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3-1 | Domains and categories emerging from the data ($N = 13$)………………………………26
According to Psychology of Working Theory (PWT; Duffy, Blustein, Diemer, & Autin, 2016), marginalization and economic constraints are important in understanding the nuances of the world of work across all individuals. Students who are the first in their families to attend college often live within multiple intersections of marginalized identities, frequently coming from lower-income families and identifying within marginalized ethnic groups (Engle & Tinto, 2008). The present study aimed to examine marginalization and economic constraints and explore how these experiences have affected academic and career development. Interviews were conducted and analyzed using consensual qualitative research (CQR) methods with a sample of 13 first-generation, economically constrained college students. All participants discussed working harder than others, critical reflections of stereotypes of self and others, restricted freedom and limited activity participation compared to peers, budgeting and future financial planning as a priority, comparing self to peers, and the importance of emotional social support, resilience, scholarship money, and family values. Implications include a deeper understanding of how marginalization and economic constraints are related to first-generation, economically
constrained students’ experience of college and ability to secure employment. These findings have practical implications for counseling psychology, as results may inform the development of therapeutic, instrumental, and vocational interventions for these students.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Career development theories and research have traditionally focused on majority groups when discussing the experience of work. By leaving out minority or marginalized groups in the investigation of career development, it is impossible to understand how all individuals experience work and how these experiences may be different across groups. Social class, ethnicity/race, gender, and several other identity pieces impact our experience of work. One group of individuals who is often left out of the traditional vocational discourse is first-generation college students. In addition to being the first to attend college, first-generation students are often from lower-income families and identify within marginalized ethnic groups (Engle & Tinto, 2008; Horn, Nuñez, & Bobbitt, 2000), exemplifying multiple intersections of marginalized identities. It is important to examine this population in order to deepen our understanding of how we can help individuals across different identities and contexts, developing more effective interventions that will lead to positive changes across different groups.

First-Generation Academic and Career Development

Research suggests that obtaining a bachelor’s degree is associated with a greater likelihood of finding full-time employment and higher incomes for young adults (Kena et al., 2015) as well as more positive mental health outcomes (Erford & Crockett, 2012; Padgett, Johnson, & Pascarella, 2012). Among undergraduate students in 2011-2012, 34% of college students had parents who never attended college in addition to 28% of college students whose parents only had some college education without obtaining a bachelor’s degree (Cataldi, Bennett, & Chen, 2018; National Center for Education Statistics, 2014; Redford & Hoyer, 2017).
Moreover, hypothesized increases in student numbers across colleges over the next few years are predicted to include high numbers of first-generation students (Davis, 2012). Although first-generation students make up a significant portion of the college population, graduation rates are lower compared to those whose parents have completed their bachelor’s degrees (Chen, 2005; Choy, 2001; Engle & Tinto, 2008). In addition to a higher drop-out rate, first-generation students experience numerous challenges while completing their college degrees and must overcome various barriers (Chen, 2005; Engle & Tinto, 2008; Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013).

