary. Once the youth completed the SDS, the researcher guided the youth through scoring the SDS scales in order to obtain their three-letter summary code. The researcher summarized the activities that were completed on that day. Between day two and three, the researcher checked each participant's SDS for errors in scoring.

On the third day, the researcher reviewed the meaning of the three-letter summary code referring to Holland's career theory and typology. Beyond the SDS, instructions regarding the use of *The Occupations Finder* were provided aloud. Youth were guided through using *The Occupations Finder* to review their occupational code for careers that closely match their interests and skills. Youth were asked to: (a) highlight all the occupations from the results that they would be interested in exploring further and (b) mark out those occupations that they have no interest in learning more about. For those occupations that they marked out, they were asked to write a brief reason for marking its elimination beside the occupation. Participants were also instructed to use question marks by the occupations that they are unsure about or those that are unfamiliar to them (e.g., Osborn & Reardon, 2006). The participants were asked to share aloud their career choices and the themes in the occupations that they highlighted, as well as the themes in the occupations that they eliminated. Focusing on this information and sharing it aloud helped the participants to increase their self-knowledge by processing the information that

they learned about self, which is in accordance with Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) theory (Sampson et al., 2004). The researcher gave the participants an overview the *Occupational Outlook Handbook 2010-2011 Edition* (see Appendix N). Using the OOH, the youth researched information about the careers that they marked with a question mark and those careers that they highlighted. They eliminated careers until they selected three in which they are particularly interested in exploring further. The youth were given three *Career Exploration Worksheets* (see Appendix O) and provided with instructions on how to complete the form. Youth collected information about the three careers in which they expressed interest in learning more about. Youth were asked to share aloud the information collected on the *Career Exploration Worksheet* with the group. The researcher emphasized to the participants the benefits of having the information on the *Career Exploration Worksheet*. Finally, in accordance with CIP theory, the researcher discussed negative self-talk, the impact that negative self-talk can have on the career decision-making process, and ways of turning negative self-talk into positive self-talk. The researcher summarized the activities that occurred during the vocational assessment process, concluding with a review of what the youth learned about themselves, their career interests and options, and the importance of positive self-talk. Each group participant was given a *Mid-Atlantic Guide to Information on Careers* (MAGIC; see Appendix P). The usefulness of the guide was explained and a brief overview of the guide's contents was provided so that it could be used as a reference.

On the fourth day, the participants participated in a focus group and completed the MSCS posttest measure. The group interactions were recorded with the permission of the participant. The Permission to Record Focus Group form (see Appendix S) was read aloud and the participant's signed permission was obtained. The researcher used guided questions to facilitate the focus groups (see Appendix T).

Data Analysis

Data analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows, Version 16. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the demographic information obtained from the participants on their *Demographic Information Form*. Interactions between any demographic information and outcome data were checked.

Using the following method, the first research question was answered. *Research Question #1: What is the impact of the vocational assessment process on the self concept of*

juvenile offenders? A repeated measures within-subjects ANOVA was used in order to assess the effects of the independent variable on the dependent variables between Time 1 (pretest) and Time 2 (posttest). A significance level of $p < .05$ was used to determine the significant differences between T1 and T2. In addition, a repeated measures within-subjects ANOVA was used in order to assess if any differences exist between subjects at T1 and T2. A significance level of $p < .05$ was used to determine significant differences between the subjects in the group. Post-hoc pairwise comparisons were used if any significant differences between Time 1 and Time 2 existed in order to determine if any significant interactions existed between any level of the independent variable and the dependent variables. If any unwanted interactions existed between demographic data and outcome data, that demographic data was used as a covariate (i.e., a variable not controlled by the researcher that has an influence on the outcome), and the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) statistical procedure was used in the place of ANOVA analyses in an effort to remove the covariate from the analysis.

The second research question was answered using the following technique. *Research Question #2: What are the perceptions held by juvenile offenders about the vocational assessment process?* The data from the focus groups were transcribed and examined for major ideas and common themes to collect information on juvenile offenders' views of the vocational assessment process. Statistical analysis findings and findings from the focus groups are detailed in Chapter IV.

Summary

The purpose of this research study was to explore the impact of a brief vocational assessment intervention based on CIP on the overall self concept of juvenile offenders and, more specifically, to examine the impact of the intervention on juvenile offenders' competence self concept. Additionally, the researcher gathered information on the juvenile offenders' perceptions of the vocational assessment process. A pre-posttest, quasi-experimental design was used to answer the research questions. The *Multidimensional Self Concept Scale* (MSCS; Bracken, 1992) was used as the pretest and posttest measure to assess the participants' self concept prior to the introduction of the intervention and at the conclusion of the intervention. The *Self-Directed Search Form R* (SDS; Holland, Powell, & Fritzsche, 1997) was used to help the participants learn more about themselves by exploring their interests in activities, skills, and career interests and assisting them in identifying career options that match their interests and

skills. Demographic information was used to describe the participants and data analysis was used to present the findings, answer the research questions, and report on each hypothesis. Data from the focus groups were transcribed and examined for major ideas and common themes. Results from the study have been reported in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of the vocational assessment process on juvenile offender self concept as measured by the *Multidimensional Self Concept Scale*. Descriptive statistics were used to describe participants' demographic information, and ANOVA analyses were used to determine the effects of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Interactions between the data also were explored. Analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows, Version 16. Focus group data were analyzed by identifying themes and categories to capture the participants' perceptions of the vocational assessment process. A pretest-posttest research design without a comparison group was employed to answer the following research questions:

1. *What is the impact of the vocational assessment process on juvenile offender self concept?*
2. *What are the perceptions held by juvenile offenders about the vocational assessment process?*

It was hypothesized that using the vocational assessment process with juvenile offenders *would not improve* their *global* self concept; however, it *would enhance* their *competence* self concept.

Participants

The participants for this study were youth who had been adjudicated and committed to the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (VDJJ) and were located at the Reception and Diagnostic Center (RDC), which is the Department's intake facility. Youth were obtained using purposive sampling. Those youth that met certain criteria were eligible to participate in the study. Participants were to be 16 years of age or older (i.e., of legal working age); have no significant educational deficiencies (e.g., intellectual disability, extremely low reading level) and no significant mood/emotional disorders (e.g., depression, bipolar disorder); and be in their first commitment to the VDJJ. Once eligible participants were identified, correspondences were mailed to the youths' parents/guardians for youth under the age of 18 years and hand-delivered by the researcher to those participants 18 years of age and older. The letters included a description of the study, benefits and/or risks information, a confidentiality statement, and a permission/consent form to be signed and returned by the parent/guardian or the consenting individual 18 years of age or older. When a signed parental permission form was returned for a

minor youth, the researcher hand-delivered an assent form to that youth. The assent form included the same information as the parental permission and consent forms for youth 18 and older. The minor youth signed and returned the assent form in order to participate in the study. Ultimately, a total of 61 youth participated in the study.

Of the 61 participants, the vast majority were male (98.4%; n=60) and one was female (1.6%). Over half of the participants were 17 years old (52.5%; n=32), 17 were 16 years old (27.9%), and 12 were 18 years old (19.7%). The greatest number of participants were African-American (57.4%; n=35), 20 were Non-Hispanic White (32.8%), 5 were Hispanic or Latino (8.2%), and 1 person was Bi-Racial (1.6%). Most of the participants (42.6%; n=26) were from the Tidewater/Hampton Roads area. Almost 51% (n=31) first became involved with the legal system between the ages of 15 and 17. More than half of the participants (54.1%; n=33) reported having 3 to 4 people in their households. Finally, the majority of youth (72.1%; n=44) had been involved in some kind of activity (e.g., sports teams, church, school clubs, community involvement) prior to their commitment. See Table 4.1 for a complete profile of the participants.

Table 4.1

Profile of Study Participants (N=61)

Demographic Variable	n	%	Demographic Variable	n	%
Age			First Involvement with Legal System		
16 years old	17	27.9%	9-11 years old	3	4.8%
17 years old	32	52.5%	12-14 years old	27	44.3%
18 years old	12	19.7%	15-17 years old	31	50.8%
Gender			Number of people in household (including participant)		
Male	60	98.4%	1-2 people	7	11.4%
Female	1	1.6%	3-4 people	33	54.1%
Race			5-6 people	18	29.6%
African-American	35	57.4%	7-9 people	3	4.9%
Hispanic or Latino	5	8.2%	Involved in activities		
Non-Hispanic White	20	32.8%	Yes	44	72.1%
Bi-Racial	1	1.6%	No	17	27.9%
Residence					
Central VA	11	18.0%			
Chesapeake Bay	2	3.3%			
Eastern Shore	0	0.0%			
Northern VA	9	14.8%			
Tidewater/Hampton Roads	26	42.6%			
Shenandoah Valley	8	13.1%			
Blue Ridge Highlands	2	3.3%			
Heart of Appalachia	1	1.6%			
Southern VA	2	3.3%			

Table 4.2 focuses on the demographics pertaining to the youths' vocational-related information, such as prior vocational assessment, formal work experience, previous vocational training, career goal, and the number of people in the participants' households who were currently employed. Of the 61 participants, 23 participants (37.7%) had received a prior vocational assessment and 31 youth (50.8%) had not received an assessment. Seven of the participants (11.5%) were unsure as to whether or not they had ever received an assessment. More than 60% of the youth (n=38) never held a formal job in which they received a paycheck,

while 36.7% (n=22) reported formal work experience. Sixty-five percent of the individuals (n=39) participated in previous vocational training; 35% (n=21) had not participated in any training. Over 83% of the participants (n=51) indicated that they had decided on a career goal; however, 16.4 % (n=10) had no career goal. Lastly, less than half of the participants (46.7%; n=28) had two employed persons in their household.

Table 4.2

Participants' Vocational-Related Demographics (N=61)

Vocational Variable	n	%
Prior Vocational Assessment		
Yes	23	37.7%
No	31	50.8%
Unsure	7	11.5%
Formal Job		
Yes	22	36.7%
No	38	63.3%
Vocational Training		
Yes	21	35.0%
No	39	65.0%
Career Goal		
Yes	51	83.6%
No	10	16.4%
Number of people in household currently employed		
0 people	5	8.3%
1 person	18	30.0%
2 people	28	46.7%
3 people	8	13.3%
4 people	1	1.7%

Research Question 1:

What is the impact of the vocational assessment process on juvenile offender self concept?

Hypothesis One: The vocational assessment process would not improve juvenile offender global self concept (i.e., Total Scale).

The *Multidimensional Self Concept Scale* (MSCS; Bracken, 1992) was used to measure the participants' self concept. The MSCS provided measures for *global* self concept (i.e., *Total Scale*) as well as six context-dependent self concept domains that were reported on the following scales: *Social, Competence, Affect, Academic, Family, and Physical*. For the purposes of this study, the emphasis was on the participant results for *Total Scale* self concept and *Competence* scale. Participants were instructed to respond to 150 statements using *Strongly Agree (SA)*, *Agree (A)*, *Disagree (D)*, or *Strongly Disagree (SD)* to identify how well they believed the statement applied to them.

The results of the MSCS produced norm-referenced interpretation standard scores, percentile ranks, and self concept classifications for each of the self concept domain scales as well as the *Total Scale* (i.e., sum of raw scores from the six domain scales) and ipsative interpretation standard scores, difference scores, and self concept classifications for each of the self concept domain scales. The norm-referenced interpretation compared the youth's test performance to that of the MSCS normative sample, which was comprised of the individual's peers identified as grades 5-12 [ages 9-19] (Bracken, 1992). In contrast, the ipsative interpretation compared the youth's performance for the six domain scales with his or her global (*Total Scale*) self concept (Bracken, 1992). Standard scores were derived from the individual's raw scores (Bracken, 1992). Percentile ranks corresponded to the standard scores and displayed the individual's self concept ranking relative to other youth in the U.S. population (Bracken, 1992). The self concept classification represented the individual's level of positive and/or negative self concept on each of the six individual self concept domain scales and the *Total Scale*; classifications ranged from extremely positive to extremely negative (Bracken, 1992).

