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Transition Outcomes of Young Adults with Disabilities: A Social Cognitive Career Theory Perspective

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The University of Southern Mississippi

TRANSITION OUTCOMES OF YOUNG ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES: A SOCIAL
COGNITIVE CAREER THEORY PERSPECTIVE

by

Sabrina Michelle Singleton

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2016

ABSTRACT

TRANSITION OUTCOMES OF YOUNG ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES: A SOCIAL COGNITIVE CAREER THEORY PERSPECTIVE

by Sabrina Michelle Singleton

May 2016

Young adults with disabilities are impacted by the learning experiences they engage in as students that help shape their career development post-high school. Researchers have identified moderate-level transition predictors that improve post-school outcomes in employment, postsecondary education, and/or independent living. This study used the *Social Cognitive Career Theory* to examine if a relationship exists among race/ethnicity, gender, and disability type and transition predictors among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi who completed high school in May of 2013. Additionally, this study explored whether a relationship existed between career decision self-efficacy and engagement in employment or enrollment in postsecondary education. A school representative reviewed participants' Individualized Education Program to answer demographic questions and whether or not participants were engaged in transition predictors. Additionally, participants were contacted by phone to answer questions regarding career decision self-efficacy and whether they were engaged in employment or enrolled in postsecondary education. A significant relationship was found among three transition predictors which included number of transition goals completed in a transition program, participation in vocational education courses, and participation in a work study program. No significant relationship was found among transition predictor paid work experience. Additionally, results indicated participants had high to moderate self-

efficacy beliefs. Further, the analysis revealed career decision self-efficacy had a significant impact on both employment and enrollment in postsecondary education. Implications are provided for school districts personnel, special education teachers, and preparation programs for students with disabilities. Recommendation for future research included exploring other factors that may influence whether or not participants are engaged in post-school outcomes and expanding research nationwide.

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2016

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by

Sabrina Michelle Singleton

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
and the Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education
at The University of Southern Mississippi
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for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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DEDICATION

To my mother Shirley McGee, I dedicate my dissertation work to you. Thank you for the prayers, words of encouragement, and love provided during these stressful years.

To my former co-worker, Dr. Lagen Bradley, thank you for inspiring me to pursue my dream of earning a doctorate degree in special education.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

Work is a vital part of human life that promotes independence, self-worth, and confidence while being engaged in the community (Lee & Carter, 2012). This experience often leads to developing social relationships and making new friends. The number of young adults with disabilities who are employed or participate in postsecondary education post-high school is significantly lower than young adults in the general population (Flannery, Yovanoff, Benz, & Kato, 2008; Fleming & Fairweather, 2012; Shandra & Hogan, 2008). Specifically, out of 2,741 young adults with disabilities in Mississippi only 33% who completed high school in 2012 and interviewed a year later were competitively employed (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014b). For young adults with disabilities in the United States, who completed high school up to six years ago, the employment outcomes were 71% (Sanford et al., 2011). Only 26% disabled young adults in Mississippi, who completed high school in 2012 and interviewed a year later, were enrolled in higher education (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014b). Sanford et al. (2011) indicated that 55% of young adults who completed high school up to six years ago continued to pursue postsecondary education.

The numbers are quite different for young adults with disabilities in Mississippi when examined by disability type. Of young adults with disabilities in Mississippi who were interviewed one year after exiting high school in 2012, only 37% of youth with a specific learning disability were competitively employed and 30% were enrolled in higher education (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014b). In addition, only 34%

of young adults with emotional disturbance in Mississippi were competitive employed and 15% were enrolled in higher education (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014b). Additionally, 25% of young adults with an intellectual disability in Mississippi were competitive employed and five percent enrolled in higher education. Twenty-five percent of young adults from Mississippi with other disabilities such as autism, speech or language impairment, and other health impairment in Mississippi were competitive employed and 29% enrolled in higher education (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014b).

Research indicates the employment rate for young adults with disabilities from minority backgrounds varies according to the race/ethnic group (Gold, Fabian, & Luecking, 2013; Kim & Morningstar, 2005). Sanford et al. (2011) revealed up to six years after exiting Whites with disabilities were employed at higher numbers compared to Blacks. Thirty-three percent of Whites with disabilities in Mississippi who completed high school in 2012 were competitively employed similarly to Blacks with disabilities (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014b). In addition, 28% of Whites with disabilities were enrolled in postsecondary education as compared to 24% of Blacks.

The employment and postsecondary education outcomes of young adults with disabilities based on gender are similar to employment outcomes as young adults of different races/ethnicities. Sanford et al. (2011) indicated more males than females were employed up to six years after exiting high school. Particularly, in Mississippi 37% of males with disabilities were employed as compared to 24% of females (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014b). However, 22% of males with disabilities were enrolled in postsecondary education as compared to 31% of females.

In response to the low enrollment in postsecondary education and engagement in employment experienced by youth with disabilities, laws were passed that highlight preparing students with disabilities for careers post-high school. The Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1973 (P.L. 93-112) recognized the importance of post-school outcomes for students with disabilities and began requiring collaboration among educational and state rehabilitation agencies responsible for transition from school to employment or postsecondary education (Wehman, 2013). Similarly, the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-220) was enacted to provide services to all Americans designed to enhance the employability, occupational attainment, job retention, and earnings of adults and youth. Finally, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA; P.L. 108-446) increased accountability for improved post-school outcomes and emphasized collaboration among professionals. This act changed the definition of transition services to include a coordinated set of activities that are results-oriented. These laws collectively emphasized the need for career preparation, collaboration, and action needed to improve transition outcomes of students with disabilities. In order to demonstrate successful employment and postsecondary education outcomes, students with disabilities need access to an array of educational services as well as participation of adult service agencies (Test & Cease-Cook, 2012). This is best accomplished by secondary special education teachers utilizing evidence-based transition practices known to improve post-school success for students with disabilities (Test et al., 2009).

Test et al. (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of 22 studies to determine which practices showed evidence of predicting better post-school outcomes in employment, postsecondary education, and/or independent living for individuals with disabilities. As a

result, Test and colleagues identified a set of 16 transition practices that are linked to specific transition outcomes. They then determined each predictor's level of evidence, given guidelines on interpreting correlational research created by the Institute for Education Sciences that identified transition predictors as either having moderate or potential level of evidence of improving transition outcomes (Test et al., 2009). Specifically, the Institute for Education Sciences guidelines specified predictors that showed moderate-level of evidence on transition outcomes must have two studies with planned hypotheses prior to analysis with significant correlations between predictor and outcome variables and included effect size (Test et al., 2009). In contrast, the guidelines stated predictors with potential level of evidence had either one study with a planned hypothesis prior to analysis or had two or more studies with no clear defined problem (exploratory) with significant correlations between predictor and outcome variables (Test et al., 2009).

Test et al. (2009) identified 16 transition predictors that improve outcomes in employment, postsecondary education, and/or independent living for youth with disabilities. Of the 16 predictors, 11 significantly correlated with postsecondary education, five with independent living, and all 16 predictors significantly correlated with post-school employment (Test et al., 2009). However, only five transition predictors discussed in this study met the threshold of having a moderate-level of evidence to support improved outcomes related to postsecondary education and/or employment. The transition practices that improve engagement in both employment and postsecondary education included; inclusion in general education, paid work experiences, and participation in vocational education courses. Additionally, the number of transition

goals completed in a transition program predicted post-secondary education engagement and participation in a work study program predicted employment engagement.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that guides this research is the *Social Cognitive Career Theory* (SCCT). SCCT was developed by Robert Lent, Steve Brown, and Gail Hackett in 1994. It originated from Albert Bandura's *Social Cognitive Theory* which emphasized the interaction between one's thought and social processes in guiding behavior (Bandura, 1986). SCCT represents a framework for understanding vocational interests, career aspirations, and career-related behaviors. It states that people have the ability to direct themselves and maintain other factors, such as social support or barriers, that tend to strengthen or weaken career development (Brown & Lent, 2013). The central elements of SCCT are self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals which are fundamental in predicting educational and occupational pursuits (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000). SCCT also articulates that environmental and personal factors influence the development of these three factors that influence career development (Lent, Hackett, & Brown, 1999).

Self-efficacy is the belief or confidence in one's self to succeed at a given task (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002). Self-efficacy beliefs influence one's action in performing career-related tasks. Self-efficacy beliefs are developed in accordance with one's learning experiences and can be modified through personal achievements, vicarious learning experiences, influence of others, and emotional wellbeing (Bandura, 1997). Successful performance of a given task tends to increase self-efficacy in relation to that task; while repeated failures tend to reduce self-efficacy beliefs (Lent et al., 2002).

Outcome expectations are cognitive beliefs about the consequences of performing particular behaviors (Lent et al., 2002). Within SCCT, outcome expectations is critical in the development of behaviors that leads one to pursue a particular career path. Lent et al. (1999) suggested outcome expectations and self-efficacy predicts the development of career interests, which further predicts goal setting, and in the end guide one's behavior. Additionally, self-efficacy and outcome expectations help determine the activities people pursue and the ones they avoid (Brown & Lent, 2013), and thus predicting goals that one sets. Goals motivate one to engage in a particular career activity, help organize, direct, and maintain one's behavior (Lent et al., 2002). Goals are critical components through which people implement self-authority. A person who has a high level of self-efficacy and favorable outcome expectation is more likely to set ambitious goals that in turn sustain behavior (Lent et al., 2002).

The elements of the SCCT illustrate the significance of cognitive beliefs in career development. From the SCCT framework, cognitive beliefs, such as self-efficacy and outcome expectations, are critical in the attainment of occupational and educational pursuits. Further, SCCT depicts how cognitive beliefs are influenced by personal characteristics and environmental factors that contribute to career-related learning experiences. According to Lent et al. (2000), career development is influenced by both internal and external factors. Examples of external factors are the quality of the education experience and restrictions related to financial support to pursue particular goals (McWhirter, Rasheed, & Crothers, 2000). Internal factors are perceptions about perceived barriers and resources in the environment that may hinder career success (Lent et al., 2000). These internal and external factors influence pursuit of educational and

occupational career goals and moderate the relations between goals and persistence in a career (Lent & Brown, 1996; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994).

A few studies regarding youth with disabilities that used the SCCT as a guide for research have discussed cognitive beliefs and environmental barriers in relation to career behavior. Gushue, Scanlan, Pantzer, and Clarke (2006) found among Black high school students, high self-confidence in making career decisions was linked to having defined interests, goals, and actions as well as being actively engaged in activities related to potential careers. Similarly, Gushue and Whitson (2006) found that teacher support was positively related to both career-decision self-efficacy and outcome expectations among Black students. While parent support was positively related to career decision self-efficacy (Gushue & Whitson, 2006).

SCCT is an appropriate framework for examining school-to-work transition because it considers the formulation of career interests and goals that is central to transitioning from school to work. In addition, it considers variables that are influential to educational and occupational success, including self-efficacy expectations, outcome expectations, and goals (McWhiter et al, 2000). Much of the existing research that has a SCCT framework has examined gender, race/ethnicity, and career behavior intentions using samples of high school students or college students. The research that has been conducted has provided valuable information about SCCT variables. For example, Ochs and Roessler (2004) found among high school students, career decision self-efficacy and career outcome expectations contributed greatly to career exploratory behavior both in students with learning disabilities and those without disabilities. Williams and Subich (2006) examined the learning experiences of male and female youth and found the more

learning experience in a specific area, the higher the self-efficacy and outcome expectations were for students in that particular area.

Statement of the Problem

According to the Mississippi Department of Education (2014b), out of nearly 3,000 young adults who completed high school in 2012 and interviewed a year later, 26% were enrolled in higher education and 33% were competitively employed. Current research has examined the employment rate of young adults with disabilities based on gender, race/ethnicity, and disability type, and finding lower rates of post-school employment compared to young adults without disabilities (Sanford et al., 2011). In an effort to identify ways to improve transition outcomes, researchers have identified transition predictors shown to improve post-school outcomes in employment, postsecondary education, and/or independent living (Test et al., 2009). While extensive research on the effect of transition practices on post-school outcomes has been conducted, still not enough is known about whether young adults with disabilities in Mississippi have high school programs that include these evidence-based practices or if they do, indeed, lead to positive outcomes for students with disabilities in Mississippi. In addition, research on transition predictors that improve post-school outcomes for students with specific disabilities was not the focus of the Test et al. meta-analysis and was identified as a need by those authors (Test et al., 2009). Given that school officials are responsible for examining whether students are employed or engaged in post-secondary education one year after exiting high school, research is warranted to determine if young adults with disabilities are engaged in employment or enrolled in postsecondary education two years after exiting and beyond. A longer follow-up study may help

determine whether school transition practices utilized in high school by young adults with disabilities in Mississippi translate to successful engagement in careers.

In examining this issue, SCCT appears to be a relevant framework to examine the school-to-work transition of young adults because SCCT articulates relevant variables that explain career development and predicts career success. Existing research that has examined the relations between outcome expectations and career-related behavior within the SCCT framework has been with special education, general education, and university students (Gushue et al., 2006; Gushue & Whitson, 2006; Ochs & Roessler, 2004). Many young adults in this present study have already engaged in desired careers as a result of career-related behavior exposed during high school. Therefore, this study will not explore outcome expectations as it relates to post-school outcomes given that participants have already completed high school and many are employed. This study will examine person inputs and its influence on transition predictors. In addition, self-efficacy expectations and their influence on post-school employment and enrollment in postsecondary education will also be explored.

Few studies have investigated the relationship, if any, among person inputs and transition predictors. In addition, determining whether a relationship exist between self-efficacy and employment and postsecondary education outcomes of former special education students who have already completed high school is significant for special education professionals. Given that both the SCCT and transition planning process is interactive, determining how these variables influence engagement in employment and postsecondary education is meaningful for transition programs in Mississippi. Therefore, a follow-up study may be helpful to examine how self-efficacy and outcome expectations

continue to shape individuals career-related behaviors and goals. This study will extend research on the transition outcomes of young adults with disabilities from a SCCT perspective. The researcher seeks to understand how personal demographics influence engagement in transition predictors. Additionally, determining whether young adults with disabilities in Mississippi engaged in transition predictors as students is missing from the literature.

Purpose of the Study

The intent of this study is to identify what transition experiences young adults with disabilities in Mississippi were engaged in during their final year of high school. Particularly, the researcher seeks to understand how personal demographic variables influence engagement in school learning experiences. In addition, the intent is to determine if self-efficacy influence engagement in employment and enrollment in postsecondary education two years after exiting high school. A longer follow-up helps determine if the transition activities of young adults with disabilities in Mississippi continue to shape career behaviors and goals after exiting high school. An extended examination of transition activity also helps determine if a link exists between self-efficacy among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi and engagement in employment or enrollment in postsecondary education after exiting high school.

Individuals who complete postsecondary education have improved employment rates and earn more income than those who do not complete postsecondary educational opportunities (Flannery et al., 2008). The researcher seeks to understand if a relationship exists between race/ethnicity, gender, disability type, and transition practices with moderate-level of evidence of empirical support. Moreover, the researcher desires to

determine if a relationship exists between level of career decision self-efficacy and engagement in employment and enrollment in postsecondary education among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi. The engagement of young adults with disabilities in post-high school activities are often dependent upon the disability type. The majority of students with disabilities in Mississippi ages six through 21 years have a disability from six of the thirteen disability categories Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA specified) as being eligible for special education services. According to the Mississippi Department of Education (2014a), these disabilities include: speech or language impairments (30%), specific learning disabilities (28%), other health impairments (16%), emotional disturbances (6%), autism (6%), and intellectual disabilities (6%). The Mississippi Department of Education (2014a) indicates the majority of students with disabilities in Mississippi, ages 6 through 21 years, are either Black (49%) or White (47%). Furthermore, the researcher seeks to compare postsecondary education enrollment and employment outcomes of young adults with disabilities in Mississippi across these racial groups. This study was limited to outcomes in employment and postsecondary education outcomes because special education teacher prepare students with disabilities to go to work once they exit high school.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research questions and associated hypotheses are as follows:

Research Question 1: Do relationships exist among identified person variables (race/ethnicity, gender, disability type) and identified school transition predictor variables (inclusion in general education, paid work experiences, number of transition goals completed in a transition program, participation in vocational education courses,

participation in a work study program) among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi?

H₁- There is a relationship among race/ethnicity, gender, disability type, inclusion in general education, paid work experiences, number of transition goals completed in a transition program, participation in vocational education courses, and participation in a work study program among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi.

Research Question 2: Does a relationship exist between level of career decision self-efficacy and enrollment in postsecondary education for young adults with disabilities in Mississippi?

H₂- There is a relationship between the level of career decision self-efficacy and enrollment in postsecondary education among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi.

Research Question 3: Does a relationship exist between level of career decision self-efficacy and engagement in employment for young adults with disabilities in Mississippi?

H₃: There is a relationship between the level of career decision self-efficacy and engagement in employment for young adults with disabilities in Mississippi.

Definition of Terms

The terms in the research questions were defined theoretically and operationally:

1. *Career Decision Self-efficacy*- a person's confidence in his or her ability to engage in career decision-making tasks (Taylor & Betz, 1983).
2. *Disability type*- a specific learning disability, emotional disturbance, speech or language impairment, other health impairment, autism, and/or intellectual disability as defined by IDEA.
3. *Employment*- have worked for pay at or above minimum wage an average of 20 or more hours a week since leaving high school alongside people without disabilities. This includes military employment or working in a family business but does not include sheltered employment or volunteer work (National Post-school Outcomes Center, 2011).
4. *Inclusion in general education*- a student with disability included in the general education classroom alongside peers without disabilities at least 80% of the day.
5. *Paid work experience*- a student with a disability who had a paid job while in high school or at the time of exiting (Test & Cease-Cook, 2012).
6. *Post-school outcomes*- engagement in employment or enrollment in postsecondary education after exiting high school.
7. *Postsecondary education*- have been enrolled on a full- or part-time basis for at least one complete term at any time since leaving high school in an education or training program (Alverson, Unruh, Rowe, & Kellems, 2011).
8. *Race/ethnicity*- self-identification of being Black or White
9. *Transition*- "life changes, adjustments, and cumulative experiences that occur

in the lives of young adults as they move from school environments to independent living and work environments” (Wehman, 2013, p.4).

10. *Transition program* “a comprehensive set of instruction and services implemented to help students with disabilities successfully work towards completing post-school goals in education, employment, or independent living” (Test & Cease-Cook, 2012, p.35).

11. *Vocational education courses*- course work designed to teach students skills needed for choosing and preparing a career, skills and work habits that lead to success in future schooling and work (Test & Cease-Cook, 2012).

12. *Work-study program*- a program offered by schools where students spend part of their day on-campus taking courses and part of the day working for pay at a job off campus (Test & Cease-Cook, 2012).

13. *Young adult*- the time when one is in the early years of adulthood and includes the age group 19 to 24 years.