The definition of a first-generation student differs across the research, with some researchers defining it as a college student who has parents who have never attended college and others defining it as a college student who has parents who may have some college experience but did not receive a bachelor’s degree (Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013). Based on the described requirements of the program that the present sample was recruited from, a first-generation student was defined as a student whose parents had not received a bachelor’s degree. When comparing first-generation students to non-first-generation students, there are a number of differences in obstacles to overcome in attending college as well as barriers once enrolled. While in high school, first-generation students complete less college prep courses (Horn, Nuñez, & Bobbitt, 2000), get lower standardized exam scores (Bui, 2002; Riehl, 1994), are less academically prepared (Choy, 2001; Horn, Nuñez, & Bobbitt, 2000; Terenzini, Springer, Yaeger, Pascarella, & Nora, 1996), and report less support from family to attend college (Gibbons & Borders, 2010; York-Anderson & Bowman, 1991). First-generation students also report having more limited knowledge about the process of applying to college, college admissions, requirements of colleges, financial aid opportunities, and scholarships (Vargas, 2004).
In order to attend college, first-generation students are more likely to take remedial courses (Chen, 2016) and seek more loans in larger dollar amounts (Furquim, Glasener, Oster, McCall, & DesJardins, 2017). While attending college, these students have lower engagement in extracurricular activities and interact less with peers (Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004; Snellman, Silva, Frederick, & Putnam, 2015), participate less in course experiences aimed to improve learning (Lundberg, Schreiner, Hovaguimian, & Miller, 2007), study less (Terenzini et al., 1996), and report having less academic resources (Collier & Morgan, 2008). This is often due to having less free time compared to non-first-generation students, with greater responsibilities outside of college, including additional employment and family obligations (Engel & Tinto, 2008; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Warburton, Bugarin, Nunez, & Carroll, 2001). Contributing further to the systemic differences in college, these students have poorer grades (Mamiseishvili & Rosser, 2010) and higher drop-out rates (Chen, 2005; Engle & Tinto, 2008; Warburton et al., 2001) compared to non-first-generation students and are not as represented at some college institutions (Pascarella et al., 2004). It is important to note that first-generation students also have strengths that contribute to their academic experiences, including greater motivation to achieve their goals as a result of adversity and family experiences (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005; Khanh, 2002; McCarron & Inkelas, 2006; Richardson, Abraham, & Bond, 2012).

Although differences in academic outcomes have been examined in the literature, only a few studies have focused on first-generation students’ career development experiences, many of which were conducted with prospective students. In prospective first-generation students
attending middle school, participants described having lower vocational self-efficacy, greater negative outcome expectations associated with potential careers, and more barriers to overcome than other students (Gibbons & Borders, 2010). Similarly, in low-income, prospective first-generation students in high school, perceived barriers to attending college as well as paternal support predicted vocational self-efficacy, and maternal support predicted vocational outcome expectations (Kantamneni, McCain, Shada, Hellwege, & Tate, 2018). For African American first-generation students, students described experiences of being alienated from their college and other students, lower levels of professional support from their families and communities (Owens, Lacey, Rawls, & Holbert-Quince, 2010), and limited social capital and career opportunities following graduation (Parks-Yancy, 2012). In a qualitative study with first-generation students identifying with different ethnicities, participants discussed external influences from their families impacting their vocational development in addition to a limited vocational network and limited support programs (Tate et al., 2015). They also described feeling marginalized as first-generation students and struggled to build a vocational network to connect with. Aligned with the strengths discussed previously, these students also talked about their appreciation, motivation, self-reliance, and adaptability that arose from their challenges.

Further, considering entering college is a significant transitional period for first-generation, low-income students, cumulative simultaneous events during one transitional period have been found to be associated with greater struggle (Graber & Brooks-Gunn, 1996) and must be investigated within context (Schulenberg, Sameroff, & Cicchetti, 2004). For example, these students experience many changes and stressful life events, such as being financially independent and managing money on their own, moving away from home to a new
place, and going into an environment none of their family has experienced before. A number of developmental tasks are also being accomplished, or not accomplished, when moving to college, such as maintaining a household/apartment, acting appropriately in professional settings, and learning about commitment in relationships (McCormick, Kuo, & Masten, 2011). Considering attending college is a major transition period, and first-generation students are experiencing numerous stressors during this transition, these students may be at greater risk for heightened stress and struggle.

**Theoretical Framework**

Recent research efforts, guided by Psychology of Working Theory (PWT; Duffy, Blustein, Diemer, & Autin, 2016), have aimed to capture the vocational experiences of underrepresented populations and demonstrate how these experiences of limited power and heightened oppression may affect the pursuit and attainment of a fulfilling career. According to PWT and subsequent research studies (e.g., Douglass, Velez, Conlin, Duffy, & England, 2017; Duffy, Autin, England, Douglass, & Gensmer, 2018; Duffy, Velez, et al., 2018), experiences of marginalization and economic constraints in underrepresented groups of individuals are negatively associated with work fulfillment outcomes and well-being. Within the model, marginalization and economic constraints are proposed to predict work volition and career adaptability, which predict access to decent work and subsequent experiences of work fulfillment and well-being (Duffy, Blustein, et al., 2016).