A 2x1 within-subjects repeated measures ANOVA with pairwise comparisons for pre- and post-tests was conducted for each MSCS domain scale (*Social, Competence, Affect, Academic, Family, Physical*) and *Total Scale* of the norm-referenced interpretation and each domain scale of the ipsative interpretation. Support for Hypothesis One was indicated in the analysis (see Table 4.3). No significant differences existed on any score format for the MSCS

norm-referenced interpretation for *Total Scale* self concept. Statistically, all scores remained the same from pre- to post-test ($p > .05$).

Table 4.3

Total Scale Self Concept MSCS Norm-Referenced Interpretation

<i>N</i> = 61	Pre-test		Posttest		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Standard Score	107.39	14.07	107.38	16.33	.000	.995
Classification	3.61	0.84	3.52	1.01	.237	.627
Percentile Rank	62.77%tile	0.26	60.47%tile	0.27	.230	.632

Hypothesis Two: The vocational assessment process would enhance juvenile offender competence self concept.

For the MSCS norm-referenced interpretation, support for Hypothesis Two was indicated (see Figure 4.1 and Table 4.4) with a significant difference between the pre- and post-test *competence* classification ($t[60] = -2.35, p = .022$). The mean pre-test score was significantly higher ($M = 3.90, SD = .70$) from the mean post-test score ($M = 3.69, SD = .98$). For data analysis, classification scores were assigned numbers 1 to 7 (1=*extremely positive self concept*; 7=*extremely negative self concept*). In other words, for this study, lower classification scores indicated more positive self concept. Therefore, participants' *competence* self concept improved from pre- to post-test. All other comparisons indicated nonsignificant findings ($p > .05$).

Figure 4.1. Competence Scale Self Concept Mean Classification Scores. MSCS Norm-Referenced Interpretation

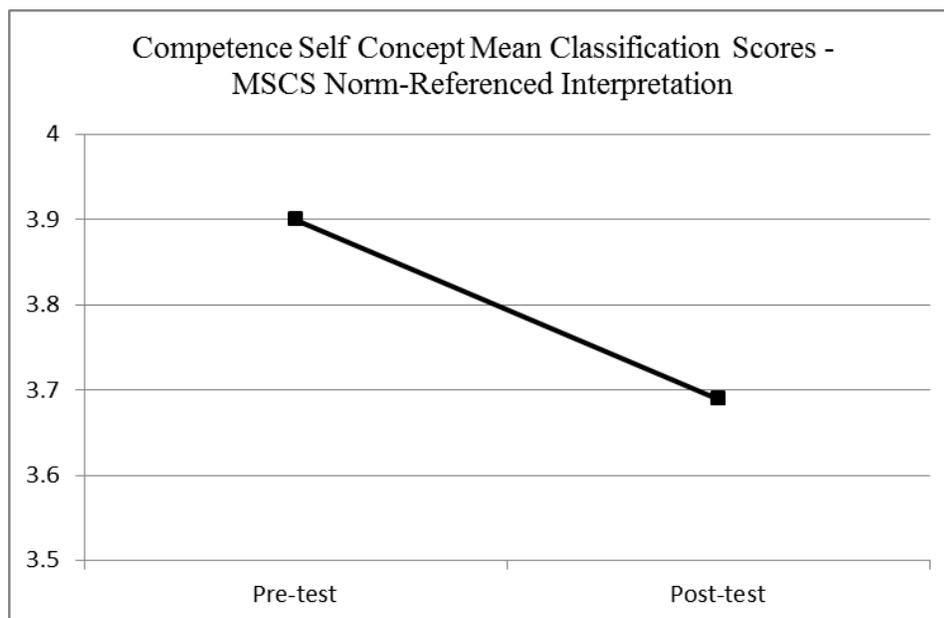


Table 4.4

MSCS Norm-Referenced (Classification Scores)

	Pre-test		Posttest		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
<i>N</i> = 61						
<i>Social</i>	3.45	0.98	3.41	1.15	0.622	0.536
<i>Competence</i>	3.90	0.70	3.69	0.98	-2.350	0.022*
<i>Affect</i>	3.70	0.84	3.61	0.90	0.814	0.419
<i>Academic</i>	3.75	0.83	3.81	0.94	-0.646	0.521
<i>Family</i>	3.93	0.73	3.90	0.65	0.322	0.749
<i>Physical</i>	3.33	0.96	3.41	1.05	-0.726	0.470

*significant at $p < .05$

Note: Lower scores indicate more positive self concept.

Similarly, the MSCS ipsative interpretation supported Hypothesis Two (see Figure 4.2 and Table 4.5). A significant difference was indicated between the pre- and post-test *competence* scale percentile rank scores ($t[60] = 2.79, p = .007$). The mean post-test percentile rank score was higher ($M = 20.0\%$ tile, $SD = .26$) than the pre-test percentile rank score ($M = 18.8\%$ tile, $SD =$

.32). Higher percentile rank scores post-test indicated increased *competence* self concept. All other comparisons indicated nonsignificant findings ($p>.05$).

Figure 4.2. Competence Self Concept Mean Percentile Rank. MSCS Ipsative Interpretation

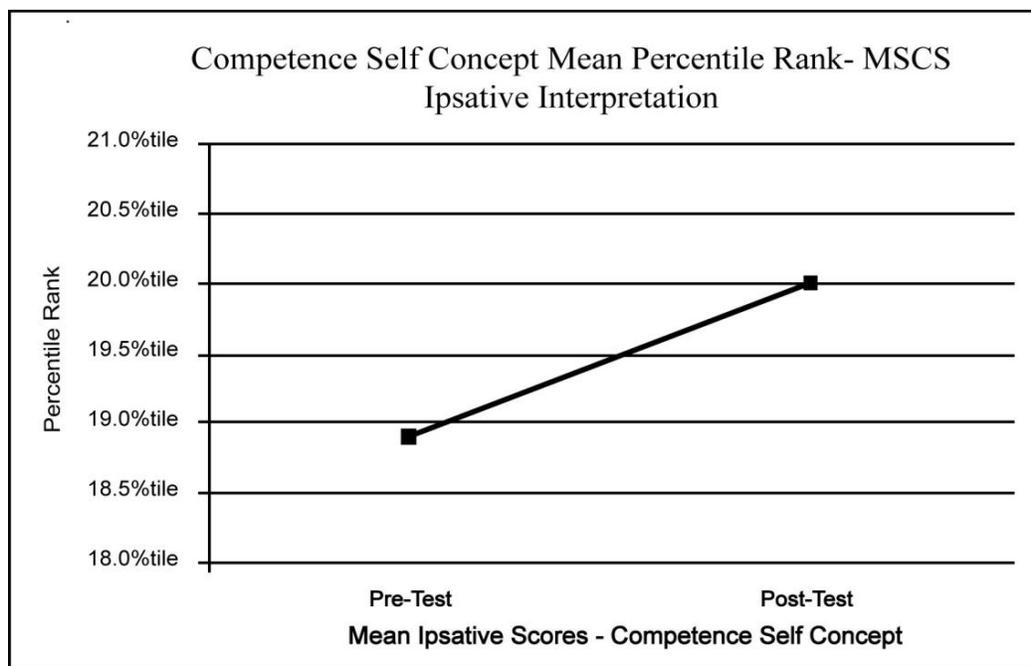


Table 4.5

MSCS Norm-MSCS Ipsative Interpretation (Percentile)

N = 61	Pre-test		Posttest		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
<i>Social</i>	21.0%tile	0.44	20.9%tile	0.33	0.331	0.742
<i>Competence</i>	18.8%tile	0.32	20.0%tile	0.26	2.789	0.007*
<i>Affect</i>	20.0%tile	0.32	19.3%tile	0.36	1.158	0.251
<i>Academic</i>	18.9%tile	0.49	18.9%tile	0.52	0.000	1.000
<i>Family</i>	16.6%tile	0.7	16.4%tile	0.66	0.256	0.799
<i>Physical</i>	22.8%tile	0.49	23.6%tile	0.48	-1.150	0.255

*significant at $p<.05$

Using a regression analysis with dummy-coded categorical demographic variables, correlations (R^2) were evaluated to assess if any unwanted interactions existed between demographic and MSCS pre-test outcome variables. This test was conducted in order to

determine whether or not demographic variables with a significant baseline correlation to assessment variables needed to be controlled for during outcome analyses. The demographic variables were only assessed for correlations with the MSCS norm-referenced interpretations because the correlations would be redundant for the ipsative interpretations. In this analysis, race was the only assessed demographic variable that produced significant correlations with the outcome scores. All of the MSCS pre-test scale scores except *Social* were significantly different based on the participants' race. This indicated that race had a significant effect on the outcome scores with all mean scale score differences occurring between African American and White participants. On some scales, significant differences also occurred between Hispanic/Latino and White participants (*Family* standard score and percentile rank) and between the African American and Hispanic/Latino participants (*Physical* standard score and percentile rank).

An overview of the MSCS pre-test subscale scores and the significant differences between mean scale scores based on race categories is provided in Table 4.6. The table is an overview of significant correlations between Race demographic variable and dependent pre-test norm-referenced MSCS scores, and breakdown of significant mean score differences between Race categories. The bi-racial category is not included due to all nonsignificant findings. For brevity, only significant correlations between race and pre-test score are presented in Table 4.6.

Demographic data were further examined to ultimately determine whether or not significantly correlated demographic factors needed to be used as a covariate in Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) statistical procedures in the place of ANOVA in the main outcome analyses. However, although several MSCS outcome scores were significantly correlated to race, this demographic variable did not significantly affect the statistical outcomes as a covariate (i.e., all $p > .05$ when assessed as interaction variables). Therefore, it was determined that race did not significantly explain enough of the variance on the MSCS pre- and post-test scores, and ANCOVA procedures were not necessary in any of these cases.

Table 4.6

Correlations between Race and MSCS (N = 60)

Scales	R^2	Race Demographic	M	Significant Mean Differences
<i>Competence</i>		African American	107.06	
Standard Score	-.284*	Hispanic or Latino	102.20	African American and White*
		Non-Hispanic White	98.80	
Percentile Rank	-.278*	African American	64.26	African American and White*
		Hispanic or Latino	50.20	
		Non-Hispanic White	48.20	
<i>Affect</i>		African American	-2.37	
Difference Score	.327**	Hispanic or Latino	-2.00	African American and White**
		Non-Hispanic White	2.35	
<i>Academic</i>		African American	108.11	
Standard Score	-.334**	Hispanic or Latino	106.20	African American and White*
		Non-Hispanic White	99.20	
Percentile Rank	-.353**	African American	64.45	African American and White*
		Hispanic or Latino	55.54	
		Non-Hispanic White	48.25	
<i>Family</i>		African American	105.49	
Standard Score	-.325*	Hispanic or Latino	111.20	African American and White*; Hispanic/Latino and White*
		Non-Hispanic White	95.40	
Percentile Rank	-.346**	African American	61.00	African American and White**; Hispanic/Latino and White*
		Hispanic or Latino	72.60	
		Non-Hispanic White	39.85	
<i>Physical</i>		African American	117.37	
Standard Score	-.385**	Hispanic or Latino	103.80	African American and Hispanic/Latino*; African American and White**
		Non-Hispanic White	107.30	
Classification	.309*	African American	3.06	African American and White*
		Hispanic or Latino	3.80	
		Non-Hispanic White	3.65	
Percentile Rank	-.383**	African American	0.81	African American and Hispanic/Latino*; African American and White**
		Hispanic or Latino	0.57	
		Non-Hispanic White	0.65	
<i>Total</i>		African American	111.26	
Standard Score	-.346**	Hispanic or Latino	106.40	African American and White*
		Non-Hispanic White	101.75	
Classification	.284*	African American	3.43	African American and White*
		Hispanic or Latino	3.40	
		Non-Hispanic White	3.95	
Percentile Rank	-.342**	African American	70.01	African American and White*
		Hispanic or Latino	55.54	
		Non-Hispanic White	53.75	

* significant at $p \leq .05$; ** significant at $p \leq .01$

Research Question 2:

What are the perceptions held by juvenile offenders about the vocational assessment process?