Limitations, Delimitations, and Assumptions

Limitations

Limitations that may affect internal validity include respondent fatigue, memory over time, and instrumentation. The first threat to internal validity is respondent fatigue. Participants within this study vary in regards to severity of disability. Some participants may become easily fatigued throughout the process of being interviewed and as a result their responses may be affected or they may drop out of the study. A second threat to internal validity is memory over time. Due to the likelihood that some young adults with disabilities are not engaged in post-school activity, participants may have a hard time

remembering information about employment or postsecondary education. The information obtained from the person may not be accurate due to passage of time. A third threat to internal validity is instrumentation. Although the recruited data collectors of IEP and transcript documents are school officials, changes between trained data collectors within each school may produce changes in coding and reporting data. School officials are used to collect data from students' IEP and transcript in order to maintain confidentiality.

Delimitations

Delimitations that may affect external validity and/or generalization of this study include differential selection of subjects, small sample size, and race/ethnicity selection. First, given that the participants of this study are conducted in one state with a selected sample of young adults with disabilities, caution should be exercised when generalizing to the entire population of students with disabilities. Second, since only a number of school districts within the state were included in the study, results may not necessarily be applicable to other geographic regions. Though these school districts are located in different regions within the state, it limits generalization to other areas of the state because of other factors within the environment such as access to transportation. Third, since Blacks and Whites with disabilities are of interest in this study, this excludes all other race/ethnicity groups. However, this stipulation was put in place to represent the largest number of students with disabilities served in Mississippi schools.

Assumptions

The assumptions within this study are that respondents will answer all survey and interview questions truthfully and to the best of their ability. Additionally, it is assumed

that school personnel will accurately report data on each former student. Confidentiality will be maintained and respondents are volunteers who may withdraw from the study at any time and with no ramifications.

Summary

Current literature on the employment and postsecondary education outcomes of young adults with disabilities indicates a need to enhance approaches for this population. Differences in engagement in employment and enrollment in postsecondary education have been identified among youth and young adults with disabilities between disability types, races/ethnicities, and genders (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014b; Newman, Wagner, Cameto, & Knokey, 2009; Sanford et al., 2011). Although federal laws were passed to improve transition services and post-school outcomes, the employment rate of young adults with disabilities continues to be lower than young adults without disabilities (Sanford et al., 2011). Researchers have identified evidence-based transition practices that improve post-school outcomes in employment and postsecondary education as an effort to assist teachers in transition planning (Test et al., 2009). In addition, SCCT is a framework that illustrates how students develop career interests, goals, and behaviors, which ultimately explains post-school engagement. Research studies have used SCCT as a basis for explaining career intentions and self-efficacy and outcome expectations among students with and without disabilities (Ochs & Roessler, 2004; Williams & Subich, 2006).

Despite current research that utilizes SCCT in an attempt to explain career development, the lack of research on the relationship among SCCT variables and employment and postsecondary education outcomes has been identified as a gap in the

transition literature that this study intends to investigate. This study will provide a review of literature on employment and postsecondary education outcomes as it relates to career decision self-efficacy, race/ethnicity, gender, disability, and transition predictors shown to improve post-school outcomes. Additionally, this research will use the SCCT to help explain the variables that influence participation in employment and enrollment in postsecondary education. The methodological approach will detail how this will be accomplished.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The positive implications work has on young adults with disabilities are both economic and social benefits (Lee & Carter, 2012). For young adults with disabilities in Mississippi, data shows low engagement in employment and enrollment in postsecondary education post-high school (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014b). Additionally, the outcomes of young adults with disabilities in Mississippi for particular races/ethnicities, genders, or disability types are even more discouraging (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014b). Test et al. (2009) analyzed the transition literature and identified transition predictors shown to improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. However, determining whether these predictors are included in transition programs in Mississippi has not been studied.

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) provides a framework for understanding how personal characteristics influence learning experiences. Moreover, learning experiences then influence one's self-efficacy and career goals (Lent et al., 2000). Researchers who have utilized SCCT as the framework of their research have investigated the effects of environmental factors, self-efficacy, and outcome expectations on career intentions and behavior among students with and without disabilities (Gushue et al., 2006; Gushue & Whitson, 2006). What is not well known, however, is if relationships exist among personal demographics and transition predictors shown to improve post-school outcomes.

The literature review presented in this chapter discusses the employment and postsecondary education outcomes among young adults with disabilities. The literature review begins with person inputs variables (race/ethnicity, gender, disability) identified as relevant to career development in SCCT and how person inputs influences employment participation and postsecondary education enrollment. Since the majority of students in Mississippi are either Black or White, this study will focus on outcomes for these two races. This literature review presents transition practices with moderate level evidence of support that improve transition outcomes for students with disabilities. It concludes with career decision self-efficacy and its effect on career behavior. Across different disabilities, the post-school outcomes of youth and young adults with disabilities are poorer than those without disabilities. The 13 disability categories, as defined by IDEA as being eligible for special education services, will be discussed in the literature review. However, this study will only focus on the top six disability categories young adults with disabilities in Mississippi experience. They are: specific learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, speech or language impairments, other health impairments, autism, and intellectual disabilities (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014a).

Person Inputs

SCCT shows how personal characteristics, such as race, gender, disability, personality, contribute to career-related learning experiences. In addition, SCCT illustrates personal demographics influence the development of self-efficacy expectations, outcome expectations, and goals which shapes career development (Lent et al., 1999). Person inputs can also either enhance or hamper career development (Lent et

al., 2002). In this study, the person inputs of race/ethnicity, gender, and disability type will be explored.

Race/ethnicity

In Mississippi, Black students represented the largest ethnic group enrolled in public schools during the 2013-2014 school year (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014a). Research indicated youth from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds are known to have a higher risk of experiencing poor post-school outcomes as compared to those not from those backgrounds (Kochhar-Bryant & Greene, 2009). This is unequivocally true for young adults with disabilities. Particularly, Black youth and young adults with disabilities are less likely to be employed since high school compared to Whites with disabilities (Newman et al., 2009).

Researchers indicated paid work experience that occur early in high school greatly predicts positive post-school employment (Carter, Austin, & Trainor, 2012; Joshi, Bouck, & Maeda, 2012; Landmark, Ju, & Zhang, 2010; Papay & Bambara, 2014). White students with disabilities were found to be more likely to have paid work experience during high school years as compared to Hispanic students with disabilities (Carter, Austin, & Trainor, 2011). However, disparities with paid work experience post-high school exist among Whites and those from diverse racial or ethnic backgrounds.

An analysis of data from the 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth indicated that race influences post-school engagement among youth with disabilities (Shandra & Hogan, 2008). Specifically, Black youth with disabilities are more likely to work part-time post-high school and earn less income as compared to White youth with disabilities. Simonsen and Neubert (2012) suggested White youth with intellectual and

developmental disabilities were less likely to be employed after high school. In contrast, race/ethnicity was not associated with post-school employment among students with severe disabilities two years after exiting high school (Carter et al., 2012). Additionally, race/ethnicity was not a factor among all students with disabilities in the areas of employment and postsecondary education when paired with their parent's income (Sanford et al., 2011). Given these findings, the low employment rates among youth with disabilities can be attributed to a number of challenges, with race/ethnicity being one of them, that hinder the future of youth and young adults with disabilities more so than their peers without disabilities (Newman et al., 2009). Access to postsecondary education, which is associated with better jobs and higher pay, are uncertain for youth with disabilities (Wehmeyer & Webb, 2012).

The National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS-2) indicated race/ethnicity was not a significant factor among youth and young adults with disabilities for enrollment in postsecondary education up to six years after exiting high school (Sanford et al., 2011). However, young adults with disabilities whose parents' income was greater than \$50,000 were more likely to enroll in postsecondary education. Up to four years after exiting high school, research indicated family household income was related to the likelihood of enrolling in postsecondary education (Newman et al., 2009). Specifically, youth with disabilities from higher income families were more likely to enroll in college. Other research using data from the NLTS-2 revealed White youth with disabilities experienced significant gains overtime in postsecondary education enrollment but did not differ significantly from Black youth with disabilities (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, & Levine, 2005).

Gender

The role of gender as a factor on employment and postsecondary outcomes of youth with disabilities has long been explored by researchers in the field of special education. Researchers have revealed that females with disabilities are less engaged in employment post-high school, work less hours, and are paid less as compared to males (Boeltzig, Timmons, & Butterworth, 2009; Fabian, 2007; Sanford et al., 2011). Moreover, Madaus (2006) found among college graduates with learning disabilities, males were more likely to earn more than \$50,000 per year and work full-time as compared to females who were more likely to earn less than \$30,00 per year and work part-time. These finding could be contributed to other factors such as caring for a child or pursuing further postsecondary education (Madaus, 2006). Similarly, males with disabilities who participated in a work-study program in collaboration with vocational rehabilitation and achieved employment upon case closure resulted in considerably higher pay as compared to females in the same program (Doren, Gau, & Lindstrom, 2011). The job placement rates of female youth with disabilities who participated in the Marriott Foundation's Bridges from school-to-work program was lower than male youth with disabilities (Fabian, 2007). Likewise, female youth with disabilities were less likely to get a job post-high school as compared to male youth with disabilities (Fabian, 2007). However, other researchers found no connected between race and employment among youth with a specific disability. Specifically, research conducted by Grigal, Hart, and Migliore (2011) indicated that there is no relationship between gender and employment among youth with intellectual disabilities.

The findings regarding gender differences in outcomes revealed in the studies conducted by Madaus (2006) and Doren et al. (2011) could be contributed to several factors. First, females with disabilities may pursue postsecondary education post-high school instead of employment. Coutinho, Oswald, and Best (2006) found that women were more likely to be enrolled in a postsecondary education program and have desires to obtain a college degree. Similarly, Powers, Hogansen, Geenen, Powers, and Gil-Kashiwabara (2008) indicated that female youth with disabilities emphasized going to college at a high rate than male youth with disabilities. Data from the NLTS-2 suggest females with disabilities have higher two and four year college enrollment as compared to males (Newman et al., 2009). Secondly, the transition experiences of males and females have been suggested as the source of gender disparities in employment outcomes thus contributing to students' career decision self-efficacy and outcome expectations (Williams & Subich, 2006). Specifically, Williams and Subich reported fewer transition experiences were reported among females with disabilities in careers that are mainly pursued by males such as an electrician.

Disability

The number of youth with disabilities who pursue employment or postsecondary education post-high school is significantly lower as compared to the general population (Shandra & Hogan, 2008; Wehmeyer & Webb, 2012). A substantial number of students exit high school neither employed nor continuing their education (Shandra & Hogan, 2008). For young adults with disabilities in Mississippi, the number of youth participating in employment or enrolled in postsecondary education is even lower when examining by disability category. These findings are presented in order of disability

category based on IDEA's definition and requirements for determining eligibility for special education services. However, the first six disability categories presented first are the focus of this study. They are: intellectual disability, emotional disturbance, specific learning disability, autism, other health impairments and speech or language impairment.

Intellectual disability. Current research indicates the post-school employment and postsecondary education outcomes of youth with intellectual disabilities are poor compared to other disabilities and the general population. In 2012, there was 2,741 young adults with disabilities in Mississippi who was surveyed one year after exiting high school (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014b). From that group, 25% with intellectual disabilities were competitively employed (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014b). Bouck (2012) found among high school students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities a majority had not attended any postsecondary education, were not employed in a paid job, and had not worked since high school regardless of the type of curriculum received during high school. These findings are supported by Wehmeyer and Webb (2012), who suggested that the employment rate for youth with intellectual disabilities is repeatedly lower as compared to youth without or with other disabilities. In addition, Grigal et al. (2011) found that youth with intellectual disabilities were less likely to be employed post-high school compared to youth with other disabilities. Specially, more than half of the youth with intellectual disabilities were not working and/or never worked since high school.

Youth with intellectual disabilities are least likely to enroll in postsecondary education post-high school (Newman et al., 2009). Likewise, of young adults with intellectual disabilities in Mississippi who completed high school in 2012 only five

percent were enrolled in higher education and 11% in some other postsecondary education or training such as Job Corp. Grigal et al. (2011) found youth with intellectual disabilities were less likely to have positive education outcomes as well as being less likely to have a goal of attending a two or four year college on their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Emotional disturbance. The Mississippi Department of Education (2014b) indicated 34% of young adults with an emotional disturbance disability who completed high school in 2012 were competitively employed. However, students with emotional and behavioral disabilities require the most need for academic, social, and career transition support to influence post-school outcomes (Kochhar-Bryant & Greene, 2009). Particularly, these students have not developed academic and social skills needed for success which are often contributed to difficulties in employment, postsecondary education, and personal relationships. Transition services and supports play a prominent role in developing skills and in achieving post-school goals for students with emotional disturbance (Clark & Unruh, 2009).

Karpur, Clark, Caproni, and Sterner (2005) indicated students who took part in a work-study program had positive outcomes in employment and postsecondary education and were uninvolved in the juvenile justice system. These findings shows how paid work experience during high school improves post-school outcomes primarily because students with emotional and behavioral disabilities often experience some form of involvement in the criminal justice system and are engaged in violent-related activity (Wehmeyer & Webb, 2012). In comparison, Zigmond (2006) found youth with severe emotional and behavioral disorders who completed with a diploma or by dropping out were mostly

employed (e.g. 20 out of 33 persons) two years after and 40% were enrolled in an education or training program. Longitudinal data from NLTS-2 indicated youth with emotional and behavioral disabilities were more likely to have a paid job more than youth with deaf-blindness, orthopedic impairments, visual impairments, or intellectual disabilities (Sanford et al., 2011).

Specific learning disability. Students 6 to 21 years of age with specific learning disabilities make-up the second largest disability category in Mississippi who receive special education services (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014a). Thirty-seven percent of the Mississippi students with a specific learning disability, who completed high school in 2012 was competitively employed (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014b). According to Sanford et al. (2011), enrollment in postsecondary education and rates of employment for youth with learning disabilities is relatively high compared to other disability groups (e.g. orthopedic impairments, other health impairments, autism). Earlier research conducted by Curtis, Rabren, and Reilly (2009) found most youth with learning disabilities and intellectual disabilities were employed and working full-time. Chambers, Rabren, and Dunn (2009) found 60% of students with disabilities (e.g. specific learning disability, intellectual disability, other health impairment) and students without disabilities were employed as they completed high school and 70% were employed one year after exiting. Seo, Abbott, and Hawkins (2008) found the rate of employment and amount of income earned at both 21 and 24 years of age for youth with learning disabilities was no different than their peers without a learning disability.

Students with learning disabilities are less likely to earn college degrees than students without disabilities (Gonzalez, Rosenthal, & Kim, 2011). Chambers et al.

(2009) indicated youth with a specific learning disability, intellectual disability, and other health impairment, were less likely to attend college as compared to youth without disabilities. Among young adults with a specific learning disability in Mississippi who was interviewed one year after exiting high school, only 30% were enrolled in higher education and 7% in some other postsecondary education or training (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014b). Wehman (2013) noted students with learning disabilities often have difficulties with test taking and many receive accommodations. These students experience difficulties with standardized tests and may not perform well because of their disability. Students with learning disabilities often experience difficulty with concentrating, speech, writing, spelling, and organizing which can impact all aspects of life (Wehman, 2013). Furthermore, these weaknesses support the notion that students with specific learning disabilities are less likely to enroll in postsecondary education.

Autism. Current research has suggested there is little information about the exit outcomes of youth with autism (Wei, Wagner, Hudson, Yu, & Shattuck, 2014). This information is lacking perhaps due to educators' difficulty with figuring out these students' interest (Friend, 2008). Shattuck et al. (2012) found youth with autism had the lowest rate of employment compared with youth with speech and language impairments, learning disabilities or intellectual disabilities. Taylor and Seltzer (2011) examined young adults with autism, who had completed high school within the past five years and revealed a small number ($n = 4$) were competitively employed out of 66 participants. However, most had jobs that required low skills such as replacing dirty dishes with clean ones at a hotel. Additionally, other youth with autism ($n = 9$) were pursuing both education opportunities and working part-time (Taylor & Seltzer, 2011). Wei et al.

(2014) suggested that youth with autism primarily attended postsecondary education two years after completing high school while less than 30% were not employed nor attended postsecondary education. Similarly, Shattuck et al. (2012) indicated that youth with autism had the highest risk for being disengaged from postsecondary education or employment two years after high school. Students with autism experience difficulty with social engagement, communicating, focusing, and maintaining emotions (Wehman, 2013). Therefore, these impediments create difficulties with learning new skills and achieving post-school goals.

Other health impairments. The disability category other health impairment includes disabilities such as epilepsy, asthma, diabetes, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and sickle cell anemia. The disabilities covered under the other health impairment category varies, thus the information presented focuses on youth with ADHD. Youth with disabilities covered under the disability category “other health impairment” often miss time from school (Kochhar-Bryant & Greene, 2009). Students with ADHD exhibit inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity, which can significantly impact behavior and academic performance (Heller & Cohen, 2009). Kuriyan et al. (2013) indicated that youth with ADHD were unlikely to pursue education opportunities and employment post-school compared to youth without ADHD. These findings were found in an earlier study conducted by Barkley, Fischer, Smallish, and Fletcher (2006) which indicated youth with ADHD had low education attainment, had been fired from more jobs, and were less likely to be employed as compared to youth without ADHD. Biederman and Faranoe (2006) concluded students with ADHD were less likely to graduate college or earn a college degree and few worked full-time.

Speech or language impairment. Students with speech or language impairments experience difficulty communicating by means of expressive and receptive language. They are known to have co-occurring disabilities such as hearing impairment, autism, or brain injury (Friend, 2008). Speech or language impairments are the second most common disability among students receiving special education services and typically occur more often in boys (Friend, 2008). For students with a speech or language impairment in Mississippi, this disability category represents the largest disability category that receive special education services (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014a). Students with speech or language difficulties are known to act out and struggle with managing social situations. Their transition needs include being able to self-advocate, and some may have issues with self-esteem (Friend, 2008).

There is relatively a small amount of research on the employment and postsecondary education outcomes of youth with a speech or language impairment. Although research indicates positive employment and postsecondary outcomes, students who experience difficulty with words may turn to aggression as an alternative which can have a negative effect on the transition from school to adulthood (Friend, 2008). Students with speech or language difficulties are known to act out and struggle with managing social situations. Their transition needs include being able to self-advocate, and some may have issues with self-esteem (Friend, 2008). Young adults with speech or language impairments or learning disabilities were more likely to enroll in postsecondary education (Newman et al., 2009; Sanford et al., 2011) than those with emotional disturbances and were more likely to have a paid job than any other disability group (Sanford et al., 2011).

Hearing impairments. The high school graduation rates among students with hearing impairments have increased over time with many earning a standard diploma (Wehmeyer & Webb, 2012). As a result, many youth from this population have enrolled in a four-year college, vocational, business, or technical school as compared to youth with other disabilities (Sanford et al., 2011). Students who are deaf or hard of hearing experienced positive outcomes and most earned degrees or certificates and are employed working near full-time hours (Appelman, Callahan, Mayer, Luetke, & Stryker, 2012). Current data from the NLTS-2 indicated youth with hearing impairments are more likely to have a job than youth with deaf-blindness, orthopedic impairments, visual impairments, or intellectual disabilities (Sanford et al., 2011).