In PWT, decent work is the central variable and is defined as work where you receive compensation that is financially adequate, healthcare access, interpersonally and physically safe environments to work within, reasonable working hours that allow for rest and free time, and
organizational values that align with your familial and social values (Duffy, Allan, et al., 2017; Duffy, Blustein, et al., 2016). Research findings have confirmed that the variables discussed in PWT do in fact predict experiences of vocational wellbeing in samples of sexual minorities (Allan, Tebbe, Bouchard, & Duffy, 2019), transgender and gender nonconforming individuals (Tebbe, Allan, & Bell, 2019), racial/ethnic minorities (Duffy, Velez, et al., 2018) individuals with chronic physical health conditions (Tokar & Kaut, 2018), and other marginalized populations. Specifically, these studies have demonstrated that the more these underrepresented populations feel economically constrained and marginalized, the less choice they feel in their careers and the less access they have to decent work.

PWT offers a useful framework for conceptualizing the career experiences of first-generation college students. Although PWT was originally intended to apply to working adult populations, the core constructs of economic constraints, marginalization, and work volition clearly apply to underrepresented groups not currently in the workforce. First-generation students often represent a plethora of marginalized identities, frequently encompassing students of color and students from low-income families (Engle & Tinto, 2008). As noted in the previous review of first-generation students, quantitative research has demonstrated that the experiences of barriers and constraints have tangible effects on career related variables (Gibbons & Borders, 2010; Kantamneni et al., 2018; Owens et al., 2010; Parks-Yancy, 2012; Tate et al., 2015). However, very little research exists examining the in depth experience of this population via qualitative analysis, and no study has done so using a PWT lens.

The Present Study
PWT and previous research findings provide support for the role that experiences of marginalization and economic constraints have in academic and career development. Overall, there has been progress in understanding the world of work across individuals, but more research needs to be done with the marginalized populations described in PWT. In order to have a more accurate and powerful understanding of career development, we must continue to gather information from more diverse samples of individuals. Further, researchers need to investigate multiple sources of marginalization in individuals’ lives and conduct more qualitative studies for richer data on the individual experience. There is limited research on how contextual variables are associated with the academic and vocational development of first-generation, economically constrained students. To address these gaps, the present study used CQR methods to investigate how experiences of marginalization and economic constraints are associated with academic and career development in first-generation, economically constrained college students. In order to gain a better understanding of the contextual experiences of first-generation, economically constrained students, the interview questions investigated college experiences, ability to pursue a career, barriers and limitations, resilience, and what has helped and hindered the achievement of their goals. In the present study, the researchers aimed to investigate the following research questions: (a) how first-generation students’ experiences of marginalization and economic constraints are associated with college life and their pursuit of employment and (b) how have these experiences supported and/or interfered with the accomplishment of their goals.
CHAPTER 2
METHOD

Participants

A sample of 13 undergraduate students were recruited through a program providing scholarships to first-generation, economically constrained students to attend a public four-year university in the United States. In CQR, Hill, Thompson, and Williams (1997) encourage the selection of participants who have knowledge about and have had experience with the focus of the study, which is why this population was investigated. Criteria for participation included identifying as a current first-generation college student, identifying as economically constrained, and being over 18-years-old. Data saturation was found at 13 participants, as no new information was emerging from the interviews and no additional domains were needed (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Participants self-identified as Hispanic/Latino/a American \((n=4)\), African/African American \((n=3)\), Multiracial \((n=3)\), European American/White \((n=2)\), and Asian/Asian American \((n=1)\); women \((n=10)\) and men \((n=3)\); sophomores \((n=8)\), juniors \((n=3)\), and seniors \((n=2)\); and Catholic \((n=5)\), Other Christian \((n=3)\), Agnostic \((n=3)\), and Spiritual \((n=2)\). Age ranged from 19 to 22. Participants endorsed being in working class \((n=8)\) and middle class \((n=5)\) while growing up and lower class \((n=3)\), working class \((n=7)\), and middle class \((n=3)\) currently.