Focus groups were employed to find out more about the participants' perceptions of their experience in the vocational assessment process. Participants responded to questions pertaining to their thoughts of the vocational assessment process. Their responses were audio recorded and transcribed. Notes were taken by the researcher during each focus group. The focus group questions included the following:

Focus Group Question #1: What did you think about the vocational assessment process?

Focus Group Question #2: What did you like best about the process?

Focus Group Question #3: What did you like least about the process?

Focus Group Question #4: What did you gain from the process?

Focus Group Question #5: What did you learn about yourself in the process?

Focus Group Question #6: What changes would you make to the vocational assessment process?

Analysis was conducted by adapting a combination of Ritchie and Spencer (1994) and Krueger and Casey (2009) frameworks. The Krueger and Casey (2009) framework guided the analysis of the responses from the participants in the focus groups, which consisted of researcher notes from the groups and an abridged transcript. Abridged transcript-based analysis was comprised of listening to audio recordings of the focus groups and transcribing relevant parts of the discussions that were useful in answering the respective focus group question. Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) analytical process consisted of five interconnected stages: *familiarization*, *identifying a thematic framework*, *indexing*, *charting*, and *mapping and interpretation*. During *familiarization*, the researcher listened to recordings and read the entire transcript and other group notes numerous times to become engrossed in the details and develop a thorough grasp of the interview content. It was during this stage that major themes emerged (as cited in Rabiee, 2004). In the stage of *identifying a thematic framework*, the researcher developed categories by noting in the margins ideas or concepts discovered in the text (as cited in Rabiee, 2004). The third and fourth stages, *indexing* and *charting*, involved managing the data by sorting through quotes, finding links and differences in the data, and reorganizing quotes to fit together under common themes (as cited in Rabiee, 2004). The objective of the final stage, *mapping and*

interpretation, was to find the overall meaning of the data by making connections among individual quotes (as cited in Rabiee, 2004).

The Classic Analysis Approach (Krueger & Casey, 2009) was a method of accomplishing Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) concept of managing the data. This analytical process was a well-defined, visual process that enabled the researcher to identify themes and categories in the results. During the process, the researcher categorized the participants' responses to each question by sorting them using the following questions: (a) *Did the participant answer the question that was asked?* (b) *Does the comment answer a different question in the focus group?* (c) *Does the comment say something of importance about the topic?* (d) *Is it like something that was said earlier?* Once the quotes were arranged into categories, the researcher composed a summary describing the participants' responses to each question. According to Krueger and Casey (2009), the summary should be based on four factors, namely *frequency*, *specificity*, *emotions*, and *extensiveness*. These factors assisted the researcher in determining the importance of the comments and themes. *Frequency* not only referred to the number of times a comment was made but also the importance of the comment. *Specificity* pertained to the details provided in the response; emphasis was given to those comments that provided more detail. Emphasis was also given to those comments expressed with intense *emotions*. Lastly, *extensiveness* means the number of different people that made the same comment. In the summary, the researcher considered the broad themes and concepts that developed from the collection of data and encompassed the various group discussions (Rabiee, 2004).

In the focus group analysis for this study, the researcher applied an adaptation of Spencer and Ritchie (1994) and Krueger and Casey's (2009) analytic frameworks for sorting and arranging the data and developing major themes and categories. The researcher listened to and transcribed the focus group discussions. The transcript and notes were reviewed thoroughly to become familiar with the details of the discussions and make sense of the entire transcript. The researcher wrote notes in the margins of the text identifying emerging ideas and concepts and developed categories. As opposed to cutting and pasting quotes using a computer or flip chart, the researcher indicated the appropriateness of the responses using numbers. For example, if a participant's response to question #4 was more suitable for question #1, the researcher placed a #1 next to that response. When a response did not fit under any category, the researcher did not number that response. The researcher reflected on Krueger and Casey's (2009) four questions

when determining the appropriateness of the response. The researcher reviewed each question, one at time, and went through the transcript paying close attention to those responses that were numbered as related to that particular question. The researcher wrote a descriptive summary for each question with consideration being given to Krueger and Casey's (2009) four factors (i.e., *frequency, specificity, emotions, extensiveness*). The summaries present the broad themes and concepts for each question.

Focus group results can be displayed in simple ways using easy-to-understand language and participants' quotes to support the data (Rabiee, 2004). Krueger and Casey (2009) suggested using modifiers such as *no one, a few, some, many, most, and all* to describe the number of participants who commented in a specific way instead of using a count as those can be misleading. Following are the results from the analysis of the focus group data for each question.

Focus Group Question #1: What did you think about the vocational assessment process?

The frequency of responses to this question indicated that most of the participants shared *positive thoughts* about the vocational assessment process. A small number of individuals expressed indifferent opinions about the process, and no one conveyed negative views. Specificity with regards to what the participants *learned about themselves* and their *options for the future* was provided in their responses. Participants most commonly expressed feelings of *enjoyment* and *fun*. Extensiveness was demonstrated in the number of times participants referred to the vocational assessment process as *helpful*, which was a major theme of the participants' thoughts about the vocational assessment process.

Following are some of the comments made by the participants to the question:

"I enjoyed it. It showed me a lot of things I could do besides working with my dad. I actually never thought about doing a lot of these things because in my mind I was really just focused on construction."

"It was interesting. I learned some stuff and what area of a field I should go to..."

"I believe it helped me to eliminate some of the things that I felt like I wanted to pursue or do..."

"It was fun; it was productive. We learned a lot and it helped us figure out our future and our goals."

"It was a good experience. I was enthusiastic about it the moment we started. I knew it would be a good experience, that I would be able to gain a lot from it so I was all for it. I liked it all."

“It was a good program. I learned more than I expected to learn. It was enjoyable.”

“I liked it. It made me think about my future. I learned a couple of things.”

“It was good overall.”

“It was helpful. It helped me see different careers that I could choose from...”

“It was very informational.”

“I think it helped. I ain’t never thought about my career so I think working in this program helped me out.”

“It was alright. You helped me a lot.”

“It was good. It got me to take time to think about my future and everything.”

“It was a good process. It helped me understand more about what I wanted to do.”

“It was very helpful. It helped me find a lot of careers.”

“It helped me learn what I want to do when I get older because I wasn’t really thinking about it at first.”

“It was pretty helpful. It made me think about my future and the things I would maybe want to look at doing. It was a good little adventure.”

“I think it helped me figure out a little bit of what I wanted to do. It was a good opportunity.”

“It was helpful for the future.”

Focus Group Question #2: What did you like best about the process?

The frequency of responses showed that every participant was able to identify aspects of the vocational assessment process they liked best. There were a few participants, however, who were unable to point out specific parts of the process they liked best but thought highly of the entire vocational assessment process. Specificity was given to *identifying and narrowing career options, career research, exploring career interests, self-knowledge, and the career resource manual (MAGIC)*. The participants conveyed feelings of *satisfaction* with many aspects of the vocational assessment process. Major themes pertaining to *career exploration, self-knowledge, career information, the interest inventory, and the MAGIC* were identified in the extensiveness of the responses about what participants liked best about the process.

Some of the participants’ responses to this question were:

“Honestly, I liked everything; I enjoyed it.”

“The narrowing down of my career choices – we had 7 choices and narrowed down to 3...”

“I liked how informational it was. It provided a lot of information on specific jobs and showed your earnings and the outlook on the jobs years from now.”

“I liked how I could fill out that little chart thing and find what jobs I would like and stuff.”

“Narrowing down of the jobs because instead of being 4-5 things on my mind it went to 3 and then it stayed at 3 then went to 2 that I was interested in...it helped me narrow down my choices”

“Answering the questions, taking the assessment, and seeing the results”

“Seeing what careers would suit me best”

“Narrowing the jobs down so you’ll know which ones are your real and true opportunities and interests”

“Found out about myself...”

“Finding out what your career goals are”

“The MAGIC book”

“Finding my code”

“The whole thing”

“Doing the research on each career”

“The best part was that we had a chance to look up our careers and the requirements needed to fulfill those.”

“Figuring out the things that weren’t my interests; ruling out options”

“When we took the interest inventory and it showed the jobs that would best suit us instead of looking around blindly for jobs”

Focus Group Question #3: What did you like least about the process?

Based on the frequency of responses to this question, many of the participants were unable to identify parts of the vocational assessment process they liked least. Others commented specifically on the amount of *writing and paperwork*, *length of the self concept measure*, *amount of reading*, *duration of the process*, and *results of the interest inventory*. Some of them expressed feelings of *disapproval* toward certain aspects of the process. They believed that *too much writing and reading* were required of them, and *the self concept measure included too many questions*. Some of them also thought *the vocational assessment process should have been longer*, while others believed *it should have been shorter*. Finally, there were participants who were *not satisfied with the interest inventory results*. Though there were a number of participants

who were unable to identify parts of the vocational process they liked least and made positive comments about the process, the extensiveness of negative comments indicated major themes with reference to the *work load, time commitment, and interest inventory results*.

Participants responded to question #3 with a few of the following comments:

“Doing the post self measure...”

“Filling out a lot of paperwork”

“Too much paperwork”

“Reading”

“All the questions, but it still wasn’t that bad”

“All the book work; other than that it was okay”

“I can’t say anything bad about it; it was informative.”

“Really nothing that I didn’t like about it; a lot of it I liked because I like learning and experiencing new things. I can’t really say didn’t like it.”

“Finding out that I was in touch with the law so much – police officer came up, detective came up – I don’t like the law.”

“All the writing”

“Everything was cool. Everything was nice.”

“The assessment was short, only a week.”

“Saying goodbye”

“I want it to be longer.”

“The code that you got may not have fit what you wanted to do.”

“Too short – I needed more time. I think if I had more time I would understand what I need a little more.”

“Too short....the code that I received and the careers I seen under it, I didn’t really like those.”

“Finding out what I want to do is not something the results said I would be interested in.”

“Nothing that I disliked”

Focus Group Question #4: What did you gain from the process?

There were various replies to this question. The frequency of responses demonstrated that the majority of participants related numerous benefits from their involvement in the vocational assessment process. One person asserted that he or she did not gain anything from the process. Specificity on *acquiring career information and self-knowledge, identifying career*

options or making a career decision, learning more about one's personality, receiving support for a career goal, and gaining hope or confidence after participating in the process were communicated in the responses. Participants expressed feelings of achievement as well as a sense of hope and confidence. Major themes of what participants gained from the process were depicted in the extensiveness of comments about career information and knowledge of self; career choices; career support; and feelings of achievement, hope, and confidence.

The following participant quotations reflect responses made to this question:

"Knowledge about a few career fields"

"Knowledge about different jobs and what I want to become in the future instead of having some crazy idea"

"Found out about myself – the test showed me who I am"

"Gained more ideas about what I would want to be...gave me more choices"

"Gained knowledge because I learned more things about myself"

"Some knowledge about my careers and about what jobs would suit me best"

"Courage and determination; I have more career options than just one."