Youth with hearing impairments are more likely to pursue postsecondary education after graduating from high school (Newman et al., 2009). Specifically, youth with hearing or visual impairments are three times more likely to continue their education upon exiting high school (Newman et al., 2009). However, Boutin (2008) suggested that the drop-out rate from postsecondary institutions of youth with hearing impairments are high. Boutin indicated the location of youth's residence and age are factors to consider in college enrollment. Although these trends are encouraging, a number of students who have hearing loss also have an additional disability that creates challenges in not only communication but in social, academic, and behavioral areas (Wehmeyer & Webb, 2012). Therefore, a typical transition plan should expose students to information about careers, collaborate with adult agencies such as vocational rehabilitation, and partner with family members about students' career interests (Wehmeyer & Webb, 2012).

Traumatic brain injury. Students with traumatic brain injuries (TBI) experience unique challenges with cognitive (memory, organization, problem solving), motor (balance, coordination, response speed) and behavior (impulsivity, aggression, hyperactivity) deficits that may contribute to poor post-school outcomes (McNamee, Walker, Cifu, & Wehman, 2009; Wehman, 2013). As a result, these deficits have been associated with low postsecondary school achievement, limited work opportunities, poor adaptive skills, and decreased quality of life (Wehman, 2013). In contrast, Todis, Glang, Bullis, Ettel, and Hood (2011) found enrollment in postsecondary education occurred more often among females with TBI and those injured at a later age. In addition, Todis et al. found families with higher incomes were associated with earlier postsecondary education engagement.

Wehman, Chen, West, and Cifu (2014) found goals of postsecondary education, specific courses to assist in achieving transition goals, active involvement in transition planning, and interagency collaboration were effective transition practices that resulted in improved employment outcomes (Wehman et al., 2014). Wehman et al. found more than half of youth with disabilities were employed and a significant number had been employed since high school. Among youth and young adults with a TBI, Todis et al. (2011) found that post-school employment was associated with a high income and severity of injury. Additionally, youth with severe TBI were more likely to be employed early on after leaving high school (Todis et al., 2011).

Visual impairment. Youth visual impairments rely on assistive technology, such as Braille, to learn work skills. According to Friend (2008), opportunities to participate in work post-high school can be limited. Research on the school to work transition

outcomes of youth with visual impairments was not found within the last 10 years. However, researchers have stressed the importance of early work experiences (McDonnall, 2010; Wehmeyer & Webb, 2012) academic competence, self-determination, use of assistive technology, and interagency collaboration with adult service providers as critical components of the transition process (McDonnall & Crudden, 2009). Early work experiences during high school have been noted as a strong predictor of employment in adulthood. Youth with visual impairments can attain work experience in many different formats during high school. They include internships, work-study programs, volunteer experiences, and paid employment. However, participation in a work-study program has not been supportive in future employment for this population (McDonnall, 2010). For some youth with visual impairments, engagement in work-study programs are the only type of work experience they acquire (McDonnall & O'Mally, 2012). McDonnall and O'Mally examined the effects of school-sponsored work versus paid work experience on future employment and found paid work experience during high school was a predictor of future employment as indicated by other researchers (Landmark et al., 2010; Test et al., 2009). However, school-sponsored work had little impact on post-school employment. These findings were supported by an earlier study conducted by McDonnall (2010) which documented little impact of school-sponsored work have for students with visual impairments. The impact of early work experience on post-high school employment has been identified as a predictor of future employment (McDonnall, 2010; Test et al., 2009). Particularly, youth with a visual impairment are more likely to be employed post-high school if they find a job on their own and held more than one job during the last two years of high school (McDonnall, 2010; Test et al., 2009). Little research exist on the

postsecondary education outcomes of youth with visual impairments. However, Sanford et al. (2011) indicated young adults with visual impairments who pursue postsecondary education are more likely to attend a four year college than any other disability group (Sanford et al., 2011).

Orthopedic impairment. The transition needs of students with orthopedic impairments varies dependent upon the severity of the disability. The disabilities represented in this category represent a range of physical disabilities such as cerebral palsy and musculoskeletal disorders. Family members have great concern about the experience of pain, depression, and medication side effects that can inhibit their child's educational performance (Sitlington & Clark, 2006). These conditions often limit completion of activities of daily living, such as eating, grooming, and personal hygiene, thus requiring help from a personal care attendant or teacher. Transition planning for students with orthopedic impairments represents a critical component of successful transition to adulthood (Sitlington & Clark, 2006). During transition planning, self-advocacy and self-determination are key practices that play a role in successful transition to employment or postsecondary education (Sitlington & Clark, 2006). Students with orthopedic impairments are required to self-disclose their disability in order to receive accommodations in the workplace or on college campuses.

Researchers indicated students with orthopedic impairments are more likely to attend a two-year college than those with multiple disabilities and intellectual disabilities (Sanford et al., 2011). However, young adults with orthopedic impairments are less likely to have a paid job than young adults with other health impairment or speech or language impairment (Sanford et al., 2011). Transition planning that considers

transportation, living arrangements, and collaboration with adult service providers who work with individuals with disabilities should be a part of the transition planning process for these students (Friend, 2008).

Multiple disabilities. IDEA (2004) indicates students with multiple disabilities have combined disabilities such as intellectual impairment-blindness and intellectual impairment-orthopedic impairment. The number of students with multiple disabilities ages six to 21 years in Mississippi, and the United States is less than one percent (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014a). Youth with multiple disabilities experience cognitive limitations and need extended time to learn new things and with additional opportunities to practice new skills (Friend, 2008). In addition, they have difficulty generalizing skills to different settings, tasks, materials, and people. Friend indicates students with multiple disabilities have difficulty with engaging in literacy activities, communicating, and difficulty with social and emotional skills because of their cognitive and physical impairments. Often times, students in this disability category have behavior problems due to difficulty with expressing themselves (Friend, 2008).

Deaf-blindness. Students with deaf-blindness have hearing and visual impairments which causes their educational experience to be negatively affected. According to the Mississippi Department of Education (2014a), there are no students ages six to 21 years of age who are identified as being deaf-blind. They share the same difficulties as students with multiple disabilities such as difficulty with cognitive skills. Friend (2008) suggested youth with deaf-blindness and multiple disabilities may work in jobs shredding documents or they may work in a kitchen at a hotel. Other youth with this

disability are not employed; instead, they attend an adult day care center where they engage in repetitive or made-up tasks for little or no pay (Friend, 2008).

Transition Predictors

Research in the area of transition services has identified evidence-based predictors for improving post-school outcomes for students with disabilities (Test et al., 2009). Test and colleagues conducted a meta-analysis of 22 studies to determine which predictors show evidence of improving post-school outcomes in the areas of employment, postsecondary education, and/or independent living. Transition predictors were then established as having either a moderate or potential level of evidence of improving transition outcomes. Of the 16 predictors, 11 significantly correlated with postsecondary education, five with independent living, and all 16 predictors significantly correlated with post-school employment (Test et al., 2009). However, the transition predictors discussed in this chapter showed a moderate-level of evidence that are associated with post-school outcomes related to postsecondary education and/or employment. The transition practices that predict outcomes in both employment and postsecondary education identified by Test et al. (2009) are inclusion in general education, paid work experiences, and participation in vocational education courses. Additionally, number of transition goals completed in a transition program predicts post-secondary education outcomes and participation in a work study program predicts employment outcomes. The positive relationship associated with each predictor provides educators with a list correlated with outcomes in employment and postsecondary education.

Inclusion in General Education

The transition services youth with disabilities experience are designed to lead to improved post-school outcomes. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) stressed the importance of including students with disabilities in the general education curriculum. It specified students with disabilities must be integrated in general education settings to the fullest extent possible in order for a successful educational experience. A meta-analysis of transition literature has identified inclusion in general education as an evidence-based transition practice that leads to positive outcomes in the areas of employment and postsecondary education (Landmark et al., 2010; Test et al., 2009). Furthermore, students included in general education learn pertinent academic skills, interpersonal skills, such as social development and autonomy, and how they directly apply to real life experiences (Carter & Lunsford, 2005). In fact, students may find the curricula more practical, motivating, and relevant, which may ultimately improve post-school engagement among transition age students. McCall (2014), Ryndak, Ward, Alper, Montgomery, and Storch (2010), and Webb, Patterson, Syverud, and Seabrooks-Blackmore (2008) demonstrated the benefits that students with disabilities gain when they participate in the general education curriculum. For instance, Webb et al. (2008) found students who participate in coursework designed to elicit critical thinking in the general education setting are more likely to generalize their work habits to postsecondary education settings. Likewise, Rojewski, Lee, and Gregg (2015) found students who earned most of their credit hours in an inclusive classroom setting, at least 80% of the day, were twice as likely to engage in postsecondary education. This may be due to students' ability to gain a number of skills including study skills, note taking, and time management which are often stressed in the general education classroom (Webb et al.,

2008). A meta-analysis conducted by Alquraini and Gut (2012) revealed students with disabilities educated in inclusive settings increase their academic performance in reading and math, expand social skills, and improve communication skills. Thus, students with these improved skills are more likely to engage in post-school employment. Rojewski and colleagues (2015) found students with high-incidence disabilities who were educated in an inclusive setting during their high school years had positive postsecondary education outcomes two years after exiting.

Students with disabilities who participate in inclusive general education settings develop social skills, functional skills, and higher college aspirations (McCall, 2014; Wehman, 2013). Ryndak et al. (2010) examined the transition outcomes of two former students with significant disabilities. Ryndak et al. noted better exit outcomes in work, community living, and social interactions for the former student who received services in an inclusive general education setting. Likewise, McCall (2014) examined the high school transition experiences of four college students with disabilities; all students indicated inclusion was a fundamental part of their primary and secondary school experience. One student suggested hearing other student's plans to attend college helped shape her goals of attending college (McCall, 2014). Finally, for students with intellectual disabilities, inclusion was determined to be a strong predictor for participation in postsecondary education (Baer, Daviso, Flexer, Queen, & Meindl, 2011).

Paid Work Experiences

Preparing high school students with disabilities to successfully transition to employment or postsecondary education has been a longstanding priority for the fields of special education and vocational rehabilitation (Simonsen, & Neubert, 2012). The high

school years are a prime opportunity for students with disabilities to develop and expand their work skills. They are able to gain knowledge about the world of work, employer expectations, learn appropriate workplace conduct and dress, expand social skills with co-workers, and gain work experience that will make it more likely other employers will hire them in the future (McDonnall, 2010). One evidence-based practice shown to predict successful outcomes in both post-secondary education and employment is opportunities for competitive paid work during high school years (Test et al., 2009). Particularly, Test et al. revealed youth who had a paid job at the time of exiting high school or had a paid job the full year prior to exiting high school were five times more likely to be engaged in employment and postsecondary education. For youth with intellectual disabilities, many work experiences post-high school involve low wages, few hours, and are within non-competitive settings (Carter et al., 2012). Unsuccessful employment outcomes for students with disabilities are often associated with struggles experienced during high school years, which are later carried over to adulthood. Notably, competitive paid work during high school is perceived to influence post-school employment. Researchers indicated that for students with intellectual disabilities, autism, and multiple disabilities competitive employment in high school is strongly associated with post-school employment (Carter et al., 2012; Joshi et al., 2012; Papay, & Bambara, 2014).

The significance of paid work experience during high school and the impact it has on post-school outcomes has been reflected in the literature by various researchers. Carter et al. (2012) found paid work experience in the community during high school was associated with post-school employment during the first two years after school for

students with intellectual disabilities. Similarly, Joshi et al. (2012) found participating in activities related to employment during high school was linked to employment in adulthood. Likewise, Papay and Bambara (2014) indicated paid work experience as a predictor for outcomes in employment, postsecondary education, and enjoyment of life two and four years post-high school. A meta-analysis conducted by Landmark, Ju, and Zhang (2010) revealed paid or unpaid work experience to be the most supported practice in transition literature. As a result, working in a competitive environment during high school prepares youth with disabilities to develop relationships with others and earn needed income.

Paid work experiences that occur early have been linked to improved employment outcomes in adulthood. The number of jobs held as a teen was found to be a prominent predictor for post-school employment for young adults with visual impairments (McDonnall, 2010). Early paid work experience is especially valuable for youth with visual impairments who seek vocational rehabilitation services. McDonnall and Crudden (2009) found prior work experience and the number of jobs held prior to receiving vocational rehabilitation services improved employment more than five times over at the time of case closure.

Despite the positive association of paid work during high school and its role in shaping employment success, there are disparities in work experience among several disability groups. Carter et al. (2011) indicated students with an intellectual disability were four times more likely to work as compared to students with autism. In addition, Joshi et al. (2012) found students who were educated in urban schools were six times more likely to have paid work experiences while in school than students from rural areas

and students educated in schools with a high percentage of special education students were less likely to engage in paid work experiences. Furthermore, other factors that contribute to reduced exposure to work experiences are students' communication skills, level of independence in self-care, and access to transportation (Carter et al., 2011).

Participation in Vocational Education courses

Vocational education courses are designed to prepare secondary students with disabilities for employment post-high school. Vocational education courses are shown to predict transition outcomes in both employment and postsecondary education (Test et al., 2009). These courses prepare students to work and develop skills needed to be successful as an employee (Wehmeyer & Webb, 2012). They are designed to help students with disabilities make post-school decisions and determine the support needed to accomplish transition goals. Students with disabilities who enroll in vocational education courses learn skills both in the classroom and community. Experiences gained in the classroom are technical skills such as performing job searches or interviewing (Guy, Sitlington, Larsen, & Frank, 2009). Skills gained during experiences in the community are related to employability, such as social skills, and includes opportunities for unpaid job experiences such as job shadowing or supervised work (Guy et al., 2009). Teachers who incorporate both classroom and community-based experiences are able to guide students' learning and make connections with classroom instruction (Sitlington & Clark, 2006). However, most training takes place in a classroom setting (Guy et al., 2009) even though a combination of work-based and classroom-based learning is more beneficial (Sitlington & Clark, 2006). The curriculum in school-based learning allows students to consider career paths and include activities that focus on work. During work-based learning,

students are able to build work competence and expand employment while reflecting on information learned in the classroom (Sitlington & Clark, 2006). These experiences permit students with disabilities to try out jobs within the community and assist in creating positive post-school outcomes. Students who participate in vocational education courses are two times more likely to be engaged in postsecondary education and employment (Baer et al., 2003; Harvey, 2002; Test et al., 2009).

Although positive outcomes are associated with students who take vocational education courses, not all students across disability categories appear to benefit. Joshi et al. (2012) examined secondary data from the NLTS-2 and found vocational education courses were a frequent transition activity. However, it was not a significant predictor for post-school employment among students with mild intellectual disabilities. Carter et al.'s results (2012) also support this, finding among students with intellectual disabilities, autism, and multiple disabilities enrollment in vocational courses was not a predictor of post-school employment. Finally, Baer et al. (2011) found that vocational education was not a significant predictor for post-school employment for students with intellectual and multiple disabilities. These findings deviate from other researchers who found it to be a predictor for positive outcomes for students with disabilities (Test et al., 2009; Test, et al., 2006).

Despite the benefits gained from taking vocational education courses, some students with disabilities do not enroll in vocational courses. Students with emotional and behavioral disorders enroll in vocational education programs at low rates (Carter & Lunsford, 2005). Test et al. (2006) suggested there has been a decline with all students with disabilities taking vocational courses due to emphasis placed on standardized

testing. As a result, students receive less exposure to work-related instruction and hands-on experience in the community that has shown to improve outcomes in employment and postsecondary education (Carter et al., 2012; Joshi et al, 2012; Papay & Bambara, 2014).

Particularly, hands-on experience impacts students with intellectual disabilities, autism, and multiple disabilities more so than classroom instruction (Carter et al., 2012).

Students who enroll in vocational education courses are able to develop career interests based on their skills and abilities. Therefore, these programs are designed to increase employability and focus on post-school engagement which increases independence in adulthood (Test et al., 2006).

Number of Transition Goals Completed in a Transition Program

IDEA (2004) mandates transition planning to begin at least by the age of 16 in order to prepare students with disabilities for adulthood. Secondly, it requires IEPs to include measureable postsecondary goals related to training/education, employment, and/or independent living so students with disabilities are actively involved in the community post-high school. Lastly, IDEA requires transition services to assist students in reaching post-school goals in order to improve outcomes. IDEA requirements involves effective planning and developing transition goals on students' IEP that are action oriented and reflects their interests, skills, and abilities. However, IEPs continue to not reflect students' desires (Landmark & Zhang, 2012; Powers et al., 2005) which are instrumental in student-centered transition planning.

Transition programs are instrumental in assisting students for life after high school. These programs provide students with disabilities opportunities to participate in multiple education and/or community experiences that assist them to attain their post-

school goals. During a transition program, extensive planning is involved in which students work toward post-school goals in the areas of employment, postsecondary education, and/or independent living. A meta-analysis conducted by Test et al. (2009) revealed that students who participate in a transition program and met four or more transition goals were more likely to be engaged in post-school employment or education. Secondly, Test et al. revealed that students who receive transition planning services during their final year of high school were more likely to be engaged in post-school education. A transition program is designed to be action oriented with the student being the center of the entire process. This process can help improve students' self-esteem, develop work ethic, and progress toward permanent employment (Sabbatino & Macrine, 2007). Lastly, students who are involved in creating post-school goals are more likely to have positive post-school employment and education outcomes (Portley, Martin, & Hennessey, 2012).

IDEA (2004) requires educators to implement measurable postsecondary goals and transition services that will help students achieve in careers as adults. However, Landmark and Zhang (2012) reviewed IEPs of students with emotional disabilities and found they are least likely to be measurable and support student's post-school outcomes, be aligned with students' interests, skills, and abilities, and have transition services that address postsecondary goals. Portley et al. (2012) indicated that students who are involved in creating their postsecondary goals are more likely to have greater post-school employment and education outcomes. However, among 399 IEPs Power et al. (2005) found that only 19% of all goals showed evidence of students' desires or interests and only 6% made reference to transition services needed to achieve goals. According to

SCCT, desires and interests influence future behavior, thus will be expected to affect the number of transition goals completed in a transition program. Thus, if goals are not created that consistent with an individual's interests, it is likely they will not be reached.

Participation in a Work-study Program

A work-study program is another opportunity for students with disabilities to gain work experience. However, there are significant distinctions among work-study programs, paid work experiences, and vocational education courses. Work-study programs are offered by schools and designed for students with disabilities to take courses for part of the day and engage in employment for the remainder of the day (Test & Cease-Cook, 2012). In contrast, paid work experiences involve students with disabilities attending high school full-time and engaging in work in the community after school has been dismissed (Test & Cease-Cook, 2012). On the contrary, vocational education courses allow students to earn academic credit and a grade (Test et al., 2009).

The focus of work-study programs is to provide work training opportunities by developing partnerships with organizations and agencies within the community. With these opportunities, post-school employment prospects develop and students are able to secure competitive jobs within the community. Work-study programs are intended to improve post-school employment for students with disabilities. Programs, such as Marriott Foundation's Bridges from School to Work Program, addresses obstacles such as identifying and learning a job youth with disabilities frequently encounter.

Nevertheless, the employment outcomes of students who participate in these types of programs contribute to improved outcomes in employment.