Recruitment

We recruited participants through an email invitation from the students’ program director describing our study goals (i.e., to understand how financial struggle and experiences with discrimination may impact your experiences in college and pursuit of a career), specifying study components (i.e., a short survey through Qualtrics and an in-person, 11-question semi-interview
that will be audiotaped), and inviting volunteer participation in the study. Students who were interested in participating in the study were instructed to email the principle investigator for more information and, if interested, to schedule a time for the interview. Participants did not receive compensation for participating in this study.

Research Team

The original research team consisted of seven members, and an eighth member was added to the research team as other members graduated from their undergraduate program. One auditor was recruited. Team members and auditor self-identified as European American/White (n = 4), African/African American (n = 1), Multiracial (n = 2), Asian/Asian American (n = 1), and Hispanic/Latino/a American (n = 1); women (n = 6) and men (n = 3); seniors (n = 3) and PhD students (n = 6); and Spiritual (n = 3), Agnostic (n = 2), Protestant (n = 2), Catholic (n = 1), and Other Christian (n = 1). Age ranged from 21 to 32. Team members and the auditor endorsed being in lower class (n = 1), working class (n = 3), middle class (n = 1), and upper middle class (n = 4) while growing up and working class (n = 2), middle class (n = 5), and upper middle class (n = 2) currently. All of the members were associated with the same public, four-year university.

Before beginning data analysis, members of the research team anonymously reported their expectations and biases associated with the study topic and interview questions. This allowed for the acknowledgement of any beliefs that may introduce possible bias, deconstruction of the potential influence of these beliefs, and encouragement of appropriate evaluation from those reading the study results. The discussion of these biases and expectations were invited and encouraged prior to and throughout the entire research process in order to help manage the influence of bias in the analysis of the data (Hill, 2012).
Past research teams using CQR have utilized a set team format while others have utilized a rotating team format (Hill et al., 2005). In set teams, team members complete all of the steps of the study analyses, and one or two separate auditors review their work. In this format, the researchers become familiar with all of the participants’ responses and have a deeper understanding of the findings, but this format is also time-consuming, as some tasks become monotonous after a few cases have been completed. In rotating teams, team members rotate doing different tasks. In this format, more data can be collected and examined in a shorter amount of time; however, not all of the researchers have a deep understanding of the data and may not be able to gather overarching themes as effectively that may be surfacing from the data. Each format has been shown to be useful and effective in CQR methods.

For the present study, the researchers used a combination of set and rotating teams in order to ensure that team members were fully immersed in all of the data while also speeding up the data analysis process by appropriately disseminating tasks. All members typed and edited the transcripts, workshopped domains, and assigned raw data into categories. The rest of the tasks were rotated among team members and subsequently reviewed. Team composition across CQR studies has included different combinations of graduate students, undergraduate students, and psychologists, with overall familiarity with the study topic and interpersonal power dynamics prioritized in their formation (Hill et al., 2005). In order to mitigate any perceptions of a power differential between members, no individual claimed to be an expert on the research team, and all members were treated with respect and acceptance in sharing their perceptions. Additionally, team members rotated reading or speaking in the group in order to balance the space in the
research team meetings. Any potential power imbalance was explicitly discussed, and open, honest perceptions were invited and encouraged throughout the entire research process.