"Opened up more careers that I have available to me"

"Learned about my personality – my hobbies, my likes and dislikes- I got a bunch of different options to choose from"

"I can be a bartender."

"Found out about myself; found jobs that I would enjoy more..."

"Confidence in what you want to do"

"Gave me information I didn't know about the jobs"

"A lot of confidence"

"I didn't gain a lot...in some ways it helped me and in some ways it didn't."

"Knowledge about jobs; more information about my careers"

"Hope that I can find some type of job in the future"

"Head start to my future"

Focus Group Question #5: What did you learn about yourself in the process?

The frequency of responses indicated that many of the participants believed that they learned something about themselves from participating in the vocational assessment process. A few of the individuals believed they learned *very little or nothing* about themselves from the

process. Specificity was given to the participants' *career interests, likes and dislikes, and personality*. Most of the participants seemed *pleased* about what they learned about themselves. A major theme of what participants learned about themselves was in the extensiveness of the variety of responses; *participants learned many different things about themselves*.

Some of the statements made in response to this question during the focus groups were:

"I learned that I'm an artistic person because of all the stuff I like...writing, drawing, writing poetry, creating stuff, thinking stuff like that"

"I learned that I'm a FED. I didn't know that I would be so in touch with the law like that. I would be a great police officer or detective."

"Nothing really; sort of fell into place with what I already knew about myself"

"It was different jobs out there not just auto mechanics like transportation jobs."

"I would be good in hands-on jobs."

"I like working with my hands."

"Expanded my horizons, I have a broader view. It expanded my options. I have something to fall back on."

"I like being in charge."

"I learned a lot – I like to help others and I like music."

"Nothing really"

"Learned I like more than sports"

"I can do more than what I thought I could."

"Learned that I was on the right career path; I just need to surround myself with positive people and successful people in the field I want to be in."

"I would enjoy a sociable job."

"Learned that hands-on jobs is my personality"

"Learned that I am a realistic person and I like to do things with my hands; I don't like to be cooped up in an office, I like to move around"

Focus Group Question #6: What changes would you make to the vocational assessment process?

In response to this question, the frequency of responses showed that several participants would not make changes to the process while some would make a few changes. Specificity in the responses suggested that changes be made to the *length of the process* and the *amount of*

writing required. A few individuals believed the process should consist of *less writing* and be *computer-based*. Some participants communicated that they would like *the vocational assessment process to be longer*; however, others suggested that *the process be shorter*. There were some youth who also expressed interests in *spending time during the process addressing [specific] topics* such as *how to complete employment applications* and *specific jobs that are available for individuals with criminal records*. Major themes were displayed in the extensiveness of comments regarding the *length of the process*, the *work required* of the participants, and *suggestions* to address particular topics of interest to them. Overall, participants seemed *very pleased* with the process.

Participants suggested the following changes to the vocational assessment process:

"I probably wouldn't change anything."

"Done electronically..."

"Your project that you're doing and the way you're helping us is excellent; I wouldn't change anything..."

"I wish I could learn more things about the resources available to me to help me get a job since I'm a felon."

"Nothing really"

"I wouldn't make no changes..."

"None that I can think of"

"The writing...more computer-based"

"A longer process"

"Longer; 2-3 weeks"

"I wouldn't change anything; seems to be working fine to me."

"None; pretty good process"

"Nothing wrong with it; I had a good time."

"No suggestions; it was good."

"Opportunity to practice some of the jobs that the assessment says you're interested in"

"...bring in job applications, learn about making resumes..."

"More information from the instructor as far as what we can and cannot do with our record"

"I think this program is perfect."

Summary of Findings for Research Question 2

The major themes and feelings identified by question number are summarized in Table 4.7. Support for Hypothesis Three was indicated by the analysis of participants' perceptions of the vocational assessment process. The juvenile offenders who participated in this study had a favorable perception of the vocational assessment process as helpful in learning about themselves and identifying career options for the future, and they expressed positive feelings towards the process. Suggested changes were to make the process longer or shorter, decrease the amount of writing, and include specific topics related to future employment (e.g., completing applications, jobs for individuals with criminal records). Overall, participants seemed very pleased with the process.

Table 4.7

Focus Group Results (Major Themes and Feelings)

Q #	Major Themes	Feelings
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>positive thoughts and indifferent opinions</i> • <i>learned about themselves</i> • <i>options for the future</i> • <i>process was helpful</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>enjoyment</i> • <i>fun</i>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>identifying and narrowing career options</i> • <i>career research and information</i> • <i>exploring career interests</i> • <i>self-knowledge</i> • <i>career resource manual (MAGIC)</i> • <i>interest inventory</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>satisfaction</i>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>work load (too much reading, writing, and paperwork)</i> • <i>length of self concept measure (too many questions)</i> • <i>time commitment/duration of process (longer/shorter)</i> • <i>results of the interest inventory</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>disapproval</i> • <i>not satisfied</i>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>acquiring career information and self-knowledge</i> • <i>identifying career options or making a career decision</i> • <i>learning more about one's personality</i> • <i>support for a career goal</i> • <i>hope or confidence</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>achievement</i> • <i>hope</i> • <i>confidence</i>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>very little or nothing</i> • <i>career interests</i> • <i>likes and dislikes</i> • <i>personality</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>pleased</i>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>no/few changes</i> • <i>length of process (longer/shorter) and amount of writing (less writing or computer-based)</i> • <i>address topics (e.g., completing applications, specific jobs for individuals with criminal records)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>very pleased</i>

Summary

The results of the study demonstrated that participants' *competence* self concept improved after their participation in the vocational assessment process. As expected, however, the participants' *global* self concept was not affected by the process. Overall, participants appeared to benefit from the vocational assessment process. The participants demonstrated favorable perceptions of the process. They learned about their career interests and personalities, identified career options and acquired career information, and made a career decision as well as experienced enhanced *competence* self concept.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to examine the impact of the vocational assessment process on the self concept of juvenile offenders. Additionally, the study captured juvenile offenders' perceptions of the vocational process. Given the significance of employment in successful reentry into their communities (National Reentry Resource Center, 2010) and in reducing recidivism (Chartrand & Rose, 1996; Glaser et al., 2003; Young, 1994), it is important for juvenile offenders to be able to identify their career interests and options and develop more positive self concept in order to make appropriate employment decisions (Glaser et al., 2003; Munson, 1994; Munson & Strauss, 1993). Therefore, a vocational assessment intervention was used in this study to assist juvenile offenders in acquiring and evaluating information on their career interests and options as well as to enhance their self concept, which could potentially lead to increased employment options and reduced recidivism for this group.

The focus of this chapter is to relate the research findings with current literature, present limitations of the study, provide implications and recommendations for professionals who work with the juvenile offender population (i.e., program administrators, vocational evaluators, transition specialists, probation/parole officers, counselors, community agencies and organizations), and explore implications for future research. The conclusion to the chapter highlights the significance of the current study.

Research Findings

Findings from the current study are presented in the context of the research questions. The findings are related to the existing literature in order to provide a more in-depth understanding of juvenile offenders' self concept and the vocational assessment process.

The Impact of the Vocational Assessment Process on Juvenile Offender Self Concept

As hypothesized, the results of the study showed that the vocational assessment process *did not improve* the juvenile offenders' *global or total* self concept. According to self concept enhancement literature, self concept is relatively stable (e.g., Anderson, 1952; Rosenberg, 1979), and, too often, global changes in self concept are anticipated from limited, brief interventions without considering the resistance to change of core beliefs (Gorrell, 1990; Snygg & Combs, 1949). Due to the stability of self concept, its changes are gradual and occur over time in response to environmental changes and changes to the individual (Bracken, 1992). Therefore, it

was postulated and supported by the ANOVA with pairwise comparisons of the participants' pre- and post-tests that there would be no improvement in the participants' *global or total* self concept using a brief vocational assessment intervention.

However, juvenile offender *competence* self concept *did improve* in this study. This is a significant finding since individuals who believe they are more competent are more likely to act on their career plans than those who believe they are less competent (see Novick et al., 1996). These results reflected Marsh, Smith, Barnes et al.'s (1983) assertion that self concept changes can occur in specific self concept domains without having as significant of an effect on the general self concept. In addition, Horne (1990) indicated that, from their participation in the vocational assessment process, individuals may show more self-confidence (e.g., *competence* self concept) and/or self-esteem. Also, Jordaan (1963) believed that vocational exploratory behavior (e.g., vocational assessment process) contributed to positive changes in an individual's self-perceptions including "a more realistic self concept; a clearer and better differentiated self concept; more integrated self concept; an expanded self concept; greater confidence in his self concept; and a clearer sense of identity" (p.60). Furthermore, the vocational assessment intervention for this study was based on Sampson et al.'s (2004) Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) Approach to career problem-solving and decision-making, and it was suggested that CIP can bring about confidence (e.g., *competence* self concept) as well. The results of this study also coincide with O'Brien et al.'s (1999) study that investigated the effects of a career intervention program on at-risk students and showed that participants experienced more confidence in career decision-making and more congruent career selections.

The Perceptions Held by Juvenile Offenders About the Vocational Assessment Process

The results indicated that participants in this study thought favorably of the process. Overall, participants conveyed positive views (e.g., *enjoyable, fun*) about the vocational assessment process. Participants believed the process was helpful in learning more about themselves and their options for the future. They enjoyed exploring their career interests and identifying options, researching careers, learning more about self, and receiving the career resource manual (MAGIC). Several participants expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of reading and writing required during the process as well as the length of the self concept measure, the duration of the process, and the results of the interest inventory. Participants gained information about careers; self-knowledge; career options or made a career decision; support for

their career interests or goals; and hope or confidence about their futures. They shared that they learned about their career interests, likes and dislikes, and personality. Some participants suggested that the length of the vocational assessment process be shortened, while others thought it should be longer. It was also suggested that the amount of writing required during the process be reduced and topics that interested them (e.g., completing employment applications, specific jobs that are available for individuals with criminal records) be included.

According to Horne (1990), youth who participate in the vocational assessment process are not only likely to demonstrate more self-confidence and/or self-esteem but also exhibit a desire to

discuss their vocational or career futures or specific education plans; are able to say things they can do; may show excitement about the vocational activities on which they are working; may enthusiastically talk with their families and friends about what they are doing in school; may develop new, realistic career interests;...and may show more interest in school and in their academic performances. (p. 2)

Additionally, in a study conducted by Osborn and Reardon (2006) with high-risk middle school students using the *Self-Directed Search Career Explorer* (SDS-CE; Holland & Powell, 1994) and a structured group counseling setting based on the CIP framework, students learned more about themselves, gained occupations knowledge, and learned about decision-making and used self-talk in accordance with CIP theory. In their comments, the students suggested that they became more aware of their career interests, occupations, educational options, decision-making, and they increased positive self-talk. Several of them also stated that they enjoyed participating in the groups. As expected, the participants in the current study expressed similar opinions to those of the students in Osborn and Reardon's (2006) study.

Limitations of the Study

There are a few limitations to this study. One limitation is the generalizability of the study's findings. The generalizability of the study may have been affected by the size and composition of the sample. The reasonably small sample size could limit the generalizability of the results to the larger juvenile offender population. The larger the sample size, the more the results can be generalized. Additionally, the relatively homogeneous sample could also affect the generalizability of the results to the larger juvenile offender population. The study's sample was comprised of youth committed to the State of Virginia juvenile justice system and, therefore, limits the generalizability of the results to juvenile offenders in other state correctional systems.

A second limitation is the absence of a control/comparison group where the control/comparison group receives either a modified intervention or none at all. Initial research design for this study included a comparison group. Participants assigned to the comparison group would not have received the intervention at the time of the study but at a later date. The use of the comparison group would have demonstrated the effect of the intervention between two groups (experimental/intervention group and comparison group); it could have been determined if the intervention was more effective than not having an intervention. However, due to time constraints and security needs at the intake center, it would have been difficult to include a comparison group. Therefore, the comparison group was eliminated, and the focus of the study was on the impact of the intervention on one group (intervention group).