There are a number of work study programs that assist students with disabilities in paid employment. Project SEARCH High School Transition program provides work experiences for youth with high incidence disabilities by educating and creating work opportunities, collaborating with adult agencies, and making connections with adult life (Rutkowski, Dastom, Kuiken, & Riehle, 2006). The goal is to obtain competitive employment for each participant, and it includes internship opportunities in which students rotate three times throughout the school year (Wehman, 2013). A second work-study program, Start on Success, partners with a university to assist low income, racial minority students with disabilities receive paid work during their transition period in high school (Sabbatino & Macrine, 2007). This program helps students discover their abilities, provide training to employers and employees, and demonstrate what can be accomplished through collaboration with the student, high school, and employers (Sabbatino & Macrine, 2007). A third program, Iowa's Super Senior Program, serves students in the middle range of the disability spectrum and incorporates person-centered planning, vocational experiences, and training and support (Nietupski et al., 2006). Students gain work experience through paid internships and job try-outs. A total of 153 students entered the work-study program from 2001 through 2005 and approximately 125 students who completed the program exited with paid employment (Nietupski et al., 2006). Lastly, state vocational rehabilitation agencies frequently collaborate with high schools in identifying students with disabilities in need of employment-related services (Flexer, Baer, Luft, & Simmons, 2008). Vocational rehabilitation programs provide work experiences to students and youth with disabilities in preparation for community work

experiences. Many students become clients of the state rehabilitation agency to help them make the transition to employment successful.

Students who participate in work-study programs have improved outcomes in employment (Test et al., 2009). Baer et al. (2003) and Test et al. (2009) indicated students who participated in a work study program were twice as likely to be engaged in employment post-high school. The Marriott Foundation Bridges School to Work program provides competitive paid work experiences for students with disabilities who are transitioning from school to adulthood (Fabian, 2007). Fabian (2007) examined students who participated in work study programs over a five year period and found students with learning disabilities were more likely to obtain jobs as compared to students with orthopedic impairments who were least likely to obtain employment. Students who participated in the Marriott Foundation's Bridges School to Work internship program in their last year of high school, completed the internship, and/or received a job offer, were more likely to be employed post-high school (Luecking & Fabian, 2000; Test et al., 2009). Gold et al., (2013) analyzed data from 2006 through 2011 from multiple program sites and found more than a third of participants were placed in jobs and rates differed very little across disability categories and race. Other researchers found work-study programs positively associated with stable employment and working full-time (Shandra & Hogan, 2008). Conversely, Baer et al. (2011) found participation in a work study program to be uncorrelated to post-school employment for students with ID.

Career Decision Self-efficacy

As mentioned, SCCT proposes that self-efficacy and outcome expectations are key factors that lead to the development of career-related interests, goals, and behaviors. In addition, personal and environmental factors contribute to learning experiences which influence the formation of self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Career decision self-efficacy refers to one's beliefs in his or her ability to engage in decision-making tasks (Taylor & Betz, 1983). A person with low self-efficacy may be more likely to avoid engaging in career exploration behavior (Taylor & Betz, 1983) thus lessen opportunities for career success (Bandura, 1986). Career decision self-efficacy was first examined by Betz and Hackett who indicated college students' beliefs about competence in education and work were considerably related to the diversity of career options they considered (Betz & Voyten, 1997). Previous research has indicated self-efficacy is a predictor of academic performance and career decision intentions and behaviors (Ochs & Roessler, 2004). Career decision self-efficacy has been used in numerous studies among different samples, age groups, and cultures as an attempt to explain career behavior. Betz and Voyten (1997) examined how using career decision self-efficacy and outcome expectations contributed to exploration intentions and career decidedness among college students. Betz and Voyten found that increased career decision self-efficacy and outcome expectations were related to greater career indecision and increased career outcome expectations related to greater intentions to explore careers. Similarly, among Black high school students, high self-confidence in making career decisions was linked to having a defined interests, goals, and actions as well as being actively engaged in activities related to potential careers (Gushue et al., 2006).

A meta-analysis of 34 studies based on the SCCT framework revealed that career decision self-efficacy was linked significantly to self-esteem, vocational identity, peer support, vocational outcome expectation, and career indecision (Choi et al., 2012). These findings are also supported by Scott and Cinani (2008) who suggested career decision self-efficacy and vocational identity increased self-efficacy overall and vocational identity following completion of an undergraduate career course among men and women. Moreover, Nauta and Kahn (2007) found identity status was associated with career decision self-efficacy and differentiation of interests.

Choi et al. (2012) indicated person inputs variables and career barriers were not a factor in career decision self-efficacy. Choi et al. found other variables, such as self-esteem and peer support, to significantly contribute to career decision self-efficacy. Kelly and Hatcher (2013) found age and ethnicity to be significant contributors to career decision self-efficacy and career barriers among college students in an applied technology program. Therefore these findings highlights the different constructs that contribute to the development of career decision self-efficacy.

Tang, Pan, and Newmeyer (2008) investigated whether learning experiences impact career choices among high school adolescents through their influence on career self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and career interests. Additionally, Tang et al. examined whether these predictive variables differed across gender. The results indicated that high school females were more interested and had high self-efficacy for jobs that provided internal rewards such as working with people and independence (Tang et al., 2008). In contrast, males were more interested in and had high self-efficacy for jobs such as an auto mechanic or carpenter. Similarly, Jackson, Potere, and Brobst (2006)

examined the success of learning experiences of middle school students from low income and culturally diverse backgrounds and whether learning experiences was associated with occupational interest and aspirations. The results of this study revealed a strong associated between learning experiences in which youth succeeded in while in school and occupation interest. Jackson et al. (2006) also found a strong correlation between participants' career self-efficacy beliefs and occupational interests.

Summary

There has been a vast amount of literature published on factors that contribute to the engagement in employment and enrollment in postsecondary education among youth with disabilities. Utilizing a SCCT perspective, this literature review discussed personal characteristics, moderate-level school transition predictors shown to improve employment and education outcomes, and career-decision self-efficacy as it relates to post-school engagement. The information presented illustrates vast differences in relation to race/ethnicity, gender, and disability. Specifically, White youth with disabilities were more likely to be employed after high school than Black youth with disabilities (Newman et al., 2009). Female youth with disabilities were more likely to enroll in postsecondary education after high school compared to males (Coutinho et al, 2006). However, males with disabilities were more likely to earn more money and work full-time compared to female youth with disabilities (Madaus, 2006).

The literature illustrates differences in the employment and postsecondary education outcomes of young with specific disabilities. Particularly, youth with learning disabilities were more likely to be employed post-high school and less likely to earn college degrees (Chambers et al., 2009; Gonzalez et al., 2011). Additionally, positive

outcomes were associated with youth with a speech or language impairment. Although little research exist on the engagement of youth with a speech or language impairments post-high school, national data indicated they were more likely to enroll in postsecondary education (Newman et al., 2009; Sanford et al., 2011). Youth with intellectual disabilities were less likely to be employed post-high school compared to youth with other disabilities (Grigal et al., 2011) and less likely to attend postsecondary education (Newman et al., 2009). Youth with an emotional disturbance who participate in a work-study program have better employment postsecondary education outcomes Karpur et al., 2005). Shattuck et al. (2012) indicated youth with autism had the highest risk for being disengaged from postsecondary education or employment two years after high school. Youth with ADHD were unlikely to pursue education opportunities and employment post-school compared to youth without ADHD (Kuriyan et al., 2013).

Empirically research support predictors of transition from school to work or post-secondary education, as well as career-decision self-efficacy, are also factors that contribute to post-school engagement. Particularly, youth who were included in the general education classroom were more likely to enroll in postsecondary education and be employed (Baer et al., 2011; Test et al., 2009). Equally important, students who participated in paid work either in a work study program or a job within a community had more frequent positive employment outcomes (Baer et al., 2003; Joshi et al, 2012; Papay & Bambara, 2014; Test et al., 2009). Numerous studies have illustrated the influence of career-decision self-efficacy on career behavior (Ochs & Roessler, 2004). Mostly, research has linked career decision self-efficacy to having a definitive vocational identity and career decisiveness (Choi et al., 2012; Gushue et al., 2006; Scott & Cinani, 2008).

The literature review indicated that while various factors contribute to post-school engagement, the influential factors may be different.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The following section presents the research design and methodology for this study. This study examined the engagement in employment and enrollment in postsecondary education among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi. Current national research for the number of youth with disabilities who are employed or enrolled in postsecondary education is considerably low as compared to youth in the general public (Fleming & Fairweather, 2012; Wehmeyer & Webb, 2012). For youth and young adults with disabilities in Mississippi, the number employed is considerably lower as compared to youth and young adults with disabilities in the United States (Sanford et al., 2011). Understanding how young adults with disabilities develop career interests, aspirations, and behaviors is necessary in order to achieve better understanding of the impact it has on post-school outcomes.

Problem and Purposes Overview

Young adults with disabilities who complete postsecondary education have improved employment rates and higher income (Flannery et al., 2008). Nevertheless, only 33% of young adults with disabilities in Mississippi who completed high school in 2012 and interviewed a year later were competitively employed and 26% were enrolled in higher education (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014b). The employment outcomes were higher at 71% for young adults with disabilities in the United States, who completed high school up to six years ago, while 55% pursued postsecondary education (Sanford et al. 2011). When compared by disability type, only 37% of young adults with

a specific learning disability in Mississippi were competitive employed and 30% were enrolled in higher education (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014b).

Additionally, only 34% of young adults with emotional disturbance in Mississippi were competitive employed and 15% were enrolled in higher education (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014b). Moreover, only 25% of young adults with an intellectual disability in Mississippi were competitive employed and 5% enrolled in higher education. Twenty-five percent of young adults with other disabilities such as autism, speech or language impairment, and other health impairment in Mississippi were competitive employed and 20% enrolled in higher education (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014b).

Youth from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds often have a higher risk of experiencing poor post-school outcomes as compared to those not from those backgrounds (Kochhar-Bryant & Greene, 2009). Nonetheless, the engagement in employment and enrollment in postsecondary education for young adults with disabilities from a specific ethnic group in Mississippi two years after exiting are unknown. In Mississippi, approximately 47% of students age six to twenty-one in the U.S. Census category “White” and 49% in the category “Black” during the 2013-2014 school year (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014a).

Researchers have explored the transition literature and identified five moderate-level school transition predictors that are associated with improved outcomes in employment and/or postsecondary education (Test et al., 2009). These transition predictors are: inclusion in general education, paid work experience, number of transition goals completed in a transition program, participation in vocational education courses,

and participation in a work-study program. Given that school officials are responsible for providing learning experiences to students with disabilities, research is warranted to determine if these experiences progress to positive careers as young adults.

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) states career decision self-efficacy and outcome expectations are distinctly associated with career-related interests, goals, and behaviors. This study was designed to identify the transition experiences young adults with disabilities in Mississippi engaged in as students. Furthermore, this study explored how personal demographic variables (race/ethnicity, gender, disability type) influenced engagement in transition predictors outlined by Test et al. (2009). In addition, the researcher investigated whether career decision self-efficacy influenced participation in employment or enrollment in postsecondary education two years after exiting high school. However, the researcher was unable to explore how learning experiences influence self-efficacy, which is a key component of the SCCT, due to the inability to connect the results of all four surveys.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1: Do relationships exist among identified person input variables (race/ethnicity, gender, disability type) and identified school transition predictor variables (inclusion in general education, paid work experiences, number of transition goals completed in a transition program, participation in vocational education courses, participation in a work study program) among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi?

H₁- There is a relationship among race/ethnicity, gender, disability type, inclusion in general education, paid work experiences, number of transition goals

completed in a transition program, participation in vocational education courses, and participation in a work study program among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi.

Research Question 2: Does a relationship exist between level of career decision self-efficacy and enrollment in postsecondary education among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi?

H₂- There is a relationship between level of career decision self-efficacy and enrollment in postsecondary education among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi.

Research Question 3: Does a relationship exist between level of career decision self-efficacy and engagement in employment for young adults with disabilities in Mississippi?

H₃: There is a relationship between level of career decision self-efficacy and engagement in employment among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi.

Population and Sample

The criterion for inclusion in the study were young adults in Mississippi with disabilities who completed high school in May 2013 with a standard diploma, occupational diploma, or certificate of completion. Additionally, this study's sample was limited to participants who had an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in high school, received transition services, and had one of the following disabilities as defined by IDEA: specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, emotional disturbance, other health impairment, autism, or intellectual disability. These disability categories represent the majority of students with disabilities in Mississippi. Specifically,

30% of students with disabilities ages six to twenty-one years have speech or language impairments, 28% specific learning disabilities, 16% other health impairments, 6% emotional disturbances, 6% autism, and 6% of students with disabilities have an intellectual disabilities (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014b). This study's sample was obtained from nine school districts from various locations in the state of Mississippi. Stratified sampling was used so that appropriate numbers of each subgroup were included (male/female, Black/White, disability type) in the sample. The sample represented participants who attended school in the northeast, northwest, southeast, and southwest region of the state.

Data Collection

The method for collecting data in the study were surveys completed by telephone and from participants' most recent IEP. Upon approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB; Appendix A), the initial round of data collection involved participants from the Desoto County School District ($n = 147$), Jackson County School District ($n = 26$), and Hattiesburg Public School District ($n = 27$). These participants were mailed information regarding the study. It also included a request for their participation in answering questions regarding career decision self-efficacy and engagement in post-school activity. The researcher collaborated with a school representative (e.g. transition coordinator, special education director) who identified eligible participants who meet the criterion for participation in the study. The school representative created a list of graduates and provided a total number of eligible participants to the researcher. In order to maintain confidentiality, the researcher pre-filled envelopes and delivered them to the school representative. The school representative then addressed and mailed envelopes to

eligible participants using their last known address on file. Each envelope consisted of a recruitment letter (Appendix B), one of two consent forms, and a return self-addressed stamp envelope. There were two consent forms mailed as suggested by IRB, because of the different disabilities expected to be represented in the sample and the potential differences in understanding the request for participation in the study. The first consent form (Appendix C), was mailed to young adults with the following disability: speech or language impairment, other health impairment, and emotional disability. The second consent form (Appendix D) was mailed to young adults with the following disabilities: intellectual disability, autism, and specific learning disability. The consent form explained (a) the purpose of the study, (b) information regarding the confidentiality of survey responses, (c) incentive for participating in the study, (d) request for signature of consent to participate in the study, and (e) request for current mailing address, telephone number, and video chat account name (e.g. Face Time, Skype, Tango). In addition, consent forms were printed on colored paper in order to distinguish between school districts. Envelopes were separated based on the different types of consent forms. Approximately one week later, a postcard (Appendix E) was mailed to potential participants reminding them about the consent form that was previously mailed. Young adults who did not wish to participate in the study simply did not return the consent form to the researcher. Participants who were willing to participate mailed the self-addressed stamped envelope directly to the researcher. Once consent forms were received, the researcher contacted participants, explained the purpose of the study briefly, and asked if they were still interested in participating in the study. After the participant verbally expressed continued interest, the researcher began interviewing participants by telephone.

The *Career Decision Self-efficacy Scale-SF* (CDSE-SF) and the *Post-school Outcomes Survey* were completed as participants responded to each question. In order to verify whether the appropriate person was being interviewed, the researcher asked participants to verify the year they graduated and the school they attended. While the researcher interviewed participants by phone, the school representative reviewed participants' IEPs and completed the *Demographics Questionnaire* and *School Records Review Instrument* on all participants who were mailed information regarding the study in order to maintain confidentiality. Since participants were not identified and survey responses from these two surveys were not linked to specific participants, each school provided consent to collect data.

Participants who responded to the mailed letter, which requested their participation in the research study, and answered questions from the CDSE-SF and the *Post-School Outcomes Survey* were mailed a small reward immediately after the phone interview. Respondents received a coupon or card from one of the following: a free sandwich from Which Wich, a free cookie from McAllister, a "Pizza on Us" card from Papa Murphy, a "Lunch on Us" card from Raising Cane's, or a free ice cream cone from Sonic. However, from this group only a small number of participants ($n = 7$) responded to request to participate in the study which included answering questions regarding career decision self-efficacy and engagement in post-school activity. Therefore, the researcher solicited other schools to participate in the study in order to adequately represent a sample of the population of interest.

Upon IRB's approval to revise the previously-approved project (Appendix F), the research study was expanded to include graduates from the following school districts:

Smith County ($n = 21$), Jones County ($n = 38$), Holmes County ($n = 16$), Stone County ($n = 13$), Alcorn County ($n = 29$), and Vicksburg Warren ($n = 27$). Data was collected from all eligible participants. The data collection procedure was changed in an effort to obtain responses from a larger number of participants. In this new approach, the school representative, rather than the researcher contacted participants by phone using their last known phone number on file. The researcher provided specific instructions to each school representative on how to collect data using the surveys. The school representative completed all four surveys on behalf of the researcher on 73 participants who were interviewed by phone. For eligible participants who could not be reached by phone, the school representative completed the *Demographics Questionnaire* and *School Records Review Instrument* only. Since no identifying information was provided on specific participants and survey responses were not linked to participants, each school consented to collect data on these surveys. The school representative then mailed or e-mailed completed surveys to the researcher.

Instrumentation

Several research instruments were used to collect data for the study. First, a *Demographic Questionnaire* (Appendix G), developed by the researcher, was used to collect data regarding personal demographic variables. Second, the *School Records Review Instrument* (Appendix H), developed by the researcher, was used to collect data regarding transition predictor variables. Third, the CDSE-SF, developed by Betz, Klein, and Taylor (1996), was used to measure the level of career decision self-efficacy. The researcher contacted one of the developers and was granted permission (Appendix I) to use the tool for this dissertation research with specific instructions not to reproduce

survey questions. Finally, the *Post-school Outcomes Survey* (Appendix J), contains two items from the National Post School Outcomes Center survey. The researcher received permission (Appendix K) to modify or adapt questions from the instrument to suit the researcher needs. Two items were modified and used to measure participation in employment and enrollment in postsecondary education.

Demographic Questionnaire. Demographic information was collected using an instrument developed by the researcher that was designed to collect information related to race/ethnicity, gender, and disability type. Items were written based on person inputs variables described by the SCCT. *The Demographic Questionnaire* was designed to obtain background information in relation to participants in the study and to verify eligible participants. The following background information was included: date student exited high school, diploma earned, school district, school setting, and adult agency present in transition planning meetings. A school representative completed the *Demographic Questionnaire* on all participants who were mailed information regarding the study which also requested their participation and on participants who were interviewed by phone. This survey was completed using participants most recent IEP.

School Records Review Instrument. The *School Records Review Instrument* was developed to collect data on moderate-level transition predictors identified by Test et al. (2009). Items were written based on Test et al. review of literature and studies included in their meta-analysis. The *School Records Review Instrument* consisted of five questions. Each item of the questionnaire required a *yes* or *no* response. A response of *yes* indicated that the participant participated in the identified transition experience. A response of *no* indicated the participant did not participate in the transition experience.

Examples included the following: “did the former student participate in general education instruction at least 80% of the time?” and “did the former student have a paid job at the time of exiting high school”?