In utilizing CQR methods, training is necessary in order to ensure team members understand the study topic as well as the steps and values of the CQR process. In preparation for the present study, team members read and discussed information on marginalization and economic constraints and posed any questions they had about the constructs. Additionally, they read multiple studies that utilized CQR methods (i.e., Hill et al., 2013; Hill et al., 2003; Hill et al., 1997; Knox, Hess, Williams, & Hill, 2003), chapters from Hill’s (2012) text on conducting CQR, and a review of past studies using CQR methods (Hill et al., 2005). To deepen the team members’ understanding, members attended weekly two-hour meetings where the principal investigator reviewed these readings and CQR methods, allowing for any discussion or clarification of topics, and the research team continued to meet to conduct data analysis until members felt competent and confident in using the methods.

Regarding past experience with the study constructs, four coding team members studied PWT in depth and conducted research within the theory. All coding team members had prior knowledge of the main study constructs, marginalization and economic constraints, and highly valued the importance of multiculturalism and context in career development. Regarding past experience with the study methods, most team members had experience coding in other qualitative research projects.

**Measures**

The interviewees, research team members, and auditor completed informed consent prior to beginning the study process. All completed the demographic form (see Appendix A) through
Qualtrics. Interviewees answered the interview protocol questions (see Appendix B), and research team members reported their biases and expectations on the interview protocol questions.

**Demographic Form**

Participants reported their age, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, year in college, GPA, and relationship status. Subjective social status was collected, which reliably predicts objective indicators of social class often measured in research studies (e.g., wealth, education, and occupational status; Adler, Epel, Castellazzo, & Ickovics, 2000). We asked participants “How would you identify your current social class?” as well as “How would you identify your childhood social class?” with multiple choice responses including *lower class*, *working class*, *middle class*, *upper middle class*, and *upper class*. We also used the MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status (Adler et al., 2000) for which participants followed these instructions: “*Think of this ladder as representing where people stand in our society. At the top of the ladder are the people who are the best off, those who have the most money, most education, and best jobs. At the bottom are the people who are the worst off, those who have the least money, least education, and worst jobs or no job.*” For this question, participants selected which rung they identify most with, ranging from 1 (*bottom rung*) to 10 (*top rung*).

**Interview Protocol**

When creating the interview protocol, the researchers used Hill’s (2012) method of protocol construction, and the questions were based off of previous qualitative research protocols (e.g., Hill et al., 2013), first-generation student experiences, and PWT (Duffy, Blustein, et al., 2016). We investigated the contextual components of PWT through questions about
marginalization (e.g., What comes to mind when you think about your experiences of marginalization in your life?), financial responsibilities (e.g., What comes to mind when you think about any difficult experiences meeting financial responsibilities in your life?), barriers or obstacles (e.g., How do these experiences affect how you approach similar barriers or other obstacles in your life?), and what has been helpful or harmful in achieving their goals (e.g., What specifically has gotten you through and helped you move forward in life and achieve your goals?). Two graduate student members of the research team as well as their research advisor worked together to develop the interview protocol for the present study. After revisions and suggestions were integrated into the protocol, the final questions were consensually selected, and an IRB committee approved the interview protocol. A semi-structured interview format was used for the protocol, including follow-up questions to allow probing for any additional material. Following a pilot interview, the interview questions were slightly revised, including the removal of two probe questions, which did not seem to engender new, relevant information from the participant. The final interview protocol included 11 questions. General questions were utilized in order to allow spontaneous responses from participants, and questions became more specific throughout the interview in order to cover all of the important constructs.

**Procedure**

The University’s Institutional Review Board approved the study, and all participants completed informed consent prior to participating in the study. There were no reported harmful outcomes after completion of the study. All of the transcripts were reviewed and edited for anonymity so that the participants cannot be identified, and their identities were kept confidential. Codes were used for participants instead of any identifying information.
To complete the interview, participants came to the principal investigator’s office, consent was discussed and obtained for audio recording, and the terms marginalization, economic constraints, and resilience were defined for each interviewee. If needed, any other words were defined for the participants. The principal investigator conducted all of the interviews in person. Participants were reassured that they could choose not to answer any questions they did not feel comfortable answering, and they can stop at any time during the interview. Each of the 11 questions were asked, each specified probe was asked, and additional follow-up questions were used to gather more information from the interviewees (e.g., What does _____ mean to you? and What was that like for you?). Following those questions, participants were asked if there was anything else they would like to add or discuss before ending the interview. The interviews ranged from one hour long to two hours long.