A third limitation is the testing effects. Participants in this study were administered the same self concept measure at the onset and conclusion of the study. Employing a pretest-posttest design could increase the participants' understanding of the objective of the study and affect participants' performance on the posttest (Marczyk, Dematteo, & Festinger, 2005). It is possible that the results were influenced by the participants' exposure to the pre-test. However, the researcher's use of different measurement techniques (i.e., *Multidimensional Self Concept Scale*, focus groups) may have been advantageous as the use of "multiple measures would increase overall confidence in a study's findings" (Marczyk, Dematteo, & Festinger, 2005, p. 120).

A possible fourth limitation to this study could be the length of the vocational assessment intervention. Although participants indicated there was too much reading, writing, and paperwork; too many questions on the self concept measure; and the process was too long, the vocational process for this study may not have been long enough. The length of the process could have influenced the impact of the vocational assessment process on the participants' *global* self concept. According to the definition of vocational assessment provided by Horne (1990), it is an "ongoing process." The vocational assessment process for this study was a two-day process due to time constraints at the intake facility. However, for those facilities that do not have time to conduct a lengthy program, the results of this study showed that a brief vocational assessment can have a positive impact on juvenile offenders' knowledge and understanding of their career interests and options as well as enhance their *competence* self concept.

A fifth limitation presented in this study could have been minimal environmental factors. This study was conducted in a juvenile correctional setting. Uncontrollable factors such as the

noise level and movement of the staff and youth as well as delays could have affected the participants' performance and should be considered possible limitations.

Lastly, the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations of the focus groups may be a limitation to the study. Bias is not a word generally used by qualitative researchers as "all research is interpretive" (Creswell, 2008, p. 266). However, researchers should be self-aware of their involvement in the research, interpretation of the findings, and influence of their individual and political experiences on their interpretations (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, strategies should be used to validate the researcher's findings (see Creswell, 2008). The strategy applied to this research was triangulation, which encompassed the utilization of various sources of data to improve the study's accuracy (Creswell, 2008). Quantitative (i.e., MSCS) and qualitative measures (i.e., focus groups) were employed in this study, thus, aiding the researcher in composing an accurate and reliable report (Creswell, 2008).

Implications and Recommendations

Juvenile crime and recidivism continue to be important issues in the U.S. that concern policymakers. Society incurs significant costs from juvenile offenders with regards to the judicial system, costs to the victims, and incarceration (Unruh et al., 2009). Consequently, policymakers are continuously developing initiatives and programs in their attempts to regulate juvenile crime and recidivism through successful community reentry. A common theme among past and present initiatives and programs is employment; it is critical in helping offenders to successfully transition into their communities (National Reentry Resource Center, 2010) and in reducing recidivism for juvenile offenders (Chartrand & Rose, 1996; Glaser et al., 2003; Young, 1994).

In this study, the vocational assessment process assisted juvenile offenders in evaluating and identifying their career interests and options and enhancing their *competence* self concept, which could lead to increased employment options for them and potentially reduce recidivism. The results of this study could prove useful to professionals working with juvenile offenders (i.e., program administrators, vocational evaluators, transition specialists, probation/parole officers, counselors, community agencies and organizations) in the areas of delinquency prevention, correctional education and training, and reentry services for juvenile offenders.

The discussion that follows is structured according to an ecological framework developed by Unruh, Povenmire-Kirk et al. (2009), *Ecology of Community Adjustment Factors for Juvenile*

Offenders, which is an adaptation of Dishion and Patterson's (2006) *Ecology of Anti-social Behavior* model. Unruh, Povenmire-Kirk et al.'s framework focuses on the interactions of the adolescent in various domains comprising relationships in different behavioral settings and within the context of the individual's culture and community. This variation to Dishion and Patterson's ecological model was used by Unruh, Povenmire-Kirk et al. to explicate juvenile offenders' perceived risk and protective factors in the development process for adolescents across ecological domains. Relevant domains from Unruh, Povenmire-Kirk et al.'s ecological model were used to provide implications for the juvenile offender and those who come into contact with the juvenile offender. These implications address the use of the vocational assessment intervention through interactions with the juvenile offender to assist the juvenile offender in making appropriate employment decisions and carrying out his or her career plan to successfully re-enter the community and reduce the likelihood of recidivism.

The innermost domain of Unruh, Povenmire-Kirk et al.'s (2009) ecological model is the individual. This study showed that a vocational assessment intervention can assist juvenile offenders in learning more about themselves, career interests, and options. In addition, the intervention increased juvenile offenders confidence (i.e., *competence* self concept) in their abilities to act on their career plans that should also influence their effort and eventual success in accomplishing their employment goal. In this study, half (50.8%) of the participants had not received a prior vocational assessment. This means that opportunities for these individuals to participate in the vocational assessment process should be available more often, not only during their confinement in a correctional facility but also prior to their involvement with the juvenile justice system, for example, in their communities or schools. Such an intervention could lead to reduced criminal behaviors. In his review of the best delinquency-prevention programs, Greenwood (2008) identified career education (e.g., vocational assessment) as a component of some programs that have proven to be effective in preventing delinquency and other behaviors that result in criminality. Prevention could be money-saving for taxpayers by lessening the financial and emotional toll of crime (Greenwood, 2008).

Outside the individual domain is the individual's relationships with family, friends, teachers, probation/parole staff, and other significant people with whom the individual interacts.

For this discussion, the focus is on the role of the teacher, probation/parole officer, school counselor, correctional counselor, and transition specialist and how the vocational assessment intervention can be used in their interactions with the juvenile offender.

The education and training received by juvenile offenders within the correctional facility can contribute to improving employment and reducing recidivism upon release. The educational programming “could allow them to avoid continued personal failure, social maladjustment, unemployment, and incarceration” (Zabel & Nigro, 2007, p. 352). Vocational training is vital to the quality of educational programming offered in corrections (Platt, Casey, & Faessel, 2006). It is believed that vocational training reduces recidivism, decreases the number of parole violations, improves post-release employment statistics, and improves the institutional behavior of those participating in vocational training programs (Ward, 2009). While vocational instructors assist students in gaining the knowledge and skills in a trade, they should also be able to determine the vocational needs of the student, the student’s abilities and preferences, and teach skills to transition into work (Platt, 1986). The results from the vocational assessment can provide vocational instructors with the information needed to effectively teach and prepare juvenile offenders for work.

Many times post-release employment is incorporated into juvenile offenders’ parole plan (Waintrup & Unruh, 2008). Parole officers are considered the juvenile offender’s liaison between the correctional system and community and should be able to assist the offender in obtaining and maintaining employment and adjusting to life and work upon release (Platt, 1986). Parole officers provide support to potential employers, which can minimize the employer’s apprehension (Platt, 1986). Parole officers can make use of the vocational assessment process information to assist the juvenile offender in seeking appropriate employment opportunities upon release. The individuals’ interests and their strengths and needs must be considered in order to make suitable career matches in developing a long-term plan for employment (Waintrup & Unruh, 2008).

School counselors assist juvenile offenders in academic and vocational planning and place them in courses to assist them in meeting their educational and career goals. School counselors can use the information obtained from the vocational assessment process in placing youths in suitable educational and vocational training programs to assist youths in working towards attaining their academic and career goals. Vocational assessments can be used to guide

juvenile offenders into “careers through vocational training programs in order to maximize their employment potential and occupational enjoyment” (Platt, Casey, & Faessel, 2006, p. 35). Correctional counselors in the juvenile correctional center are responsible for coordinating the delivery of services between service providers within the correctional facility and in the community (Platt, 1986). Correctional counselors can use the information from the vocational assessment to connect juvenile offenders with appropriate services both inside and outside of the correctional facility.

The transition specialist “develops trusting relationships with participants, identifies and accesses sources of community support for training and employment, helps individuals acquire the support they need from local mental health and other agencies, and monitors participant involvement” (Zabel & Nigro, 2007, p. 352). The transition specialist, like the school counselor and correctional counselor, can utilize the vocational assessment information to access appropriate training and education sources for juvenile offenders upon release.

The layer in Unruh, Povenmire-Kirk et al.’s (2009) ecological model that surrounds the individual’s relationships is comprised of the behavioral settings in which the individual interacts (e.g., juvenile justice system, community, place of employment, school, home). This discussion emphasizes the juvenile justice system and community.

Effective services within the facility can lead to a reduction in the number of youth returning to the correctional facility and an increase in the rate of employment upon release, thereby, contributing to reduced costs to society, victims, and juvenile offenders (Waintrup & Unruh, 2008). The juvenile justice system should ensure that quality academic and vocational programming are available at the correctional facilities that allow juvenile offenders to acquire the education and training necessary to return to their communities and pursue additional education or training or immediately enter the world of work.

Reentry and post-release services that assist juvenile offenders in adjusting upon their return to their communities continue to be uncommon practices in juvenile correctional facilities (Clinkinbeard & Zohra, 2012; Spencer & Jones-Walker, 2004). Community agencies and organizations can be instrumental in providing the wide range of services from which juvenile offenders could benefit to successfully reintegrate into society, such as mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and employment preparation and assistance services. Community agencies and organizations and correctional personnel should be willing to work collaboratively

to make certain that juvenile offenders receive comprehensive services to meet all their needs for successful reentry.

A few implications for public policy considerations relating to vocational assessment and juvenile corrections need to be addressed. McLeroy, Bibeau, Steckler, and Glanz's (1988) ecological model encompasses a public policy domain that takes into account the influence of governmental regulations and laws. There is a need to (a) increase awareness of the impact of the vocational assessment process on juvenile offenders; (b) receive governmental support for the use of the vocational assessment process for all juvenile offenders who come through the state juvenile justice system; and (c) receive funds to support the use of vocational assessment in delinquency prevention, correctional education and training, and reentry services.

In summary, recommendations have been made based on an ecological framework (i.e., Unruh, Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2009) for the individual and persons that interact with juvenile offenders in using a vocational assessment intervention to assist juvenile offenders in successfully reentering their communities. Implications for public policy considerations were also provided based on McLeroy, Bibeau, Steckler, and Glanz's (1988) ecological model. It is hopeful that both professionals who come in contact with juvenile offenders and governmental entities will see value in using the vocational assessment process with juvenile offenders in successfully reentering their communities and reducing recidivism.

Future Research

Future research is needed to further develop the literature on juvenile offender self concept and self concept enhancement, reentry and recidivism, and vocational assessment with this population. The following are suggestions for future research:

- a. Follow-up with study participants to measure self concept changes since their participation in the current study and/or to find out participants' employment statuses upon release and/or rate of recidivism.
- b. Replicate the study using other juvenile offenders from Virginia's juvenile justice system to compare/contrast results to the current study.
- c. Replicate the study using a control/comparison group to determine the effects between the intervention and the comparison groups, more specifically if the vocational assessment intervention was more effective than having none at all.

- d. Replicate the study with juveniles from other state juvenile correctional systems to compare/contrast the results to the current study and to enhance the generalizability of the study.
- e. Explore differences in self concept among demographics (e.g., race, gender, age) post-intervention.