Career Decision Self-efficacy Scale Short Form (CDSE-SF). The CDSE-SF measures a person’s belief in his or her ability to engage in career decision-making tasks (Betz, Klein, & Taylor, 1996). The scale measures behaviors relevant to five career choice competencies: self-appraisal, occupational information, goal setting, planning, and problem solving. Cronbach’s alpha was calculated on each subscale to determine scale reliability. The CDSE-SF has 25 items and uses a 5-point numeric scale that ranges from *not at all confidence (1) to complete confidence (5)*. Sample items are: “How much confidence do you have that you could use internet to find information about occupations that interest you?” and “How much confidence do you have that you could select one major from a list of potential majors you are considering?” The original scale was on a 10-level continuum distributed among five subscales totaling 50 career decision making tasks or behaviors. Scale scores are computed by adding the response to each scale item; and the total score is the sum of the five scale score. Scale scores of 3.5 or higher indicates moderate to high confidence and a willingness to try or approach the career-related behavior. Scale scores below 3.0 indicates low self-efficacy and predicts avoidance behavior of the career task.

According to Betz et al. (1996) and Betz, Hammond, and Multon (2005), the 25-item CDSE-SF has supportive evidence of reliability and validity. Internal consistency assessed by coefficient alpha for the five subscales ranged from 0.78 to 0.87 and for the total score 0.93 to 0.95. Betz et al. (1996) documented evidence of criterion-related

validity with correlations of the CDSE-SF scales and career indecision ranging from -.30 to -.63. Other researchers established reliability of the CDSE-SF scale among participants who were Black. For instance, Chaney, Hammond, Betz and Multon (2007) provided evidence of favorable reliability for the scale scores given the coefficient alpha of each subscale. They were as follows: 0.81 (self-appraisal), 0.79 (occupational information), 0.85 (goal selection), 0.83 (planning), and 0.78 (problem solving). Gushue and Whitson (2006) found a coefficient alpha of 0.78 on a sample of 104 Black students. Nauta and Kahn (2007) also used the CDSE-SF to examine career decision self-efficacy, identity status, consistency and differentiation of interests among college students.

Post-school Outcomes Survey. The *Post-school Outcomes Survey* measured young adults with disabilities' engagement in employment and participation in postsecondary education at any time during the last 12 months. The researcher modified two questions developed by the National Post-school Outcomes Center in order to develop the *Post-school Outcomes Survey*. Each question required a *yes* or *no* response. A response of *yes* indicated the participant was currently or previously enrolled in postsecondary education for at least one complete term or engaged in employment a total of three months. A response of *no* indicated the participant was not currently or previously enrolled in postsecondary education for at least one complete term or engaged in employment for a total of three months. Questions were, "At any time during the last 12 months, *have you ever* worked for pay an average of 20 or more hours per week for a total of 3 months?", and "At any during the last 12 months, *have you ever* been enrolled in any type of school, training, or education program for at least one complete term/semester?"

Data Analysis

Using the *Social Cognitive Career Theory* (SCCT), this study was intended to identify the transition predictors shown to improve outcomes in both employment and postsecondary education among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi. Moreover, it explored if personal demographics (race/ethnicity, gender, disability) were related to transition predictors among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi. Lastly, the researcher examined if a relationship existed between career decision self-efficacy and engagement in employment or enrollment in postsecondary education.

Descriptive statistics (e.g. means, standard deviations, percentages) were used to describe the sample. This description included a summary of personal demographic variables, transition predictors, level of career decision self-efficacy, employment status, and postsecondary education enrollment. To test the significance of each research question and hypothesis, binary logistic regression was used to test if a relationship existed between each independent variable and dependent variable. Since each criterion variable had binary outcomes, logistic regression was the statistical procedure used to analyze data for this research study. With logistic regression, a prediction can be made of two categories a person is likely to belong given certain information (Field, 2009). There were several factors the researcher considered in the decision making process of each predictor variable. First, the value of Cox and Snell R^2 , also known as strength of association, was examined to determine if the model was a good fit in the outcome. In addition, data were examined to determine the presence of outliers. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) suggested if there is a case in one category of outcome it may show a high probability for being in another category therefore making the model a poor fit if several

cases like this exist. Adequacy of observed frequencies and power was also considered. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) indicated it is best when all expected/observed frequencies are greater than one and that no more than 20% are less than five. Ratios of cases to variables were also analyzed because of the number of problems that may occur when there are few cases to the number of predictor variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The assumption of linearity in the logit was another factor that was taken into consideration because logistic regression assumes a linear relationship between continuous predictors and dependent variable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Equally important was that the assumption of survey responses were unrelated and independent of each other. Participants in this study who answered survey questions regarding career decision self-efficacy and post-school activity were completed independently from one another. In addition, school representatives who completed demographic questionnaires on participants and their engagement in transition experiences were collected independently from one another. Participants also represented different geographic locations in Mississippi. Lastly, the assumption of independence of observations is significant in order to make a valid statistical inferences. Survey responses in this study were observed independent of each other.

In order to make comparisons between predictors, in the first research hypothesis independent variables were “dummy coded” to compare other groups of the predictor variable with one specific group of the predictor variable. The variables were coded as follows: White = 1 and Black = 0, male = 1 and female = 0, specific learning disability = 0 (which was designated as the reference group) autism = 1, intellectual disability = 2, emotional disturbance = 3, and other health impairment = 4. The disability category

specific learning disability was chosen as the reference group because most participants ($n = 190$) represented this group. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) suggested to use the group with the most participants when the sample size is uneven. In the second and third research hypotheses, the independent variables were continuous. The outcome variables were coded as 1= yes which referred to the participant engaged in the post-school activity and 0 = no which referred to the participant did not engage in the post-school activity.

Summary

Young adults with disabilities in Mississippi who had a specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, autism, emotional disturbance, other health impairment, or intellectual disability participated in this study. In addition, participants completed high school in May 2013, with a standard diploma, occupational diploma, or certificate of completion, had an IEP while in high school, and received transition services. Participants were identified by a school representative (e.g. transition coordinator, special education director) at the high school they attended and were then either mailed information that requested their participation in the study or were contacted by phone. Initially, the researcher completed the *CDSE-SF and Post-school Outcomes Survey* once participants expressed interest in participating in the study. A school representative completed the *Demographics Questionnaire*, and *School Records Review Instrument* on all participants who were mailed information regarding the study using their most recent IEP. Since no identifying information was received and responses were not linked to specific participants, the participating schools provided consent to collect data on these two surveys. Procedures then changed because of a small number of participants who responded to the mailed request to participate in the study. The new

procedure involved the school representative who contacted participants by phone using their last known phone number on file. The school representative completed all four surveys on behalf of the researcher on participants who were interviewed by phone. Those who could not be reached by phone the school representative completed a *Demographic Questionnaire* and *School Records Review Instrument* only. Given that no identifying information was provided on specific participants and survey responses were not linked to participants, each school consented to collect data. Descriptive statistics described the sample and variable in the research hypotheses. Logistic regression analyzed the results of personal demographic on transition predictors and determined if career decision self-efficacy influenced postsecondary education enrollment or employment participation. Predictor variables were “dummy coded” in order to make a comparison between predictor variables.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This study was designed to identify and describe the high school learning experiences young adults with disabilities in Mississippi. Furthermore, it explored if personal demographics (race, gender, disability type) were related to engagement in those school learning experiences. Finally, analyses were conducted to determine if career decision self-efficacy influenced employment participation and enrollment in postsecondary education two years after exiting high school. Previous research suggests that the number of youth and young adults with disabilities in Mississippi employed is considerably lower compared to youth and young adults with disabilities in the United States (Sanford et al., 2011). Specifically, out of 2,741 young adults with disabilities in Mississippi, only 33% who completed high school in 2012 and interviewed a year later were competitive employed (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014b). Additionally, only 26% were enrolled in higher education (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014b). The current study was undertaken to determine whether transition practices of young adults with disabilities in Mississippi resulted in positive engagement in careers post-high school.

Four instruments were used to collect data on eligible participants. First, the *Demographic Questionnaire* was developed by the researcher and used to collect data related to race/ethnicity, gender, and disability type. Items were written based on person inputs variables described in *Social Cognitive Career Theory* (SCCT). Second, the *School Records Review Instrument* was developed to collect data on moderate-level transition predictors identified by Test et al. (2009). Items were written based on the Test

et al. review of literature that identified transition experiences that showed evidence of improving post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. The *School Records Review Instrument* consisted of five questions regarding participants' engagement in transition practices while in high school. Each item of the questionnaire was completed by a school representative using the participant's Individualized Education Program (IEP) and selecting a response of either *yes* or *no*. A response of *yes* indicated that the former student participated in the identified transition predictor. A response of *no* indicated that the former student did not participate in the transition predictor. Third, the *Career Decision Self-efficacy Scale-SF* is an established instrument that measures a person's belief in his or her ability to engage in career decision-making tasks (Betz et al., 1996). The scale measures behaviors relevant to five career choice competencies: self-appraisal, occupational information, goal setting, planning, and problem solving. Lastly, the *Post-school Outcomes Survey* measured young adults with disabilities engagement in employment and participation in postsecondary education at any time during the last 12 months. The researcher modified two questions developed by the National Post-school Outcomes Center. Each modified question required a *yes* or *no* response. A response of *yes* indicated the participant was currently or previously enrolled in postsecondary education for at least one complete term or employed for a total three months. A response of *no* indicated the participant was not currently or previously enrolled in postsecondary education for at least one complete term or employed for a total of three months.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research questions and associated hypotheses are as follows:

Research Question 1: Do relationships exist among identified person variables (race/ethnicity, gender, disability type) and identified transition predictor variables (inclusion in general education, paid work experiences, number of transition goals completed in a transition program, participation in vocational education courses, participation in a work study program) among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi?

H₁- There is a relationship among race/ethnicity, gender, disability type, inclusion in general education, paid work experiences, number of transition goals completed in a transition program, participation in vocational education courses, and participation in a work study program among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi.

Research Question 2: Does a relationship exist between level of career decision self-efficacy and enrollment in postsecondary education among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi?

H₂- There is a relationship between level of career decision self-efficacy and enrollment in postsecondary education among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi.

Research Question 3: Does a relationship exist between level of career decision self-efficacy and engagement in employment among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi?

H₃: There is a relationship between level of career decision self-efficacy and engagement in employment among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi.

Analysis of Data

This section begins with demographic data collected from the sample. The researcher used SPSS version 23 for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics (percentages, means, standard deviations) were used to describe the sample. Moreover, this section included information about participants' level of career decision self-efficacy as it relates to postsecondary education and employment. In order to answer each research question and its corresponding hypothesis, the researcher analyzed data using binary logistic regression.

Presentation of Descriptive Characteristics of Respondents

The sample included 346 participants for which Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) were reviewed to collect demographic information and whether or not participants engaged in specific transition predictors. Of the 346 participants, 80 answered questions regarding career decision self-efficacy, engagement in employment, and enrollment in postsecondary education. Upon analysis, the following cases were excluded: participants not associated with the racial categories Black or White, as defined by the US Census Bureau, due to a small number of other ethnic groups ($n = 13$); and the disability category speech or language impairment because this particular disability was underrepresented ($n = 4$). Table 1 presents a summary of demographic characteristics of participants in this study.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants in the Study

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Race/ethnicity		
Black	154	44.5
White	179	51.7
Did not respond	13	3.8
Gender		
Male	240	69.4
Female	106	30.6
Disability type		
Autism	32	9.2
Emotional disturbance	22	6.4
Intellectual disability	28	8.1
Other health impairment	69	19.9
Specific learning disability	190	54.9
Did not respond	1	0.3

Note. Four participants with the disability speech or language impairment were excluded from analysis.

Participants in this study either earned a standard diploma, occupational diploma, or certification of completion. Data analyzed from participants' most recent IEP revealed that nine participants (2.6%) dropped out of high school. The final sample consisted of 168 (48.6%) participants who earned a standard diploma. A majority of participants attended high school in a rural/country setting ($n = 182$; 52.6%), as compared to an urban/city school setting ($n = 164$; 47.4%). Table 2 contains a summary of diplomas earned by participants.

Table 2

Summary of Diplomas Earned by Participants

Diploma Earned	<i>n</i>	%
Standard diploma	168	48.6
Occupational diploma	81	23.4
Certificate of completion	80	23.1
Did not respond	8	2.3

Note. Nine participants who had dropped out of high school were excluded from analysis

There were numerous agencies involved in participants' transition planning in their final year of high school. Specifically, 200 (57.8%) participants had one agency represented, 44 (12.8%) had two agencies represented, and 54 (15.8%) had three or more represented. However, 26 (7.5%) participants had no agency represent at all. A summary of the agencies involved in transition planning during participants' final year of high school is provided in Table 3.

Table 3

Agencies Present in Participants' Transition Planning Meetings

Agency	<i>n</i>	%
University/college representative	81	23.4
Department of Vocational Rehabilitation	72	20.8
None	26	7.5
Some other agency not listed	21	6.1
Medicaid	16	4.6
Social Security Administration	6	1.7
Department of Mental Health	4	1.2
Did not respond	22	6.4

Note. Numbers does not equal 100% because some participants had multiple agencies represented.

There were differences in the number of participants who took part in school transition predictors dependent upon the specific predictor. Data analyzed from participants' most recent IEP indicated 330 (95%) of participants were educated in general education settings 80% or more of the day as compared to 15 (4%) of participants who were not. Additionally, 280 (81%) completed numerous transition goals as compared to 64 (19%) of participants who did not. Table 4 provides a summary of participant's engagement in school transition predictors while in high school.

Table 4

Summary of Participants' Engagement in School Transition Predictors

Variable	Yes		No	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Inclusion in general education	330	95.4	15	4.3
Paid work experiences	136	39.3	207	59.8
Number of transition goals complete in a transition program	280	80.9	64	18.5
Participation in a work study program	125	36.1	219	63.3
Participation in vocational education courses	174	50.3	170	49.9

Note. Engaged = yes and not engaged = no. Overall, survey questions were not answered on ten participants.

The number of participants who took part in employment or enrolled in postsecondary education also differed. Upon completion of phone interviews among 80 participants, 31 (38.8%) were currently or had been enrolled in postsecondary education as compared to 49 (61.3%) who had not. Forty-eight (60%) participants were currently or had participated in employment as compared to 32 (40%) who had not. Additionally, these 80 participants responded to questions related to confidence in completing tasks, or behaviors that may lead to potential careers.

The *Career Decision Self-efficacy Scale-SF* (CDSE-SF) measures an individual's confidence in performing specific career tasks and behaviors. As outlined by the CDSE-

SF, scale scores of 3.5 or higher indicated moderate to high confidence and a willingness to try or approach the career-related behavior. Of the sample, moderate to high self-efficacy was found among 22 career tasks and behaviors. Among the 25 item scale, moderate to high self-efficacy was found among career tasks related to finding average yearly earnings of a job ($M = 4.14$; $SD = 5.932$), selecting an occupation from a list ($M = 4.13$; $SD = 1.247$), and determining one's ideal job ($M = 4.10$; $SD = 1.289$). On the contrary, scale scores below 3.0 indicated low self-efficacy and predicted avoidance behavior of the career task. Although there were no scale scores below 3.0 in the sample, scale scores that were found below the moderate to high self-efficacy standards were among career behaviors related to determining the steps to take if in academic trouble ($M = 3.38$; $SD = 1.470$), finding information about graduate school ($M = 3.38$; $SD = 1.538$), and finding employment trends for a job ($M = 3.30$; $SD = 1.562$).

The CDSE-SF measured career behaviors and tasks and was found on five subscales that assessed career choice competencies. These competencies were self-appraisal, occupational information, goal setting, planning, and problem solving. For four of the subscales, there was evidence of reliability when all five items were included. Cronbach's alpha scores were as follows: 0.90 (self-appraisal scale), 0.87 (goal selection), 0.90 (planning), and 0.86 (problem solving). However, the occupational information scale showed unfavorable reliability when all five items were included with a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.43. This survey question, which related to finding the average yearly earnings of people in an occupation, was removed from the scale. The Cronbach's alpha score then increased to 0.83. The coefficient alpha for the entire sample was 0.89.

Presentation of Analyzed Hypotheses

This section contains information regarding the research questions and analyses of hypotheses the study addressed.

Research Question 1: Do relationships exist among identified person variables (race/ethnicity, gender, disability type) and identified transition predictor variables (inclusion in general education, paid work experiences, number of transition goals completed in a transition program, participation in vocational education courses, participation in a work study program) among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi?

H₁- There is a relationship among race/ethnicity, gender, disability type, inclusion in general education, paid work experiences, number of transition goals completed in a transition program, participation in vocational education courses, and participation in a work study program among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi.

To test this hypothesis of 346 *Demographic Questionnaires* and *School Records Review Instrument* completed on participants, five separate binary logistic regression analyses were conducted to predict each dichotomous dependent variables (e.g. inclusion in general education, paid work experience, number of transition goals completed in a transition program, participation in vocational education courses, and participation in a work study program). All predictor variables in the dataset were categorical/nominal, and therefore, it was not necessary to verify the assumption of linearity of these variables. School representatives who completed demographic questionnaires on participants and their engagement in transition experiences were completed independently from one

another. Therefore, it is safe to assume that the collected data/observations met the requirements of independence.

Upon examination of the first research question and hypothesis, the frequency distribution of responses provided to the variable inclusion in general education were uneven and did not meet the requirements necessary to conduct a binary logistic regression. The total counts for *yes* and *no* responses were 313 and 14, respectively. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) indicated it is best if expected frequencies for each cell are greater than one and no more than 20% of observed frequencies are less than five. Table 5 presents the observed frequencies for the variable inclusion in general education by each predictor variable. Because the percent of observed cell frequencies of less than five was 65%, the variable was not subject to further analysis.

Table 5

Observed Frequencies for "Inclusion in General Education" by Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Disability Type

Gender	Race/ethnicity	Disability type	Inclusion in general education		
			Yes	No	Total
Male	Black	Autism	8	2	10
		Intellectual disability	5	1	6
		Specific learning disability	45	1	46

Table 5 (continued).

Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Disability type	Inclusion in general education		
			Yes	No	Total
		Emotional disturbance	3	0	3
		Other health impairment	26	1	27
	Total		87	5	92
	White	Autism	18	2	20
		Intellectual disability	4	2	6
		Specific learning disability	76	0	76
		Emotional disturbance	12	1	13
		Other health impairment	20	1	21
	Total		130	6	136
Female	Black	Autism	1	0	1
		Intellectual disability	8	2	10
		Specific learning disability	34	0	34
		Emotional disturbance	4	0	4

Table 5 (continued).

Gender	Race/ethnicity	Disability type	Inclusion in general education		
			Yes	No	Total
		Other health impairment	9	0	9
	Total		56	2	58
	White	Autism	1	0	1
		Intellectual disability	5	1	6
		Specific learning disability	26	0	26
		Emotional disturbance	1	0	1
		Other health impairment	7	0	7
	Total		40	1	41
Total			313	14	327

Note. Number of cases missing = 19

A set of predictors (race/ethnicity, gender, disability type) were used to predict whether or not participants engaged in paid work experience. No statistically significant outliers were present; misfit values or residuals with z standard scores of over three were not observed. A test of the full model, with all three predictors against a constant-only model, used to predict the paid work experience variable was not statistically significant,

$\chi^2(6, n = 325) = 8.45, p = .207$, indicating that all three predictors as a set do not significantly predictor whether or not participants engaged in paid work at the time of exiting high school. The total counts for *yes* and *no* responses were 126 and 199, respectively. The observed cell frequencies less than five was 57.5%. Table 6 presents the observed frequencies for the variable paid work experience by each predictor variable.