Conclusion

Juvenile crime remains an important, costly issue in American society. Of concern to policymakers is assisting juvenile offenders in reentering their communities and reducing the rate of recidivism. Approximately 100,000 juvenile offenders are released annually after being confined to custody facilities (Snyder, 2004). Upon release, youth are typically rearrested at an average rate of 55% at 12 months post-release (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). Employment has been considered critical in successful reentry (National Reentry Resource Center, 2010) and reducing recidivism (Chartrand & Rose, 1996; Glaser et al., 2003; Young, 1994). According to Super (1963), employment is a way of implementing one's self concept; individuals with positive self concept make appropriate employment decisions, while individuals with negative self concept make poor employment choices. However, juvenile offenders' low self concept (Cloward & Ohlin, 1963; Evans et al., 1991; Fitts & Hamner, 1969; James, 1969), difficulty evaluating their career interests and options (Chartrand & Rose, 1996; Glaser et al., 2003; Young, 1994), and limited career perceptions (Glaser et al., 2003) can influence their employment decisions.

The purpose of this study was to use a brief vocational assessment intervention to increase juvenile offenders' awareness of their career interests and options and, concomitantly, enhance their self concept, which could ultimately lead to increased employment options and reduced recidivism. In addition, the study captured participants' views about the vocational assessment process. The results of the study supported the hypothesis that the vocational assessment intervention *would not improve global* self concept but *would enhance competence* self concept.

It is important to note that this research study is not implying that using the vocational assessment process to help juvenile offenders evaluate and identify their career interests and options and enhance their *competence* self concept is the only intervention needed to increase employment options. It does not guarantee employment or reduced recidivism; however, it is a

step in the right direction and may be precisely the intervention needed by some juvenile offenders to be successful upon reentry into their communities. It could be the “motivational capital” (i.e., resources that motivate behavior) that can drive productive behaviors (e.g., pursuing employment) and reduce criminal behaviors among juvenile offenders returning to their communities (see Clinkinbeard & Zohra, 2012).

The results from the current study are encouraging and contribute positively to the literature concerning juvenile offenders’ self concept and career guidance programs. Further, the results support the use of interest inventories with disadvantaged populations. Additionally, the results can be used to support the implementation of vocational assessment interventions for delinquency prevention, correctional education and training programs, and juvenile offender reentry in the efforts to reduce crime and recidivism among juvenile offenders.

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Appendix A

Department of Juvenile Justice Approval Letter



Helsvi Holland
DIRECTOR

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Juvenile Justice

700 Centre, 4th Floor
7th and Franklin Streets
Post Office Box 1113
Richmond, Virginia 23218-1113
(804) 371-0700
Fax: (804) 371-0773
Voice/TDD: (804) 371-0772

January 27, 2012

Dear Ms. McAuley-Davis:

The Department approved the research proposal, "The Impact of the Vocational Assessment Process on Juvenile Offender Self Concept," on January 27, 2012. Attached please find the signed copy of the research agreement between you and the Department of Juvenile Justice. A final report must be submitted to the Department to my attention when the project is completed. If the project is not completed within a year, an update on your progress must be submitted by January 26, 2013.

The Department wishes you luck with your research, and please do not hesitate to contact Jessica Turfboer at Jessica.Turfboer@djj.virginia.gov with any questions or concerns throughout your project.

Sincerely,

Deron Phipps
Director of Policy & Planning

Appendix B

Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board Approval Letter—December 5, 2011



VirginiaTech

Office of Research Compliance
 Institutional Review Board
 2000 Kraft Drive, Suite 2000 (0497)
 Blacksburg, Virginia 24060
 540/231-4606 Fax 540/231-0959
 e-mail irb@vt.edu
 Website: www.irb.vt.edu

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 5, 2011

TO: Pamela E. Brott, Talisha McAuley, Jusolyn Bradshaw

FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires May 31, 2014)

PROTOCOL TITLE: The Impact of the Vocational Assessment Process on Juvenile Offender Self Concept

IRB NUMBER: 11-335

Effective November 16, 2011, the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board, at a convened meeting, approved the new protocol for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report promptly to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at <http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm> (please review before the commencement of your research).

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved as: **Full Board Review**

Protocol Approval Date: **11/16/2011**

Protocol Expiration Date: **11/15/2012**

Continuing Review Due Date*: **10/29/2012**

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals / work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

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VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

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Appendix C

Virginia Tech IRB Approval Letter for Continuing Review – November 27, 2012



Office of Research Compliance
 Institutional Review Board
 2000 Kraft Drive, Suite 2000 (0497)
 Blacksburg, VA 24060
 540/231-4606 Fax 540/231-0959
 email irb@vt.edu
 website <http://www.irb.vt.edu>

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 27, 2012
TO: Pamela E Brott, Talisha Nevette McAuley, Jusolyn Bradshaw
FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires May 31, 2014)
PROTOCOL TITLE: The Impact of the Vocational Assessment Process on Juvenile Offender Self Concept
IRB NUMBER: 11-335

Effective November 12, 2012, the Virginia Tech Institution Review Board (IRB), at a convened meeting, approved the Continuing Review request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

<http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As: **Full Review**
 Protocol Approval Date: **November 16, 2012**
 Protocol Expiration Date: **November 15, 2013**
 Continuing Review Due Date*: **October 28, 2013**

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

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Appendix D

PAR Permission to Use Sample Items



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Telephone: 813.968.3003 • Fax: 813.968.2598 • Web: www.parinc.com

Sent Via Email: tmcauley@vt.edu

August 6, 2012

Talisha N. McAuley-Davis
Virginia Tech

Dear Ms. McAuley-Davis:

In response to your recent request, permission is hereby granted to you to include up to a total of three (3) sample items from the Self Directed Search (SDS) Form R Assessment Booklet in your dissertation titled, *The Impact of the Vocational Assessment Process on Juvenile Offender Self Concept*. If additional material is needed, then further permission from PAR is required.

This Agreement is subject to the following restrictions:

- (1) Any and all materials used will contain the following credit line:

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TWO COPIES of this Permission Agreement should be signed and returned to me to indicate your agreement with the above restrictions. I will then sign it for PAR and return a fully executed copy to you for your records.

Sincerely,

Vicki M. McFadden
Permissions Specialist
vmark@parinc.com
1-800-331-8378 (phone)
1-800-727-9329 (fax)

ACCEPTED AND AGREED:

BY: *Talisha N. McAuley-Davis*
TALISHA N. MCAULEY-DAVIS

DATE: 8/7/12

ACCEPTED AND AGREED:

BY: *Vicki M. McFadden*
VICKI M. MCFADDEN

DATE: August 7, 2012

Appendix E

Permission to Use PRO-ED Test Material



page 1

Approval of Permission to Use PRO-ED Test Material (Fee Waived)

August 24, 2012

Reference Permission Request #T2904

Ms. Talisha McAuley-Davis
Virginia Tech

For permission to use all; Figure 1.1; Items 1, 27, 51 of the Multidimensional Self Concept Scale (MSCS) Complete Kit by Bracken, 1992, Austin: PRO-ED. Kit Product Number: 5180. Number of copies: 1

USAGE: Research for Master's Thesis or Dissertation

MSCS will be used to measure self concept in the dissertation that aims at studying the impact of vocational assessment process on self concept in juvenile offenders. The test will be administered to 60 students, as a pre and post test measure, to assess how learning about their career interests and career options affect their view of self. Figure 1.1 on page 5 and Items 1 (S scale), 27 (C Scale) and 51 (A Scale) from the record booklet will be included in the appendix of the dissertation

LIMITATIONS:

The intellectual property will be used "as is" with no changes or adaptations made and will be used only as a part of the thesis/dissertation. Copyright statements will be included on all copies of the instrument. In exchange for a free kit, Ms. McAuley-Davis will send a copy of her dissertation research to PRO-ED, Inc. If additional materials are required, they will be purchased through customer service.

APPROVAL:

The foregoing application is hereby approved provided that the form of credit and copyright notice, as specified in the sixth edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* or an equally recognized format, gives full identification of author, publisher, copyright date, and title and states, "Used with Permission." This permission is solely for adaptation to non-original formats and should not be construed as a transfer of any rights, title or interest in the PRO-ED publication. This permission includes the right to approve, without charge, the publication or transcription in Braille, large print, audio or other formats, only for the use by print impaired individuals or to accommodate student IEP requirements and only if such an edition is not for commercial use. Should PRO-ED, Inc. in its sole discretion, determine the use of our material by you, the client, is contrary to the original intent as we understood it in your letter requesting permission, we reserve the right to demand that you cease and desist in your use of PRO-ED, Inc.'s material and remove it from the marketplace. PRO-ED makes no representations and warranties about the validity or reliability of the Licensed Material or its appropriateness or effectiveness with respect to your specific use. You agree to defend and indemnify PRO-ED, Inc. from any claims made against PRO-ED, Inc. on account of your use of the Licensed Material. By accepting this agreement, you confirm that the Licensed Material will not be used in pharmaceutical research of any kind.



Approval of Permission to Use PRO-ED Test Material (Fee Waived)

August 24, 2012

Reference Permission Request #T2904

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Approved by PRO-ED, Inc. Representative:

August 24, 2012

Test Permissions Editor

PRO-ED, Inc.

Appendix F

CENGAGE Learning Approval to Use Pyramid of Information Processing Domains Figure



NELSON EDUCATION

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04/10/2012

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 Publisher: Wadsworth Year: 2004
 Specific material: Figure 2.1 Pyramid of Information Processing Domains (Figure only); pages 21-21.
 Total pages: 1

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Sincerely,

Donna Phillips
 Permissions Associate

Appendix G

Parental Permission Form

Dear _____:

Your child, _____, who recently arrived at the Reception & Diagnostic Center (RDC) in Bon Air, VA, has been asked to participate in a study, "The Impact of the Vocational Assessment Process on Juvenile Offender Self Concept." The study is graduate research through Virginia Tech University and is being conducted by Ms. Talisha McAuley-Davis (804-323-2673), a graduate student at Virginia Tech, and Ms. Jusolyn Bradshaw (804-323-2637) with the Department of Correctional Education at RDC. Your child's participation in the study is voluntary and you or your child can choose to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

1. The purpose of the study is to find out how learning about your child's career interests and choices impact his/her self views.
2. There are no more than minimal risks associated with participation in this study. The benefits of your child participating in the study include: exploring and evaluating career interests and learning about different careers, and choices. Your child will also receive a **free** career resource manual called *Virginia's Mid-Atlantic Guide to Information on Careers (MAGIC)* that contains valuable information on career development and planning, education and training, financial aid, descriptions of occupations, job search tips, suggestions for completing applications and interviewing, and budgeting tips. This resource manual can be helpful to your child in planning for his or her future. If your child does not participate in the study, he/she will still receive the resource manual at a later date. After the study, your child will also have the opportunity to further explore his/her interests/skills and career options with a DCE vocational evaluator while at RDC.
3. Procedures for the study are as follows: the study will take place over approximately four days. During that time, the researchers will be collecting information using a variety of techniques such as tests and a recorded group session with other participants to determine your child's impression of the vocational assessment process.
4. Your child's participation is strictly voluntary. He/she does not have to participate in the study if you or your child does not wish to participate. The choice not to participate in the study will not affect your child's stay at RDC. Your child will not be treated any differently if he/she does not participate in the study and will continue to be treated the same and receive the same quality of services. If you or your child opts not to participate, your child will still be given an opportunity to receive a vocational assessment while at RDC. To stop participation, you or your child should notify the researchers or facility staff.
5. The results of your child's participation in the study will remain confidential. All study materials such as the assessments and audiotapes will be stored in a locked container and the only people that will have access are the researchers directly involved in the study. Study materials will be destroyed at the conclusion of the entire project. It may be necessary to break confidentiality in certain instances. In cases of child abuse or threats to harm self or others, the researchers are obligated to notify the appropriate authorities.
6. The researchers will answer any questions about the study, now or during the course of the study, and can be reached at (804) 323-2673 (Ms. Talisha McAuley-Davis) or (804) 323-2637

(Ms. Jusolyn Bradshaw).

Please print and sign your name on the enclosed permission form and return it to the researchers using the self-addressed, stamped envelope. Please return it in 7 days (BY DATE). Keep this letter for your records. If a signed copy of the enclosed permission form is not returned by (DATE), your child will no longer be considered for this study. Thank you very much for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Talisha McAuley-Davis
Virginia Tech Graduate Student

Parental Permission

I give my permission for my child, _____, to participate in the research study titled, "The Impact of the Vocational Assessment Process on Juvenile Offender Self Concept," which is being conducted by Ms. Talisha McAuley-Davis, a graduate student at Virginia Tech University, and Ms. Jusolyn Bradshaw with the Department of Correctional Education at RDC. I understand that this participation is entirely voluntary; I can withdraw permission for my child's participation at anytime, and my child can withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty.

Researcher Printed Name

Researcher Signature/Date

Co-Researcher Printed Name

Co-Researcher Signature/Date

Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Parent/Guardian Signature/Date

**Please return the consent form in the self-addressed, stamped envelope by
(DATE). Thank you.**

Appendix H

Youth Assent Form

You are being asked to participate in a project called a research study. But, first we want to tell you about it so that you can decide if you want to be a part of it. If you have questions, please make sure that you ask them at anytime. You can participate in the study or you do not have to participate in the study.

What is the name of the study?

The Impact of the Vocational Assessment Process on Juvenile Offender Self Concept

Who is in charge of the study?

The person in charge of the study is Ms. McAuley-Davis, a Virginia Tech graduate student, under the supervision of Ms. Bradshaw, Director of Assessment at RDC. This research is part of graduate school research through Virginia Tech University.

What is the study about?

We want to find out how learning more about yourself, your career interests and choices affect what you think about yourself.

Why are you being asked to be in this study?

- You are 16-21 years old;
- You have been committed to the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice;
- You are at the Reception & Diagnostic Center (RDC).

What will happen to me if I want to be in the study?

You will participate in a vocational assessment.

First, you will be given a brief measure that assesses how you view yourself. There are no right or wrong answers. Second, you will participate in the vocational testing process. You will complete an interest inventory that will help you in exploring and evaluating your career interests and choices. Third, you will also be asked to share your thoughts about the vocational testing process in a recorded group session. The study will take approximately four days to complete.

Will I be paid to be in the study?

You will not be paid to be in this study. You will not receive any special treatment from anyone for being in this study.

Potential risks and benefits

There are no more than minimal risks associated with participation in this study. The benefits to you include the following: (1) finding out your career interests; (2) learning about different careers; and (3) learning more about your career choices. You will also receive a free career resource manual called *Virginia's Mid-Atlantic Guide to Information on Careers (MAGIC)* that has important information on career development and planning, education and training, financial aid, types of occupations, job finding tips, help with completing applications and interviewing, and budgeting tips. This resource manual can be helpful to you in planning for your future. The resource will be made available to you even if you choose not to participate. After the study, you will also have an opportunity to further explore your interests/skills and career options with a DCE vocational evaluator while at RDC.

Confidentiality

Your participation in the study will remain confidential. All study materials such as the assessments and audiotapes will be stored in locked containers and the only people that will have access are the researchers directly involved in the study. Study materials will be destroyed at the conclusion of the entire project. It may be necessary to break confidentiality in certain instances. In cases of child abuse or threats to harm yourself or others, the researchers are obligated to notify the appropriate authorities.

Do I have to be in this study?

No, you do not have to be in the study if you do not wish to be a part of it. If you are in the study, you (or your parent) can stop at anytime without penalty. No one will treat you any differently if you choose not to be in the study or if you choose to stop being in the study. You will continue to be treated the same way as everyone else while at RDC. To stop your participation, you would need to notify the researcher, facility staff, or your parent/guardian. Also, your decision to be in the study or not to be in the study has nothing to do with your length of stay, your treatment programs, or the facility where you will go. You will still have a chance to receive vocational testing services at a later date while at RDC even if you choose not to be a part of the study.

The study has been explained to you. You have been given a chance to ask questions. You will have about 3-5 days to consider whether or not you want to participate in the study. The researcher will return in that time to collect your form. By signing your name below, you are saying that you want to be a part of the study. At anytime if you have questions, please let either Ms. McAuley-Davis or Ms. Bradshaw know.

Youth Printed Name

Youth Signature/Date

Researcher Printed Name

Researcher Signature/Date

Co-Researcher Printed Name

Co-Researcher Signature/Date

Appendix I

Letter of Consent to Participants 18 and Older

Dear _____:

You are being asked to be a part of a project called a research study, "The Impact of the Vocational Assessment Process on Juvenile Offender Self Concept." This study is being conducted by Ms. McAuley-Davis, a Virginia Tech graduate student, and Ms. Bradshaw, Director of Assessment at the Reception and Diagnostic Center (RDC). It is a part of graduate school research through Virginia Tech University. You can participate in the study or you do not have to participate in the study. It is your decision. Your participation in the study is voluntary and you can choose to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

1. The purpose of the study is to find out more about how learning about yourself, your career interests and choices affect what you think about yourself.
2. You are being asked to be in this study because: (a) you are 16-21 years old, (b) you have been committed to the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, and (c) you are at RDC.
3. If you decide to be in the study, you will participate in a vocational assessment. You will be given a brief test that will show how you view yourself. There are no right or wrong answers. You will also complete an interest inventory that will help you determine your career interests and choices. You will also be asked to share your thoughts about the vocational testing process in a recorded group session. The study will take approximately four days to complete.
4. Any information about you and your study materials will be kept confidential. All study materials such as the assessments and audiotapes will be stored in locked containers and the only people that will have access are the researchers directly involved in the study. Study materials will be destroyed at the conclusion of the entire project. It may be necessary to break confidentiality in certain instances. In cases of child abuse or threats to harm yourself or others, the researchers are obligated to notify the appropriate authorities.
5. You will not be paid to be in this study. You will not receive special treatment from anyone for being in this study.
6. There are no more than minimal risks associated with participation in this study. The benefits to you include the following: (a) finding out your career interests, (b) learning about different careers, and (c) learning more about your career choices. You will also receive a free career resource manual called *Virginia's Mid-Atlantic Guide To Information on Careers* (MAGIC) that has important information on career development and planning, education and training, financial aid, types of jobs, job finding tips, help with completing applications, and interviewing and budgeting tips. The resource manual can be helpful to you in planning your future. If you choose not to participate, this resource manual will be available to you at a later date. After the study, you will have an opportunity to further explore their interests/skills and career options with a DCE vocational evaluator while at RDC.
7. You do not have to be in the study if you do not wish to be a part of it. If you are in the study, you can stop at any time. No one will treat you any differently if you choose not to be in the study or if you choose to stop being in the study. You will continue to be treated the same way as everyone else while at RDC. Also, your decision to be in the study or not to be in the study has nothing to do with your length of stay, treatment programs, or the facility where you will go. You will have a chance to receive vocational testing services at a later date while at RDC even if you do not choose to be a part of the study. To stop your participation, you would need to notify the researchers, facility staff, or parent/guardian.

8. The researchers will answer any questions about the study, now or during the course of the study, so please feel free to speak with either Ms. McAuley-Davis or Ms. Bradshaw.

You will be given about 3-5 days to consider whether or not you want to participate in the study. The researcher will return in that time to collect your form. By signing your name on the enclosed consent form, you are saying that you understand what you have been told about the study and want to be a part of it. Please keep this letter for your records. If you do not sign the consent form, then you will no longer be considered for this study. However, you will have a chance to receive vocational testing services at a later date. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Ms. McAuley-Davis
Virginia Tech Graduate Student

Consent for Participants 18 years of Age and Older

I consent to participating in the study, "The Impact of the Vocational Assessment Process on Juvenile Offender Self Concept," which is being conducted by Ms. McAuley-Davis, a graduate student at Virginia Tech University, and Ms. Bradshaw with the Department of Correctional Education at RDC. I understand that I can be in the study if I want or I do not have to be in the study. I also understand that, if I am in the study, I can stop being in the study at anytime without consequences.

Researcher Printed Name

Researcher Signature/Date

Co-Researcher Printed Name

Co- Researcher Signature/Date

Participant Printed Name

Participant Signature/Date

Appendix J

Demographic Information Form

1. Age

What is your age? _____

2. Gender

What is your gender? _____ Male _____ Female

3. Prior vocational assessment

Have you ever participated in a vocational assessment (had a teacher/counselor/evaluator help you to explore your career interests, skills or abilities using some kind of assessment tool and/or activities)?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Unsure

4. Previous work experience and/or vocational training

Have you ever held a formal job (i.e., received a paycheck)? _____ Yes _____ No

Have you ever received vocational training (e.g., taken woodworking, auto mechanics)? _____ Yes _____ No

5. Career goal (the kind of work you would like to do in the future)

Do you have a career goal? _____ Yes _____ No

6. If yes to #5, what is your career goal? _____

7. Involvement with legal system

At what age did you first become involved with the legal system? _____

8. Household information

How many people are in your household (including you)? _____

To the best of your knowledge, how many people in your household are currently employed? _____

9. Social Connectedness

Prior to your commitment, were you involved in any activities (e.g., sports teams, church, youth groups, school clubs, community volunteer)?

_____ Yes _____ No

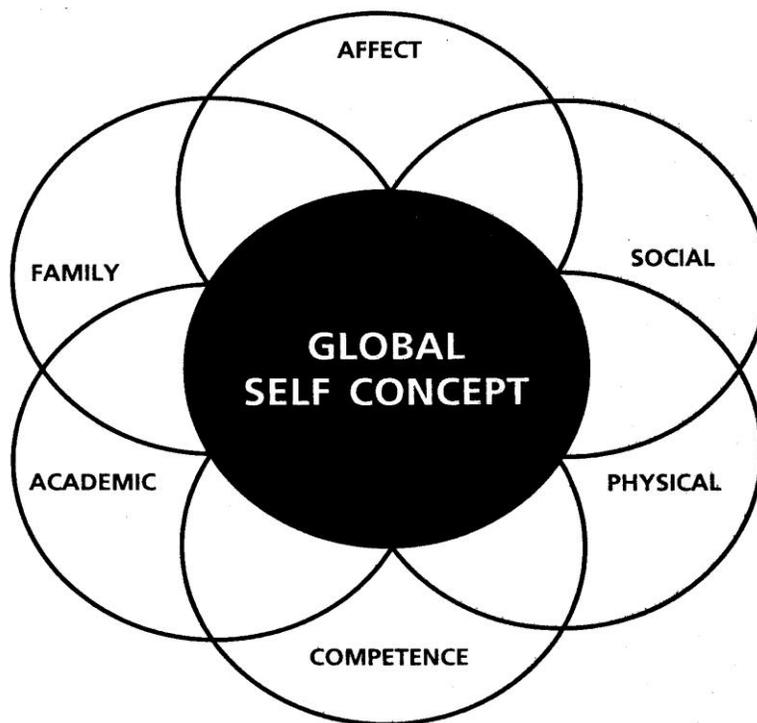
If yes, please list a few of the activities below.