Table 6

Observed Frequencies for "Paid Work Experience" by Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Disability Type

Gender	Race/ethnicity	Disability type	Paid work experience		
			Yes	No	Total
Male	Black	Autism	3	7	10
		Intellectual disability	2	4	6
		Specific learning disability	19	27	46
		Emotional disturbance	1	2	3
		Other health impairment	12	15	27
	Total		37	55	92
	White	Autism	3	16	19
		Intellectual disability	4	2	6

Table 6 (continued).

Gender	Race/ethnicity	Disability type	Paid work experience			
			Yes	No	Total	
		Specific learning disability	35	41	76	
		Emotional disturbance	4	9	13	
		Other health impairment	8	12	20	
	Total		54	80	134	
Female	Black	Autism	0	1	1	
		Intellectual disability	2	8	10	
		Specific learning disability	16	18	34	
			Emotional disturbance	2	2	4
			Other health impairment	2	7	9
		Total		22	36	58
		White	Autism	0	1	1
		Intellectual disability	2	4	6	
		Specific learning disability	7	19	26	

Table 6 (continued).

Gender	Race/ethnicity	Disability type	Paid work experience		
			Yes	No	Total
		Emotional disturbance	0	1	1
		Other health impairment	4	3	7
	Total		13	28	41
Total			126	199	325

Note. Number of cases missing = 21

The Cox and Snell, pseudo R^2 , a measure of explained variability in the outcome variable was only .026. Table 7 provides a summary of analysis predicting engagement in a paid job at time of exiting high school indicating not significant effects for any of the three independent variables.

Table 7

Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis Predicting "Paid Work Experience"

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	OR	Wald statistic	<i>p</i>
Race/ethnicity	0.05	0.24	1.05	0.05	.83
Gender	0.32	0.26	1.38	1.51	.22
Disability type				6.59	.16

A set of predictors (race/ethnicity, gender, disability type) were used to predict whether or not there were number of transition goals completed in a transition program by participants. There were two standardized outliers present with misfit values or residuals with z standard scores greater than three were observed. These outliers were eliminated from further analysis. A test of the full model, with all three predictors against a constant-only model, that was used to predict the number of goals completed in a transition program variable was statistically significant, $\chi^2(6, n = 325) = 14.528, p = .024$, indicating all three predictors as a set do significantly predictor whether or not participants completed numerous goals in a transition program. The Cox and Snell, pseudo R^2 , a measure of explained variability in the outcome variable was .044. The total counts for *yes* and *no* responses were 263 and 63, respectively. Prediction success was overall 81%. The percent of observed cell frequencies less than five was 57.5%. Table 8 presents the observed frequencies for the variable number of goals completed in a transition program.

Table 8

Observed Frequencies for “Number of Goals Completed in a Transition Program” by Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Disability Type

Gender	Race/ethnicity	Disability type	Number of transition goals completed in a transition program		
			Yes	No	Total
Male	Black	Autism	10	0	10

Table 8 (continued).

Gender	Race/ethnicity	Disability type	Number of transition goals completed in a transition program		
			Yes	No	Total
		Intellectual disability	6	0	6
		Specific learning disability	39	7	46
		Emotional disturbance	3	0	3
		Other health impairment	23	4	27
	Total		81	11	92
	White	Autism	18	2	20
		Intellectual disability	2	4	6
		Specific learning disability	57	19	76
		Emotional disturbance	9	4	13
		Other health impairment	16	4	20
	Total		102	33	135
Female	Black	Autism	0	1	1
		Intellectual disability	6	4	10

Table 8 (continued).

Gender	Race/ethnicity	Disability type	Number of transition goals completed in a transition program		
			Yes	No	Total
		Specific learning disability	31	3	34
		Emotional disturbance	3	1	4
		Other health impairment	8	1	9
	Total		48	10	58
	White	Autism	1	0	1
		Intellectual disability	5	1	6
		Specific learning disability	20	6	26
		Other health impairment	5	2	7
		Emotional disturbance	1	0	1
	Total		32	9	41
Total			263	63	326

Note. Total number of cases missing = 20

The Wald statistic demonstrated that only race/ethnicity made a significant contribution to prediction ($p = .01$). Gender and disability type were not significant

predictors. The odds ratio value (OR) indicates that race/ethnicity is 2.18 times more likely to predict completion of numerous goals in a transition program. The odds of completing a number of goals in a transition program are 118% higher for Whites than Blacks. Table 9 provides a summary of analysis predicting number of goals completed in a transition program indicating significant effects for the independent variable race/ethnicity.

Table 9

Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis Predicting “Number of Transition Goals Completed in a Transition Program”

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	OR	Wald statistic	<i>p</i>
Race/ethnicity	0.78	0.31	2.18	6.30	.01
Gender	-0.15	0.33	0.86	0.21	.65
Disability type				7.32	.12

A set of predictors (race/ethnicity, gender, disability type) were used to predict whether or not there were participation in vocational education courses among participants. No statistically significant outliers were present; misfit values or residuals with z standard scores of over three were not observed. A test of the full model, with all three predictors against a constant-only model, used to predict participation in vocational education courses variable was statistically significant, $\chi^2(6, n = 326) = 16.118, p = .013$, indicating that all three predictors as a set do significantly predict whether or not individuals participated in vocational education courses. The Cox and Snell, pseudo R^2 , a

measure of explained variability in the outcome variable was .048. The total counts for *yes* and *no* responses were 167 and 159, respectively. The prediction success was 60% overall. The percent of observed cell frequencies less than five was 45%. Table 10 presents the observed frequencies for the variable participation in vocational education courses.

Table 10

Observed Frequencies for "Participation in Vocational Education Courses" by Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Disability Type

Gender	Race/ethnicity	Disability type	Participation in vocational education courses		
			Yes	No	Total
Male	Black	Autism	3	7	10
		Intellectual disability	5	1	6
		Specific learning disability	30	16	46
		Emotional disturbance	2	1	3
		Other health impairment	12	15	27
	Total		52	40	92
	White	Autism	5	15	20
		Intellectual disability	1	5	6

Table 10 (continued).

Gender	Race/ethnicity	Disability type	Participation in vocational education courses		
			Yes	No	Total
		Specific learning disability	42	34	76
		Emotional disturbance	5	8	13
		Other health impairment	8	12	20
	Total		61	74	135
Female	Black	Autism	0	1	1
		Intellectual disability	9	1	10
		Specific learning disability	19	15	34
		Emotional disturbance	2	2	4
		Other health impairment	6	3	9
	Total		36	22	58
	White	Autism	1	0	1
		Intellectual disability	1	5	6
		Specific learning disability	12	14	26

Table 10 (continued).

Gender	Race/ethnicity	Disability type	Participation in vocational education courses		
			Yes	No	Total
		Emotional disturbance	0	1	1
		Other health impairment	4	3	7
	Total		18	23	41
Total			167	159	326

Note. Number of cases missing = 20

The Wald statistic demonstrated that only race/ethnicity made a significant contribution to prediction ($p = .02$). Gender and disability type were not significant predictors. The odds ratio value (OR) indicates race/ethnicity is 1.74 times more likely to predict participation in vocational education courses. Specifically, the odds of participating in vocational education courses are 74% higher for Whites than Blacks. Table 11 provides a summary of analysis predicting participation in vocational education courses indicating significant effects for the independent variable race/ethnicity.

Table 11

Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis Predicting “Participation in Vocational Education Courses”

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	OR	Wald statistic	<i>p</i>
Race/ethnicity	0.55	0.23	1.74	6.67	0.02
Gender	0.06	0.26	1.06	0.05	0.82
Disability type				9.16	0.06

A set of predictors (race/ethnicity, gender, disability type) were used to predict whether or not individuals participated in a work study program. No statistically significant outliers were present; misfit values or residuals with z standard scores of over three were not observed. A test of the full model, with all three predictors against a constant-only model, used to predict participation in a work study program variable was statistically significant, $\chi^2(6, n = 326) = 17.725, p = .007$, indicating that all three predictors as a set do significantly predict whether or not individuals participated in a work study program. The Cox and Snell, pseudo R^2 , a measure of explained variability in the outcome variable was .053. The total counts for *yes* and *no* responses were 114 and 212, respectively. The prediction success was 66% overall. The percent of observed cell frequencies less than five was 52.5%. Table 12 presents the observed frequencies for the variable participation in a work study program.

Table 12

Observed Frequencies for “Participation in a Work Study Program” by Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Disability Type

Gender	Race/ethnicity	Disability type	Participation in a work study program		
			Yes	No	Total
Male	Black	Autism	2	8	10
		Intellectual disability	4	2	6
		Specific learning disability	21	25	46
		Emotional disturbance	2	1	3
		Other health impairment	8	19	27
	Total		37	55	92
	White	Autism	2	18	20
		Intellectual disability	3	3	6
		Specific learning disability	26	50	76
		Emotional disturbance	6	7	13
Other health impairment		5	15	20	
Total		42	93	135	

Table 12 (continued).

Gender	Race/ethnicity	Disability type	Participation in a work study program		
			Yes	No	Total
Female	Black	Autism	0	1	1
		Intellectual disability	2	8	10
		Specific learning disability	17	17	34
		Emotional disturbance	2	2	4
		Other health impairment	2	7	9
	Total		23	35	58
	White	Autism	0	1	1
		Intellectual disability	3	3	6
		Specific learning disability	7	19	26
		Emotional disturbance	0	1	1
Other health impairment		2	5	7	
Total		12	29	41	
Total		114	212	326	

Note. Number of cases missing = 20

The Wald statistic demonstrated that only disability type made a significant contribution to prediction ($p = .02$). In this analysis, specific learning disability was used as the reference group because of the large number represented in this category. The disability categories autism and other health impairment both were borderline significant ($p = .05$), indicating the odds of participating in a work study program are potentially higher for participants with these disability types. Race/ethnicity and gender were not significant predictors. Table 13 provides a summary of analysis predicting participation in a work study program indicating significant effects for the independent variable disability type.

Table 13

Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis Predicting “Participation in a Work Study Program”

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	OR	Wald statistic	<i>p</i>
Race/ethnicity	0.47	0.25	1.60	3.68	.06
Gender	0.24	0.27	1.27	0.78	.38
Disability type				12.24	.02

The results of the first research question and hypothesis indicated that all three predictor variables race/ethnicity, gender, and disability type as a set was statistical significant in predicting the transition experiences of; number of goals completed in a transition program, participation in vocational education courses, and participation in a work study program. Specifically, Whites had a higher chance of completing numerous

goals in a transition program and participating in vocational education courses than Blacks. In examining participation in a work study program, specific learning disability was used as the reference group because of the large number that represent this category. In this analysis, participants with the disabilities of autism or other health impairment were potentially more likely to participant in a work study program than participants with an intellectual disability or emotional disturbance, but the results were borderline significant ($p = .05$). The results of research questions and hypotheses two and three are presented next.

Research Question 2: Does a relationship exist between level of career decision self-efficacy and enrollment in postsecondary education for young adults with disabilities in Mississippi?

H₂- There is a relationship between level of career decision self-efficacy and enrollment in postsecondary education for young adults with disabilities in Mississippi.

Out of the 80 participants interviewed, 31 (38.8%) of participants had enrolled in postsecondary education for at least one complete term during the second year of exiting high school as compared to 49 (61.3%) who did not. Career decision self-efficacy was used to predict whether or not there was enrollment in postsecondary education among participants. No statistically significant outliers were present; misfit values or residuals with z standard scores of over three were not observed. A test of the full model, with predictor variable level of career decision self-efficacy against a constant-only model, was used to predict enrollment in postsecondary education variable was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1, n = 80) = 5.64, p = .018$, indicating career decision self-efficacy did significantly predict enrollment in postsecondary education. The Cox and Snell, pseudo

R^2 , a measure of explained variability in the outcome variable was .068. The total counts for *yes* and *no* responses for being enrolled in postsecondary education were 31 and 49, respectively. The prediction success was 64% overall. The Wald statistic illustrated level of career decision self-efficacy made a significant contribution to prediction ($p = .03$). The odds ratio value indicates level of career decision self-efficacy is 1.698 times more likely to predict enrollment in postsecondary education. Specifically, a one unit increase in participants' career decision self-efficacy scores increases the odds of enrolling in postsecondary education by 69.8%. Table 14 provides a summary of analysis indicating significant effects for the predictor variable level of career decision self-efficacy.

Table 14

Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis Predicting "Enrollment in Postsecondary Education"

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	OR	Wald statistic	<i>p</i>
Level of career decision self-efficacy	0.53	0.24	1.698	4.92	.03

Research Question 3: Does a relationship exist between level of career decision self-efficacy and engagement in employment for young adults with disabilities in Mississippi?

H₃: There is a relationship between level of career decision self-efficacy and engagement in employment for young adults with disabilities in Mississippi.

Out of the 80 participants interviewed, 48 (60%) had worked at least 20 hours per week for a total of three months during the second year of exciting high school as compared to 32 (40%) who did not. Career decision self-efficacy was used to predict whether or not individuals were engaged in employment. No statistically significant outliers were present; misfit values or residuals with z standard scores of over three were not observed. A test of the full, model with predictor variable level of career decision self-efficacy against a constant-only model, was used to predict engagement in employment variable was found to be statistically significant, $\chi^2(1, n = 80) = 9.13, p = .003$, indicating career decision self-efficacy did significantly predict engagement in employment. The Cox and Snell, pseudo R^2 , a measure of explained variability in the outcome variable was .108. The total counts for *yes* and *no* responses for being employed were 48 and 32, respectively. The prediction success was overall 64%. The Wald statistic demonstrated that level of career decision self-efficacy made a significant contribution to prediction ($p < .001$). The odds ratio value indicated that career decision self-efficacy is 1.896 times more likely to predict engagement in employment. Particularly, a one unit increase in participants' career decision self-efficacy scores increases the odds of engaging in employment by 89.6%. Table 15 provides a summary of analysis indicating significant effects of the predictor variable level of career decision self-efficacy.

Table 15

Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis Predicting “Engagement in Employment”

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	OR	Wald statistic	<i>p</i>
Level of career decision self-efficacy	0.640	0.22	1.896	8.14	.00

Summary

This chapter presented a summary of the sample and analyses of each research questions and hypotheses. Of the 346 *Demographic Questionnaires* and *School Records Review Instrument* completed on participants, a test of the hypothesis indicated transition predictors’ participation in a work study program, participation in vocational education courses, and number of transition goals completed in a transition program were statistically significant when all three predictor variables were tested as a set. Particularly, race/ethnicity made a significant contribution to prediction in transition predictors’ participation in vocational education courses and number of transition goals completed in a transition program. The predictor disability type made a significant contribution to transition predictor participation in a work study program. Of the 80 participants interviewed, analysis of the second and third hypotheses indicated that career decision self-efficacy did predict engagement in employment and enrollment in postsecondary education. In Chapter V, the researcher discussed the findings of each research hypothesis in more detail including recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the study associating key problems issues in the review of literature to their aligning hypotheses. Key problems issues included: moderate-level transition predictors shown to improve transition outcomes for students with disabilities, career decision self-efficacy and its influence on career behaviors and tasks, and engagement in employment or enrollment in postsecondary education post-high school. Findings are discussed in detail, and conclusions are based on the analyses presented, with limitations discussed. Implications included suggestions for special education teachers and school district personnel. Lastly, recommendations for future research in the field of special education are given related to other causes that may influence engagement in employment or enrollment in postsecondary education.

Summary of the Study

A review of literature led the researcher to a study conducted by Test et al. (2009) which identified transition practices shown to improve post-school outcomes in employment, postsecondary education, and/or independent living. Current research has examined the employment rate of young adults with disabilities based on gender, race/ethnicity, and disability type, and the outcomes are lower compared to young adults without disabilities (Kochhar-Bryant & Greene, 2009; Newman et al., 2009; Sanford et al., 2011; Simonsen & Neubert, 2012). For young adults with disabilities in Mississippi, data show low engagement in employment and enrollment in postsecondary education post-high school (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014b). Additionally, the outcomes of young adults with disabilities in Mississippi for particular races/ethnicities,

genders, or disability types are even more discouraging (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014b). Test et al. (2009) analyzed the transition literature and identified moderate-level transition predictors shown to improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. The results of the review of literature presented by Test et al. was used by the researcher to developed the *School Records Review Instrument* which collected data from participants' Individualized Education Program (IEP) regarding engagement in moderate-level transition predictors. This study explored whether or not students with disabilities in Mississippi were engaged in these moderate-level transition predictors shown to predict positive outcomes. Specifically, the researcher was interested in determining if a relationship exists among identified person inputs variables (race/ethnicity, gender, disability type) and identified school transition predictor variables (inclusion in general education, paid work experiences, number of transition goals completed in a transition program, participation in vocational education courses, participation in a work study program) among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi. This problem the study addressed formed the basis for the first research hypothesis.

The *Social Cognitive Career Theory* (SCCT) was used in this study to understand the role of self-efficacy on post-school outcomes. Self-efficacy is one of the central elements of this theory. Previous research indicated self-efficacy as a predictor of academic performance, career decision intentions, and behaviors (Ochs & Roessler, 2004). The problem this study addressed included whether or not a relationship exists with self-efficacy on employment outcomes and/or postsecondary education enrollment of select Mississippi students with disabilities in order to determine if self-efficacy

continues to shape individuals' career-related behaviors and goals. Specifically, the researcher was interested in determining if a relationship exists between level of career decision self-efficacy and enrollment in postsecondary education or engagement in employment among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi. These two problems formed the basis for the second and third research hypotheses.

Participants in this study were young adults in Mississippi with disabilities who completed high school in May 2013 with a standard diploma, occupational diploma, or certificate of completion. Additionally, participants had an IEP in high school, received transition services, and had one of the following disabilities as defined by IDEA: specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, emotional disturbance, other health impairment, autism, or intellectual disability. These disability categories represented the majority of students with disabilities in Mississippi. Participants attended high school from various geographical locations throughout the state. They include the following school districts: Desoto County, Jackson County, Smith County, Jones County, Holmes County, Stone County, Alcorn County, Hattiesburg Public, and Vicksburg Warren. These schools are located either in a rural/country setting or urban/city setting.

Summary of Findings

The outcomes of statistical analysis of data for each research question and hypothesis presented in Chapter IV are summarized in this section. First, descriptive data included frequencies that described the sample. Participants were either Black ($n = 154$; 45%) or White ($n = 179$; 53%). Most participants had a specific learning disability ($n = 190$; 54.9%) and many earned a standard diploma ($n = 168$; 48.6%). During the

transition planning process, a representative from a university/college setting was the most frequent ($n = 81$; 23.4%) agency present in transition planning meetings.