Race Categories

<hr/>	American Indian or Alaska Native
<hr/>	Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
<hr/>	Asian or Asian American
<hr/>	Black or African American
<hr/>	Hispanic or Latino
<hr/>	Non-Hispanic White
<hr/>	Bi-Racial : _____
<hr/>	Multi-Racial: _____
<hr/>	_____

Residence Categories

<hr/>	(Region I) Central VA: Albermarle Co, Amelia Co, Amherst Co, Appomattox Co, Ashland-Hanover Co, Bedford Co, Buckingham Co, Campbell Co, Chesterfield Co, Cumberland Co, Dinwiddie Co, Fluvanna Co, Goochland Co, Greene Co, Henrico Co, Louisa Co, Madison Co, Nelson Co, Nottoway Co, Orange Co, Powhatan Co, Prince Edward Co, Prince George Co, Southampton Co, Sussex Co, Bedford, Blackstone, Charlottesville, Colonial Heights, Farmville, City of Franklin, Hopewell, Lynchburg, Petersburg, Richmond
<hr/>	(Region II) Chesapeake Bay: Middlesex Co, Lancaster Co, Northumberland Co, Richmond Co, King William Co, King & Queen Co, Mathews Co, Westmoreland Co, Essex Co, Gloucester Co, King George Co, Kilmarnock, Warsaw, Urbanna, West Point, Colonial Beach, Tappahannock, Gloucester, Irvington
<hr/>	(Region III) Eastern Shore: Northampton Co, Accomack Co, Accomack, Cape Charles, Chincoteague Island, Exmore, Onancock, Tangier Island, Wachapreague
<hr/>	(Region IV) Northern VA: Rappahannock co, Fauquier Co, Stafford Co, Spotsylvania Co, Caroline Co, Prince William Co, Fairfax Co, Loudoun Co, Culpeper Co, Alexandria, Arlington, Centerville, Culpepper, Dulles, Falls Church, Fairfax City, Fredericksburg, Front Royal, Herndon, Leesburg, Manassas Park, Manassas, McLean, Occoquan, Reston, Spotsylvania, Springfield, Triangle, Vienna, Warrenton, Woodbridge, Washington, VA, Washington, DC
<hr/>	(Region V) Tidewater & Hampton Roads: Charles City Co, Isle of Wight Co, James City Co, New Kent Co, Smithfield/Isle of Wight Co, Surry Co, York Co, Chesapeake, Hampton, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Newport News, Norfolk, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, Williamsburg, Yorktown
<hr/>	(Region VI) Shenandoah Valley: Alleghany Co, Augusta Co, Bath Co, Botetourt Co, Clarke Co, Craig Co, Frederick Co, Highland Co, Page Co, Roanoke Co, Rockbridge Co, Rockingham Co, Shenandoah Co, Warren Co, Buena Vista, Clifton Forge, Covington, Front Royal, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Luray, Roanoke, Salem, Staunton, Waynesboro, Winchester
<hr/>	(Region VII) Blue Ridge Highlands: Bland Co, Carroll Co, Floyd Co, Franklin Co, Giles Co, Grayson Co, Montgomery Co, Patrick Co, Pulaski Co, Smyth Co, Washington Co, Wythe Co, Abingdon, Blacksburg, Bristol, Christianburg, Damascus, Galax, Marion, Pulaski, Rocky Mount, Radford, Wytheville
<hr/>	(Region VIII) Heart of Appalachia: Buchanan Co, Dickenson Co, Lee Co, Russell Co, Scott Co, Tazewell Co, Wise Co, Bluefield, Grundy, Norton, Town of Tazewell
<hr/>	(Region VIII) Southern VA: Brunswick Co, Charlotte Co, Greenville Co, Henry Co, Halifax Co, Lunenburg Co, Mecklenburg Co, Pittsylvania Co, Danville Emporia, Martinsville, South Boston, South Hill
<hr/>	Area Outside VA: _____
<hr/>	_____

APPENDIX K***Multidimensional Self Concept Scale (MSCS; Bracken, 1992)***

*Figure K1. Multidimensional Self Concept Scale. Reprinted from *Multidimensional Self Concept Scale: Examiner's Manual* (p. 5), by B. A. Bracken, 1992, Austin, TX: PRO-ED, Inc. Copyright 1992 by PRO-ED, Inc. Used with permission.*

APPENDIX L**Selected Items from the *Multidimensional Self Concept Scale* (MSCS; Bracken, 1992)**

The statements should be rated according to their relevance to the person. The ratings include the following:

Strongly Agree
(SA)

Agree
(A)

Disagree
(D)

Strongly Disagree
(SD)

S Scale

1. I am usually a lot of fun to be with

C Scale

27. Too often I say the wrong thing

AFF Scale

51. I enjoy life

APPENDIX M

Selected Items from the *Self-Directed Search Form R*

(SDS; Holland, Powell, & Fritzsche, 1997)

SDS Scales and Ratings

Activities

The individual indicates whether or not he/she would like or dislike activities in six scales (R, I, A, S, E, C) by marking 'L' for "Like" or 'D' for "Dislike."

R Activities

Fix electrical things----- L D

Competencies

The individual indicates whether or not he/she can perform activities competently or well in six scales (R, I, A, S, E, C) by marking 'Y' for "Yes" and 'N' for "No."

I Competencies

I can use algebra to solve mathematical problems-----Y N

Occupations

The individual indicates whether or not occupations in six scales appeal to him/her by marking 'Y' for "Yes" or 'N' for "No."

A Occupations

Poet----- Y N

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APPENDIX N

The Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH; Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, 2010-2011 Edition, Bulletin 2800)

<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ooht.htm>

Following are excerpts from the 2010-11 edition of the Occupational Outlook Handbook describing physician assistants.

Nature of Work

This section describes the typical tasks and responsibilities of workers.

Physician assistants (PAs) are formally trained to provide diagnostic, therapeutic, and preventive healthcare services, as delegated by a physician. Working as members of a healthcare team, they take medical histories, examine and treat patients, order and interpret laboratory tests and X rays, and make diagnoses.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Typical paths to entry and advancement are explained in this section.

Requirements for admission to training programs vary; most applicants have a college degree and some health-related work experience. All states require physician assistants to complete an accredited, formal education program and pass a national exam to obtain a license.

Employment

This section reports the number of jobs in 2008, and key industries in which those jobs were found.

Physician assistants held about 74,800 jobs in 2008. More than 53 percent of jobs for PAs were in the offices of physicians. About 24 percent were in general medical and surgical hospitals, public or private.

Job Outlook

Here, each occupation's projected employment change over the next decade is covered, as well as the various factors expected to affect employment trends.

Employment of physician assistants is expected to grow by 39 percent from 2008 to 2018, much faster than the average for all occupations. Projected rapid job growth reflects the expansion of healthcare industries and an emphasis on cost containment, which results in increasing use of PAs by healthcare establishments.

Earnings

This section discusses typical earnings and how workers are compensated.

The median annual wage of physician assistants was \$81,230 in May 2008. The middle 50 percent of physician assistants earned between \$68,210 and \$97,070. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$51,360, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$110,240.

Related Occupations

Occupations involving similar duties, skills, education and training are discussed in this section.

Occupations with similar educational backgrounds, healthcare experience, and/or responsibilities include audiologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, registered nurses and speechlanguage pathologists.

Sources of Additional Information

In this section, the *Handbook* lists the mailing addresses of associations, government agencies, unions, and other organizations that can provide occupational information.

For information on a career as a physician assistant, including a list of accredited programs, contact the American Academy of Physician Assistants Information Center, 950 North Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314. Internet: www.aapa.org.

APPENDIX O
Career Exploration Worksheet

Use the Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH) to complete the information below on occupations that interest you. Please be as thorough as possible so that you can use the information to make a career decision.

Name of Occupation

Salary/Earnings (entry level and range)

Working conditions/environment

Job Outlook (decline or growth)

Education and training requirements

Number of people in this occupation

Nature of work (responsibilities of the job)

Other significant information (significant points)

Related occupations

APPENDIX P

Virginia's Mid-Atlantic Guide to Information on Careers (MAGIC)

Virginia's Mid-Atlantic Guide to Information on Careers (MAGIC) was created as an interchange between educators, parents, state employment counselors, students, businesses, and job seekers.

Virginia Employment Commission
Economic Information Services Division
Labor Market and Demographic Analysis
703 East Main Street
Richmond, VA 23219-1358
(804) 786-8223
(804) 371-0412 fax

Economic Information Services
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APPENDIX Q

Overview of The Cognitive Information Processing Approach (Sampson, Reardon, Peterson, & Lenz, 2004)

The following was shared with participants prior to the start of vocational assessment process:

The Cognitive Information Processing approach is a method of solving career problems and making decisions about careers. During the process, individuals learn more about themselves, obtain career information, and become aware of potential career options. The information gained can be used to make tentative career choices. Also, during the process individuals learn how to deal with negative self-talk that might interfere with their ability to make career decisions and they are taught ways of turning negative self-talk into positive self-statements.

This vocational assessment intervention is based on the CIP approach. That means that during this intervention, you will learn more about yourselves, various careers, and your possible career options. You will also learn how to turn negative self-statements into positive ones. As you participate in the vocational assessment process, I will tell you how each activity in which you will participate fits in with the CIP approach.

APPENDIX R

Overview of the *Self-Directed Search* (SDS; Holland, Powell, & Fritzsche, 1997)

The following information about the SDS was shared with participants:

The SDS is an interest inventory that helps individuals to explore and find occupations that suit their interests and abilities. The inventory is completed, scored, and interpreted by the individual. The inventory is helpful for those people who want to know what career they should pursue, those who want support for the career they are already considering, and for those who want to make sure they have looked at all of their career possibilities. The SDS reveals a lot about an individual's personality type and the kinds of careers that would best match the person's personality and environmental preferences. People tend to be most satisfied in careers that match their personalities.

Here are the personality and environmental preferences as described by Hood and Johnson (1997) and found in (Power, 2006):

Realistic (R) – Individuals who prefer and perform competently in mechanical or physical work, and outdoor tasks.

Investigative (I) – Individuals who have scientific, mathematical, analytical, and academic interests and abilities.

Artistic (A) – Individuals who enjoy or perform competently in musical, artistic, literary, and dramatic areas as well as other areas that allow them to be creative.

Social (S) – Individuals who enjoy or have the ability to work with, help, teach, or counsel others.

Enterprising (E) – Individuals who enjoy or have the ability to be in charge, speak in public, and have business, management, and sales interests and skills.

Conventional (C) – Individuals who are interested in maintaining records, working with data and details, and complying with instructions.

APPENDIX S**Permission to Record Focus Group****PERMISSION TO RECORD FOCUS GROUP**

The purpose of this focus group has been explained to me. I understand that my participation in the group is completely voluntary. I can change my mind at any time. Further, I understand that if I choose to participate in the group, my interactions in the group will be recorded and notes will be taken for research purposes. I understand that no identifying information will be used in the recording or notes. I understand that the recording and notes will be destroyed after being reviewed.

Printed Name of Focus Group Participant

Date

Signature of Focus Group Participant

Date

Signature of Focus Group Leader

Date

APPENDIX T

Focus Group Introduction/Conclusion and Questions

Introduction

Thank you again for choosing to participate in the study. This focus group is the final task that you will be asked to do in the study. The objective of the focus group is to find out how you feel about having participated in the vocational assessment process. We want your honest views on your experience during the process. The point of the group is to allow you to share your opinion about your experience in a comfortable environment. There are no right or wrong answers, instead there are different points of view and all views are welcome as long as they are expressed in a respectful manner. We are interested in both positive and negative comments.

This group should last about 30 minutes. We want to make sure that we get all of your comments so we ask that you sign a permission form allowing us to tape record the group. We want to hear from each of you so please allow everyone in the group to be heard without being interrupted. We want to assure you that your comments will remain anonymous and confidential. Any questions before we begin? Now, let's get started.

Questions

- What did you think about the vocational assessment process?
- What did you like best about the vocational assessment process?
- What did you like least about the vocational assessment process?
- What do you feel you gained from the vocational assessment process?
- What do you think you learned about yourself in the process?
- What changes would you make to the vocational assessment process?

Conclusion

Are there any questions? Thank you for your participation in this group. We appreciate your comments and want you to know that they will be useful for this research. Your comments will give the researchers a better idea of your perceptions of the vocational assessment process. We would like to stress to you again that your interactions in the group will be kept anonymous and confidential.