The study's first research hypothesis explored if a relationship exists among race/ethnicity, gender, disability type, and five separate transition experiences (e.g. inclusion in general education, paid work experiences, number of transition goals completed in a transition program, participation in vocational education courses, and participation in a work study program) among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi. In order to investigate this hypothesis, participants' IEP was reviewed by a school representative. The first transition experience, inclusion in general education, could not be tested because the frequency distribution was uneven and therefore did not meet the requirements to conduct a logistic regression analysis. The total counts for *yes* and *no* responses were 313 and 14, respectively. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) indicated it is best if expected frequencies for each cell are greater than one and no more than 20% of observed frequencies are less than five. Because the percent of observed cell frequencies less than five was 65%, the variable was not subject to further analysis.

A set of predictors (race/ethnicity, gender, disability type) were used to predict whether or not participants engaged in paid work experience. The statistical results indicated a test of all three predictors as a set used to predict the paid work experience variable was not statistically significant. Furthermore, the results indicated all three predictors as a set do not significantly predict whether or not participants engaged in paid work at the time of exiting high school.

Predictor variables (e.g. race/ethnicity, gender, and disability type) were used to predict number of goals completed in a transition program among participants. The

statistical results indicated a test of all three predictors as a set used to predict number of goals completed in a transition program variable was statistically significant. Therefore, this finding indicate all three predictors as a set did significantly predict whether or not participants completed numerous goals in a transition program. The predictor that made a significant contribution to prediction was race/ethnicity, unlike gender or disability. Particularly, the odds of completing a number of goals in a transition program was 118% higher for Whites than Blacks.

Predictor variables were used to predict whether or not there was participation in vocational education courses among participants. The statistical results indicated a test of all three predictors used to predict participation in vocational education courses was statistically significant. Thus, the results indicated all three predictors as a set did significantly predict whether or not participants participated in vocational education courses. The predictor that made a significant contribution to prediction was race/ethnicity, unlike gender or disability type. Specifically, the odds of participating in vocational education courses were 74% higher for Whites than Blacks.

Lastly, predictor variables were used to predict whether or not there was participation in a work study program among participants. The statistical results indicated a test of all three predictors used to predict participation in a work study program was statistically significant. Furthermore, this finding indicated that all three predictors as a set did significantly predict whether or not participants participated in a work study program. The predictor that made a significant contribution to prediction was disability type, unlike gender or race/ethnicity. In particular, the disability categories of emotional disturbance and other health impairment both approached statistical

significance ($p = 05$), indicating the odds of participating in a work study program were higher for participants with these disability types.

The study's second research hypothesis explored the relationship between career decision self-efficacy and enrollment in postsecondary education among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi. Participants who were interviewed responded to a 25 item questionnaire that asked a series a questions regarding their confidence in completing career-related tasks and behavior. There were 22 career-related tasks and behaviors with scale scores of moderate to high self-efficacy ($M = 3.5$) and no scale scores of low self-efficacy ($M = 3.0$). However, scale scores were found below the moderate to high self-efficacy standard. Career behaviors and tasks with moderate to high self-efficacy were related to finding average yearly earnings of a job ($M = 4.14$; $SD = 5.932$) and selecting an occupation from a list ($M = 4.13$; $SD = 1.247$). Career behaviors and tasks below the moderate to high self-efficacy standard were related to determining the steps to take if in academic trouble ($M = 3.38$; $SD = 1.470$) and finding information about graduate school ($M = 3.38$; $SD = 1.538$). Career decision self-efficacy was used to predict whether or not enrollment in postsecondary education was likely among participants. The statistical results indicated career decision self-efficacy did significantly predict enrollment in postsecondary education. Specifically, a one unit increase in participants' career decision self-efficacy increased the odds of enrolling in postsecondary education by 69.8%.

The study's third research hypothesis explored the relationship between career decision self-efficacy and engagement in employment among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi. The statistical results indicated career decision self-efficacy

did significantly predict engagement in employment. Particularly, a one unit increase in participants' career decision self-efficacy score increased the odds of engaging in employment by 89.6%.

Conclusions

Inclusion in General Education

One of the purposes of this study was to determine if there is a link between race/ethnicity, gender, or disability type among moderate-level transition predictors shown to improve post-school outcomes among students with disabilities. The first transition predictor examined was inclusion in general education. An analysis of this variable was not possible due to the frequency distribution of responses provided were uneven and did not meet the requirements necessary to conduct a binary logistic regression. The number of students included in the general education classroom versus not included revealed a larger issue. It seems logical that students with disabilities would be included in the general education classroom at some point during academic instruction. Primarily, because Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA; 2004) specified students with disabilities must be integrated in the general education settings to the fullest extent possible in order for students to receive a successful educational experience. However, after analysis of data 313, participants were included in general education, while 14 participants were not included in general education settings 80% or more of the day. Research indicates students who are included in the general education curriculum have positive post-school outcomes in the areas of employment and postsecondary education (Landmark et al., 2010; Test et al., 2009). Students also gain other skills such as time management, note taking, and social development (Carter &

Lunsford, 2005; Webb et al., 2008). The findings of this transition experience illustrates one of many challenges special education teachers encounter with their students.

Particularly, the results of this finding revealed the difficulty with ensuring all students with disabilities receive instruction that helps them enroll and succeed in postsecondary education and employment.

Paid Work Experience

Predictor variables (race/ethnicity, gender, disability type) as a set were not statistically significant to predict whether or not participants engaged in paid work at the time of exiting high school. Much of the literature states race/ethnicity, gender, and/or disability type plays a role in whether students are engaged in paid work while in high school. For example, previous research indicated students with intellectual disabilities were more likely to work in high school as compared to students with autism (Carter et al., 2011; Newman et al., 2009). Students who are Black are less likely to have a paid job in high school as compared to White students (Carter et al., 2011; Newman et al., 2009). Post-high school, males have better outcomes with employment or postsecondary education engagement compared to females (Boeltzig, Timmons, & Butterworth, 2009; Fabian, 2007; Sanford et al., 2011).

The findings of this study indicated the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, which is known for helping students with disabilities obtain employment, were the second largest agency ($n = 72$; 20.8%) present in transition planning meetings. However, the involvement of this agency in the transition planning process did not influence participants' engagement in paid work during in high school. The researcher speculates some other cause may perhaps be the reason for no statistical significance of predictor

variables on paid work experience. The researcher suspects the results may possibly be influenced by the geographic location of participants which plays a more prominent role in determining whether students with disabilities have paid work experience before exiting high school. Among participants in this study, forty-seven percent attended school in an urban/city setting. A study conducted by Joshi et al. (2012) supports the idea of better outcomes for students who attend school in urban/city settings. Joshi et al. found students who are educated in urban schools were six times more likely to have paid work experience in school than students from rural areas. Therefore, some other cause may play a role in whether students with disabilities engage in paid work while in high school. This is an area of possible further exploration.

Number of Transition Goals Completed in a Transition Program

With respect to the variable number of transition goals completed in a transition program, all three predictor variables as a set were statistically significant in predicting whether or not participants completed four or more transition goals. Specifically, race/ethnicity made a significant contribution to prediction. The odds of completing four or more transition goals in a transition program were 118% higher for Whites than Blacks. The percentage of participants who completed four or more transition goals in the present study was 81% versus 19% who did not. This finding suggests either more transition goals were written for participants who were White or IEP goals for Black participants were not written based on their interests and desires. These goals should also include services that will help Black students accomplish goals. IDEA emphasizes the importance of creating transition goals that aligned with students' interests, skills, and abilities.

Participation in Vocational Education Courses

In regard to participation in vocational education courses, all three predictor variables as a set were statistically significant in predicting whether or not participants engaged in vocational courses. The predictor variable race/ethnicity was a significant contributor to prediction. Specifically, the odds for participating in vocational education courses were 74% higher for Whites than Blacks. The finding may perhaps reveal more emphasis placed on standardized testing (Test et al., 2006) among Black participants than Whites. The percentage of participants who took vocational education courses in the present study were 51% versus 49% who did not. Previous research links enrollment in vocational education courses with positive outcomes in employment and/or postsecondary education. (Baer et al., 2003; Harvey, 2002; Test et al., 2009). The predictor variables gender and disability type was not found to be a contributor to prediction. The literature supports the non-significance of the predictor variable disability type in the non-participation in vocational education courses. Particularly, researchers indicated students with emotional and behavioral disorders enroll in vocational education programs at low rates (Carter & Lunsford, 2005).

Participation in a Work Study Program

The last transition experience explored in the first hypothesis was participation in a work study program. All three predictor variables as a set were statistically significant in predicting whether or not participants engaged in a work study program. The predictor variable disability type was potentially statistically significant in contributing to prediction. Specifically, the odds of engaging in a work study program were potentially higher for the disability categories autism and other health impairment when compared to

the reference group specific learning disability. Thirty-five percent of participants participated in a work study program in the present study as compared to 65% who did not. The significance of this transition experience is supported in the literature. Researchers indicated work study programs are offered by schools and focuses on identifying and learning critical aspect of certain jobs (Luecking & Fabian, 2000). These programs are designed for students with disabilities to take courses part of the day and engage in employment the remainder of the day (Test & Cease-Cook, 2012). Likewise, work study programs have been linked to paid work, internships, and a job offers (Fabian, 2007; Nietupski et al., 2006).

Enrollment in Postsecondary Education

The second purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship existed between career decision self-efficacy and enrollment in postsecondary education for young adults with disabilities in Mississippi. Among participants interviewed in this study, 31 (38.8%) had enrolled at least one complete term in postsecondary education or training as compared to 49 (61.3%) who did not. Career decision self-efficacy was significant in predicting enrollment in postsecondary education. Specifically, the results indicated a one unit increase in participants' career decision self-efficacy increased the odds of enrolling in postsecondary education by 69.8%. These findings are supported in the literature in that self-efficacy is a predictor of academic performance and career decision intentions and behaviors (Ochs & Roessler, 2004). Participants in the present study scored moderate to high on career decision self-efficacy on 22 out of 25 survey questions which indicated participants' willingness to try behaviors or tasks that lead to careers of interest. A study conducted by Gushue et al. (2006) had similar findings

among Black high school students which found high self-efficacy among Black high school students were linked to having a defined sense of interests, goals, and actions as well as being actively engaged in activities related to potential careers. There were no participant who had scores related to low self-efficacy, which indicates avoidance of behaviors or tasks that lead to careers of interest. Therefore, participants who have high career decision self-efficacy tend to enroll in postsecondary education programs as compared to participants with low self-efficacy. The high mean scores found among participants in this study may be due to special education teachers' emphasis on self-efficacy through vicarious learning. Jackson et al. (2006) found among students from low income and culturally diverse backgrounds a strong link existed between learning experiences, in which youth succeeded in during school, and work interest. Additionally, Jackson et al. found a significant relationship between participants' career self-efficacy beliefs and work interests.

Engagement in Employment

The third purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship existed between career decision self-efficacy and engagement in employment among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi. Among participants interviewed in this study, 48 (60%) were engaged in employment for at least 20 hours per week for 3 months as compared to 32 (40%) who were not. Career decision self-efficacy was significant in predicting engagement in employment. Particularly, a one unit increase in participants' career decision self-efficacy score increased the odds of engaging in employment by 89.6%. The literature indicates work identity and vocational outcome expectation are both linked to career decision self-efficacy (Choi et al., 2012).

Implications

The present study contributes to the existing body of literature regarding transition outcomes of young adults with disabilities by providing further information about experiences and outcomes of students with disabilities. It further explored the relationship with race/ethnicity (particularly students who are White versus students who are Black), gender, and disability type. The information provided in the study may be useful to educators and paraprofessionals that may lead to improved educational programs. Implications that address findings in the study was directed towards school districts, special education teachers, and preparation programs for students with disabilities.

Inclusion in General Education

The role special education teachers' play is critical for preparing students with disabilities for adulthood. They are essentially the ones who initiate the transition process for life after high school. The study of select Mississippi students with disabilities revealed some were not included in the general education setting 80% or more of the day. One suggestion is for school district personnel ensure students with disabilities have meaningful access to the general education setting. This can be accomplished by implementing transition programs and procedures that require the student, general and special education teachers, and parents to take part in the educational planning. Research suggests transition programs that provides students with disabilities opportunities to participate in multiple education experiences assist in achieving post-school goals (Landmark & Zhang, 2012; Powers et al., 2005). As a result, students learn

pertinent academic skills, interpersonal skills, and real life applications that benefits them as adults (Carter & Lunsford, 2005).

Number of Goals Completed in a Transition Program

The results of this study indicated there was a statistical relationship among all three predictor variables as a set and transition predictor number of transition goals completed in a transition program. The analysis revealed the odds were higher for Whites to complete four or more transition goals and participate in vocational education courses than Blacks. The literature states that youth from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds have a higher risk of experiencing poor post-school outcomes as compared to other ethnic groups (Kochhar-Bryant & Greene, 2009). Particularly, Blacks are less likely to be employed since high school than Whites (Newman et al., 2009). Therefore, the researcher recommends special education teachers write transition goals for Black students that are based on students' interests and desires and include transition services needed to achieve these goals. Landmark and Zhang (2012) and Powers et al. (2005) found that transition goals are not written based on students' interests and desires and transition services are not reference on how these goals will be accomplished.

Participation in Vocational Education Courses

The transition experience participation in vocational education courses was found to be statistically significant when all three predictor variables as a set were analyzed. In particular, the odds were higher for White participants than those who were Black. This finding may indicate the number of Black participants in Mississippi who did not enroll in vocational education courses despite the skills gained from taking these courses. Additionally, the results may perhaps reveal more emphasis placed on standardized

testing (Test et al., 2006) among Black participants than Whites. It is suggested school districts provide multiple forms of assessment such as programs that are designed to increase employability and focus on post-school engagement (Test et al., 2006).

Participation in a Work Study Program

The transition experience participation in a work study program was also found to be statistically significant when all three predictor variables as a set were analyzed. The odds were higher for participants with a disability of autism or other health impairment when compared to the reference group specific learning disability. Work study programs are designed for students with disabilities, which provides work training opportunities through partnerships with organizations and agencies within the community.

Furthermore, the results of this transition experience may indicate the collaboration between schools and agencies in Mississippi. Therefore, the researcher suggests that teachers and paraprofessionals continue to collaborate with organizations and agencies within the community such as Project SEARCH and the Department of Rehabilitation Services.

Paid Work Experience

Although there was not a statistical relationship found among all three predictor variables and transition predictor paid work experience, research suggests there is a link between having a paid job in high school and participation in post-school activities. Research indicates students who engage in paid work experience as a student were most likely to engage in employment and postsecondary education after exiting high school (Test et al., 2009). Carter et al. (2012) indicates students with disabilities who struggle with employment often transfer the struggle over into adulthood. It is suggested for

school professionals in Mississippi to implement programs that provide vicarious learning opportunities through modeling and performing. Joshi et al. (2012) indicated students who participate in activities related to employment while in high school tends to lead to employment in adulthood. These learning experiences could include school personnel collaborating with agencies that are designed to help individuals with disabilities with employment. Again, collaboration with agencies and organizations within the community will help students with disabilities gain work experience during and after high school. It is programs like this that improve employment outcomes for students with disabilities (Fabian, 2007; Nietupski et al., 2006).

Engagement in Employment and Enrollment in Postsecondary Education

The findings of this study indicated a positive relationship exists between career decision self-efficacy and engagement in employment and enrollment in postsecondary education among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi. Among participants who were interviewed, mean scores indicated high career decision self-efficacy among most career behaviors and tasks. These positive results may perhaps reveal teachers focused on self-efficacy with participants as students through practical experience. Research indicates that high self-efficacy were related to having a defined sense of interest, goals, and actions as well as being actively engaged in activities related to potential careers (Gushue et al., 2006). Other researchers found a link between career decision self-efficacy, learning experiences and work interest (Jackson et al., 2006). The researcher recommends transition programs in Mississippi schools to include real life experiences in the community that promotes students engaging in career behaviors of interest as young

adults. This would also build one's beliefs in performing career behaviors or tasks that lead to positive careers as young adults.

Limitations and Delimitations

The SCCT provided a framework by which the influence of personal demographic variables on engagement in school learning experiences could be conceptualized. Additionally, this theory provides a structure to explore the influence of self-efficacy on post-school engagement in postsecondary education and/or employment. However, in this study the researcher was unable to explore the influence of school learning experiences on self-efficacy because of the difficulty recruiting participants. As a result, the researcher was unable to connect the data from all four surveys in order to provide a full analysis of the SCCT on post-school outcomes. Because of confidentiality, the researcher was unable to obtain consent required to link outcomes to specific students. In order to overcome this difficulty, aspiring researchers should gain the support from public education officials or state agencies who are known for assisting individuals with disabilities.

Although the *Demographic Questionnaire*, *School Records Review Instrument*, and *Post-school Outcomes Survey* were surveys that had only two possible responses, the researcher did not assess reliability of these instruments. Additionally, inter-rater reliability was not established on the *School Records Review Instrument*. Likewise, future researchers should consider establishing inter-rater reliability of this instrument before utilizing it in future research.

The sample of this study was delimited to one state, which were young adults with disabilities in Mississippi. Consequently, these findings may not be generalizable to

young adults in other states because of the differences in services provided in transition programs but it may be helpful to other schools in Mississippi. In addition, participants were delimited to young adults who were Black or White because a majority of students in Mississippi were represented by these two race/ethnic groups. Therefore, the findings in this study may not generalize to other races/ethnicities. The disability categories examined in the study was limited to six specific disabilities because they represented the largest disability categories of students who attend school in Mississippi. Thus, the results of this study may not apply to other disability categories.

Recommendations for Future Research

Through this study, a vast amount of information was collected on transition services and the post-school activities of young adults in Mississippi. First, a goal of this study was to determine whether participants engaged in moderate-level transition predictors. Second, the goal was to determine whether or not a relationship among demographic variables could determine if participants engaged in transition predictors. Finally, the goal was to determine whether or not level of career decision self-efficacy predict engagement in employment and/or enrollment in postsecondary education.

Geographic Locations

The data collected in this study was limited to participants in Mississippi. Therefore, it is recommended future researchers collect data nationwide or from certain geographic regions. This would help explain whether or not transition predictors are implemented in school programs across specific regions as it would address why post-school outcomes improved or worsen among students with disabilities. In addition, aspiring researchers could expand these findings and compare outcomes between certain

school districts within a state or between schools whose post-school outcomes goals meet expectations or failed to meet expectations. Moreover, it is also suggested researchers examine if the number of transition experiences varied by school as it would help address potential confounds often found in studies.

Learning Experiences' Influence on Career Decision Self-efficacy

The SCCT was used in this study to understand the interactions between demographic variables, learning experiences, and self-efficacy on one's interests, goals, and behavior. The difficulty experienced with locating participants to answer survey questions prohibited the researcher to examine whether learning experiences influenced self-efficacy. Therefore, future research should explore the impact learning experiences has on self-efficacy in order to provide a more thorough understanding of how self-efficacy and other variables influence career-related behavior. It would also accurately reflect the expected relations of the SCCT model on post-school outcomes.

Influence of Other Factors on Post-school Outcomes

Specific data were collected in this study, such as school setting and type of diploma earned, help describe the sample but was not used to determine the impact it has on the outcome of research questions or hypotheses. Future studies may include exploring whether young adults in Mississippi who attended school in a rural/country setting experience transition predictors less often as compared to young adults who attended school in an urban/city setting. Another area of research could focus on whether there is a link between specific agencies involved in transition plan and their effect on post-school activities. This would help explain the impact certain agencies have on post-school engagement. Lastly, future studies could explore specific subscales of the CDSE-

SF rather than the mean score as this would provide more information on areas to target for interventions given the relationship between self-efficacy and employment and postsecondary education outcomes. Examining these additional factors would add to the transition literature and add to the research the present study provided.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore whether a relationship existed among race/ethnicity, gender, and disability type and moderate-level transition predictors shown to improve outcomes in employment, postsecondary education, and/or independent living among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi. The researcher also sought to explore whether a relationship existed between career decision self-efficacy and enrollment in postsecondary education for young adults with disabilities in Mississippi. Lastly, the purpose was to determine whether a relationship exists between career decision self-efficacy and engagement in employment for young adults with disabilities in Mississippi.

From these purposes, the researcher developed the *Demographic Questionnaire*, and the *School Records Review Instrument*, which was used to answer questions from participants' IEP. With permission, the researcher adapted questions to develop the *Post-school Outcomes Survey* and used the *Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-SF* to interview participants in Mississippi. Binary logistic regression was used to analyze each research hypotheses. The first variable in this research hypothesis, inclusion in general education, could not be analyzed because it did not meet the requirements to conduct a logistic regression. This was because a small number ($n = 14$) of participants were not included in the general education setting. These findings illustrates one of many

challenges special education teachers encounter with their students. Particularly, the results of this finding revealed the difficulty with ensuring all students with disabilities receive instruction that will help them enroll and succeed in postsecondary education and employment. The researcher suggested school district implement transition programs and procedures that require the student, general and special education teachers, and parents to take part in the educational planning.

In regards to the other moderate-level transition predictors, all three predictor variables as a set were found statistically significant in predictors' number of goals in a transition program and participation in vocational education courses. Specifically, results indicated that odds are higher for White participants than Blacks for both transition predictors. The researcher recommended special education teachers write transition goals for Black students that are based on students' interests and desires and include transition services needed to achieve these goals. In regard to transition predictor participation in vocational education courses, the researcher suggested school districts provide multiple forms of assessment such as programs that are designed to increase employability and focus on post-school engagement as recommended by other researchers. It was concluded that the results may perhaps reveal more emphasis placed on standardized testing as suggested by previous researchers.

All three predictor variables as a set were found statistically significant for the variable participation in a work study program. Specifically, the odds were higher for participants with a disability of autism or other health impairment as compared to the reference group specific learning disability. It was concluded that the results of this transition experience may indicate teachers collaborating with agencies and organizations

in Mississippi. The researcher suggested teachers and paraprofessionals continue to collaborate with these agencies such as Project SEARCH and the Department of Rehabilitation Services which are known for assisting individuals with disabilities.

The transition predictor paid work experience was found not to be statistically significant when analyzed with all three predictor variables as a set. The conclusion drawn by the researcher for non-significance of this variable is some other cause may be a determinant in whether students with disabilities had paid work experience before exiting high school. Additionally, it was suggested as a possible area for further exploration. The researcher suggested school professionals in Mississippi implement programs that provide vicarious learning opportunities through modeling and performing. Again, collaboration with agencies and organizations within the community will help students with disabilities gain work experience during and after high school.

Another purpose the researcher explored was whether a relationship existed between career decision self-efficacy and enrollment in postsecondary education or employment among young adults with disabilities in Mississippi. The results of statistical analysis indicated career decision self-efficacy did significantly predict enrollment in postsecondary education and engagement in employment. Furthermore, these results indicate participants with high career decision self-efficacy were more likely to enroll in postsecondary education and engage in employment. The researcher concluded that since mean scores of career decision self-efficacy indicated most participants had high to moderate self-efficacy, special education teacher in Mississippi may have established self-efficacy with participants as students through practical experience. It was suggested that school transition programs include real life experiences

in the community that promotes students engaging in career behaviors of interest as young adults. Future researchers may explore whether a link exists with school learning experiences and self-efficacy. By further exploring the effect of learning experiences on self-efficacy, teachers can implement specific evidence-based transition practices that improve employment and postsecondary education outcomes of students with disabilities.

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Phone: 601.266.5997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/research/institutional.review.board**NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION**

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.
Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 15060808

PROJECT TITLE: Transition Outcomes of Young Adults with Disabilities: A Social Cognitive Career Theory

PROJECT TYPE: New Project

RESEARCHER(S): Sabrina Singleton

COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education and Psychology

DEPARTMENT: Curriculum, Instruction and Special Education

FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 07/02/2015 to 07/01/2016

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.**Institutional Review Board**

APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT LETTER



**THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI**

July 8, 2015

Sabrina Singleton, M.S., CRC
Ph.D. Candidate
The University of Southern Mississippi

Dear Potential Participant:

My name is Sabrina Singleton. I am a student at the University of Southern Mississippi. You were mailed this letter and consent form because you have been identified by the high school you attended as having a disability and exiting high school two years ago. I am asking you to participate in a study that will look at young adults with disabilities' participation in employment and enrollment in college or other educational training. In addition, I will look at the high school activities that help young adults with disabilities get a job or attend college after exiting high school.

If you agree to participate in this study, I will ask you several questions by phone or video chat. It will take no longer than 5 minutes to answer these questions. Additionally, if you agree, questions concerning activities you participated in while in high school will be completed by a staff member at your past high school by reviewing your individualized education plan (IEP). However, your name will not be linked with your answers. There is no risk involved in taking part in this study.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will receive a coupon or card from one of the following:

- Free sandwich from Which Wich
- Free cookie from McAllister deli
- Free pizza from Papa Murphy
- Free lunch from Raising Cane
- Free ice cream cone from Sonic

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. You may stop at any time for any reason and may skip any question that you do not want to answer. You will still receive a coupon or card from one of the free items listed above for your participation. In addition, I will not tell anyone your answers about any question that is asked. I have included a permission form. Please read or have someone read it to you. If you want to participate in the study, sign the permission form and mail it back to me in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.

If you have additional questions you can call me, Sabrina Singleton, as I am the researcher in charge of this study, or e-mail me at Sabrina.singleton@eagles.usm.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a person taking part in the study, you may call the Office of the Institutional Review Board at (601) 266-6820.

Kind regards,

Sabrina Singleton, M.S., CRC
Ph.D. Candidate

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM- L/S, OHI, ED



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

**Transition Outcomes of Young Adults with Disabilities: A Social Cognitive Career Theory
Perspective
CONSENT FORM- L/S, OHI, & ED**

Why have I been asked to take part in the study?

- Because you have been identified as a young adult with a disability who exited high school two years ago
- Because you might have an interest in sharing whether you participated in employment or enrolled in college or other education training after exiting high school

What do I do first?

- Please read this form or have someone read it to you.
- Please ask any questions you may have.

What is this study about?

- Young adults with disabilities participation in employment, college, or other education training after exiting high school
- The high school activities, students with disabilities participate in that helps with getting a job or going to college after exiting high school

Who will take part in the study?

- Young adults with disabilities who attended high school two years ago in your school district

If I agree to take part, what will I be asked to do?

- Answer questions for about 5 minutes about your participation in employment, college or other educational training, and your confidence in completing tasks that leads to participation in these activities
- If you do not want to answer a question, you can choose to skip it
- Agree to allow a staff member at your former high school to review your education plan to answer questions about your participation in activities that help with getting a job or enrolling in college after leaving high school

What are the risks of being in the study?

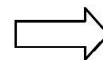
- There are no expected risks

How will things be kept private?

- The records of this study will be kept private
- In any type of report the researcher may write, it will not include your name
- Research records will be kept in a locked file
- Access to the research records will be limited to the researcher
- The researcher will not tell anyone about how you answered any of the questions.

Will I get anything from taking part in this study?

- Yes, if you take part you will receive one coupon or card for the following:
- Free sandwich from Which Wich



Turn page over

- Free cookie from McAllister deli
- Free pizza from Papa Murphy
- Free lunch from Raising Cane
- Free ice cream cone from Sonic

What if I chose not to take part or leave the study?

- Taking part in the study is voluntary and totally up to you.
- You may skip any question that you do not want to answer.
- You are free to leave the study at any time, for whatever reason.
- If you decide to take part, you are free to stop at any time. You will still receive a coupon or card for the free item listed above, even if you decide you do not want to continue to participate in the study.

Who can I contact if I have questions?

- You can call Sabrina Singleton, who is the researcher in charge of this study. Her number is (601) 580-7770 or her e-mail address is sabrina.singleton@eagles.usm.edu
- If you have questions about your rights as a person taking part in the study, you may call the Institutional Review Board Office at (601) 266-6820.

Will I get a copy of this consent form?

- Please keep one copy of this consent form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

- I have read (or have had read to me) the contents of this consent form.
- I have been encouraged to ask questions.
- I have received answers to my questions.
- I give my consent to take part in this study.
- I give my consent to allow a school staff member at my former high school to review and answer questions about activities I participated in while in high school
- I have kept a copy of this form for my records.

Participant Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Participant Printed Name: _____

Researcher Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Participant Current Mailing Address (for mailing surveys): _____

Telephone Number: _____

Video Chat Account: (i.e. Skype, Face Time, etc.):

Video Chat Account Profile Name: _____

Mail completed consent forms to: Sabrina Singleton
USM Dissertation Research
64 Creedmoor
Hattiesburg, MS 39402

APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORM- ID, AU, SLD



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Transition Outcomes of Young Adults with Disabilities: A Social Cognitive Career Theory Perspective

CONSENT FORM- ID, AU, & SLD

If you are happy to be in the study, please

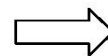
- **Write your name** in the space below
- **Sign your name** at the bottom of the next page
- Put the **date** at the bottom of the next page.

You should only say "yes" to being in the study if you know what it is about and you want to be in it. If you don't want to be in the study, don't sign the form.

I, _____ [PRINT NAME], am happy to be in this research study.

In saying yes to being in the study, I am saying that:

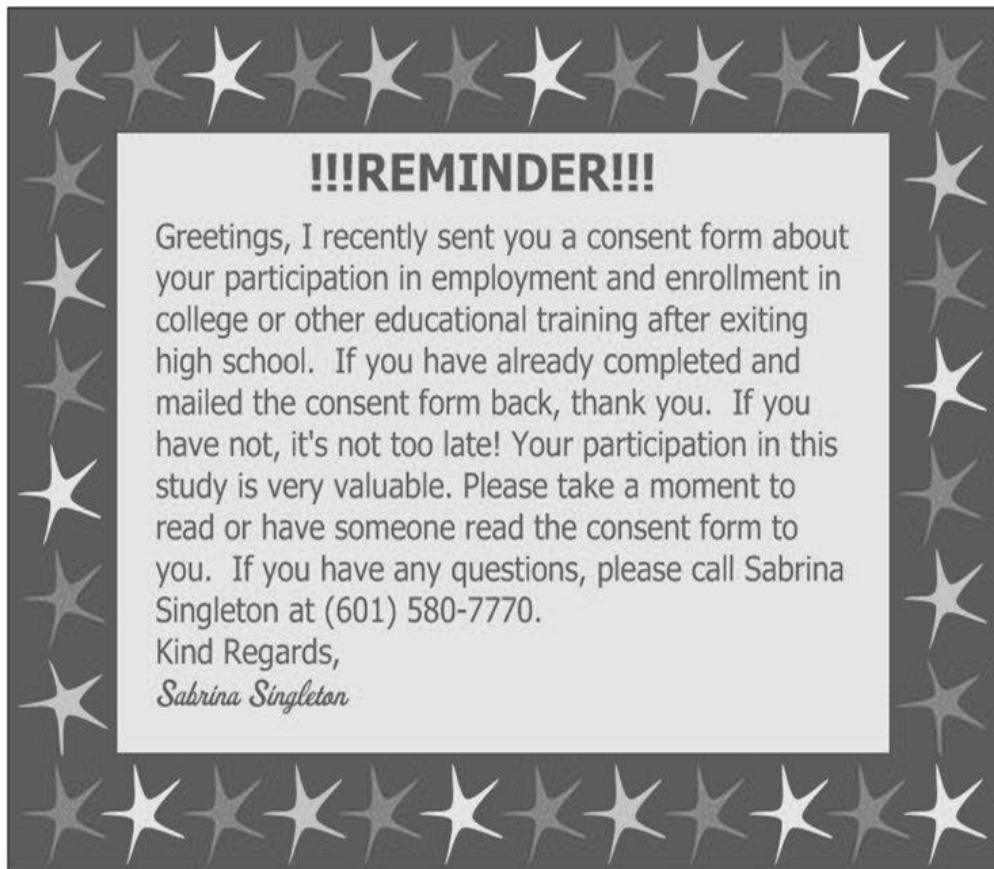
- ✓ I know what the study is about.
- ✓ I know what I will be asked to do.
- ✓ My questions have been answered.
- ✓ I agree to let a staff member at my past high school review and answer questions about activities I participated in during high school that assist in getting a job or going to college after exiting high school.
- ✓ I know that I don't have to be in the study if I don't want to.
- ✓ I know that I can pull out of the study at any time if I don't want to do it anymore.
- ✓ I know that I don't have to answer any questions that I don't want to answer.
- ✓ I know that the researcher won't tell anyone what I say when we talk to each other.
- ✓ I know there are no risks in taking part in this study.
- ✓ I know that I will receive a small reward such as a coupon for a free pizza for taking part in this study.
- ✓ I know if I sign this paper I am giving my permission to take part in the study.



Turn page over

APPENDIX E

CONSENT FORM REMINDER POSTCARD



APPENDIX F

IRB CHANGE TO APPROVED PROJECT



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Phone: 601.266.5997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/research/institutional.review.board

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.
Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: CH2-15060808

PROJECT TITLE: Transition Outcomes of Young Adults with Disabilities: A Social Cognitive Career Theory

PROJECT TYPE: Change to a Previously Approved Project

RESEARCHER(S): Sabrina Singleton

COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education and Psychology

DEPARTMENT: Curriculum, Instruction and Special Education

FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 12/09/2015 to 12/08/2016

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.

Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX G

DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS: Please refer to the former student's records (IEP and/or transcript) to answer the following questions

Background Information:

Date Student Exited High School: _____

Diploma earned: ___ Standard diploma ___ Occupational diploma ___ Certificate of completion

School District: ___ Desoto County ___ Jackson County

School Setting: ___ Urban (city) ___ Rural (country) ___ Suburban (outer suburbs of a city)

Adult Agency Involved During Last Year of High School:

- ___ Department of Vocational Rehabilitation
- ___ Department of Mental Health
- ___ Medicaid
- ___ Social Security Administration
- ___ University/ Community College Rep.
- ___ Other (Please Specify)
- ___ None

Survey Questions:

1. Gender: _____ Male _____ Female

2. Race: _____ Black/African American _____ White/Caucasian _____ Other

3. Disability: ___ Autism
 ___ Other Health Impairment
 ___ Intellectual Disability
 ___ Emotional Disturbance
 ___ Specific Learning Disability
 ___ Speech or Language Impairment

APPENDIX H

SCHOOL RECORDS REVIEW INSTRUMENT

Does the former student have an IEP?

- No. STOP HERE
 Yes. GO ON TO Part I & II

Name of Reviewer: _____ **School:** _____

Review Date: ____/____/____

Most recent IEP date that contained transition information: _____

INSTRUCTIONS: Please refer to the former student's most recent IEP to answer the following questions.

1. Did the former student participate in general education instruction at least 80% of the day?

Yes No

2. Did the former student have a paid job at the time of exiting high school?

Yes No

3. Did the former student complete four or more transition goals while participating in a transition program?

Yes No

4. Did the former student participate in a work study program during his/her last year of high school? A work study program is offered by schools and designed for students with disabilities to take courses for part of the day and engage in employment for the remainder of the day.

Yes No

5. Did the former student participate in vocational education courses while in high school? (i.e. coursework designed to teach students skills needed for choosing and preparing a career, skills, writing resumes, competing applications, and etc.)

Yes No

APPENDIX I

PERMISSION TO USE *CAREER DECISION SELF-EFFICACY SCALE-SHORT**FORM*

Gmail - cdse

Page 1 of 3



Sabrina Singleton, M.S. <mrs.sabrina.singleton@gmail.com>

cdse**Betz, Nancy** <betz.3@osu.edu>

Thu, Dec 11, 2014 at 3:32 PM

To: Sabrina Singleton <mrs.sabrina.singleton@gmail.com>

Dear Sabrina

you may use the scale in your dissertation but you may NOT publish it in your work. The scale is copyright by Mindgarden, INc and any publication of the items (except for a sample item or 2 in your method section) is a violation of copyright law.

Best wishes

Nancy E. Betz, Ph.D.

Professor Emeritus

Department of Psychology

The Ohio State University

Columbus, OH 43210

Betz.3@osu.edu or nancybetz.3@gmail.com

614 579 2453 (cell)

From: Sabrina Singleton [mailto:mrs.sabrina.singleton@gmail.com]**Sent:** Thursday, December 11, 2014 12:11 PM**To:** Betz, Nancy**Subject:** Re: cdse

Thank you so much for responding. I know you are very busy. One last thing. I need your permission to use the career decision self-efficacy scale short form in my dissertation. You can reply to this email.

Thanks

Sabrina Singleton:

Doctoral candidate

Sent from my iPad

On Dec 11, 2014, at 10:33 AM, Betz, Nancy <betz.3@osu.edu> wrote:

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=a725233b2f&view=pt&cat=Dissertation&sear...> 1/18/2016

APPENDIX J
POST-SCHOOL OUTCOMES SURVEY

INSTRUCTIONS: For each of the two questions, please think about the last 12 months.

1. At any time during the last 12 months, *have you ever* worked for pay an average of 20 or more hours per week for a total of 3 months? This includes military employment or working in a family business (i.e. farm, store, fishing, ranching, catering services)

Yes

No

2. At any time during the last 12 months, *have you ever* been enrolled in any type of school, training, or education program for at least one complete term/semester? (i.e. community college, university, Job Corps, adult education, workforce development program, vocational technical school)

Yes No

APPENDIX K

PERMISSION LETTER NATIONAL POST-SCHOOL OUTCOMES



September 24, 2014

Sabrina Singleton
University of Southern Mississippi
Hattiesburg, MS 39406

Sabrina,

What an exciting time in your career. I am writing in response to your request to use one of the National Post-school Outcomes products located on our website (i.e., Post-school Outcomes Data Collection Protocols, Stage One and Two). These protocols were developed through our funding with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, as a model for State Education Agency as they developed their post-school outcomes data collection systems. You are welcome to use these protocols as is or adapt them to suit your needs. I must caution you that these protocols have not undergone any testing for reliability or validity. Good luck with your dissertation. Please feel free to give us a call or email with any additional questions or concerns you may have as you move forward with your study. Good luck!

Best regards,

Dawn A. Rowe, Ph.D.
Project Coordinator
National Post-School Outcomes Center
University of Oregon
541-346-8412
drowe3@uoregon.edu
www.psocenter.org



NATIONAL
POST-SCHOOL
OUTCOMES
CENTER

218 Clinical Services Building
5260 University of Oregon
Eugene OR 97403-1268
T (541) 346-8412 F (541) 346-1411 <http://www.psocenter.org>

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