Data Analysis

Each step of the research process incorporated diversity of perspective and consensus, with a consensual coding team working together for various steps of the process and finding consensus at each step, ensuring limited bias during the analysis process. All team members transcribed the interviews, and participants’ exact words were transcribed. The transcriptions included instances of silence, laughter, sighs, and any other nonverbal reactions from participants. All of the interview recordings were erased after the transcriptions were finished. All identifying information was removed from the interview transcriptions in order to ensure confidentiality, and code numbers were used to refer to the participants. Data analysis followed the CQR guidelines, including creation and coding of research domains, crafting core ideas, and conducting cross-analysis. A report of the study outcomes will be shared with the first-generation
program director in order to help improve the program and inform our knowledge of how first-generation students experience college and meet their goals.

**Domains**

Using the interview protocol and previous research, the research team members consensually created a list of domains, which are overall categories of themes or ideas that the participants discuss in their interviews (Hill, 2012; Hill et al., 2005). The domains were developed based on the interview protocol and past research findings. These domains were changed and revised throughout the research process until they became consistent across transcripts. Domains for the first three transcripts were consensually coded with the team, and following this, rotating pairs identified the domains on the remaining transcripts. Different rotating pairs then checked over the other pairs’ domain choices and made suggestions or revisions as needed.

**Core Ideas**

Team members then consensually created core ideas for the first transcript, which are succinct summaries of the raw data that reflect what the participant reported in the interview (Hill, 2012; Hill et al., 2005). In creating these summaries, the core ideas should reflect what was stated in the raw data in order to avoid any interpretation or bias from the coding team members. Three members of the team were responsible for creating the remaining core ideas.

**Cross-analysis**

Cross-analysis was used to draw themes together across the core ideas. Through cross-analysis, team members generated categories and subcategories that represented consistent themes that emerged from the data (Hill, 2012; Hill et al., 2005). As descriptors for the number
of transcripts included in each category, Hill’s (2012) recommended terms specific to the
category frequencies were used, including general for results applying to all or all but one
participant, typical for results applying to 50% or more of the participants, and variant for results
applying to less than 50% of the participants. Finally, categories that only included one or two
participants were removed.

**Auditing**

In following Hill’s (2012) CQR methods, the coding team’s domains and categories were
reviewed by an auditor who had previous experience with qualitative research methods. The
auditor provided reactions, feedback, and suggestions for edits. Recommended changes were
explored and incorporated.
CHAPTER 3
RESULTS

Research Team’s Exploration of Biases and Expectations

Typical themes of the research team’s biases and expectations are summarized in the following paragraph. Team members discussed an overall potential bias in relating more with participants who have similar experiences compared to themselves and an expectation that their own experiences will shape their interpretation of the data. Other themes that emerged included the expectation that visible identities would be associated with greater marginalization experiences, marginalization experiences would be associated with negative outcomes, and participants would have greater resilience because of these experiences. Team members discussed how to acknowledge when their biases and expectations may be coming up and how to create a safe space to discuss different interpretations of the raw data. All team members reported an openness and ability to bracket their biases and approach the data using an open, nonjudgmental lens.

CQR Analysis

The data was organized into nine domains (i.e., identifying as someone who has been marginalized, reactions to marginalization experiences, experiences associated with marginalization, experiences specific to economic constraints, success mechanisms, barriers to success, family, ideal life with no limitations, and others’ marginalization experiences). The domains, categories, and subcategories that emerged from the data are listed in Table 3-1. Each category corresponds with its category frequency, including the labels of general, typical, and variant. Following CQR guidelines (Hill, 2012), categories were labeled as general if they applied to 12-13 participants, typical if they applied to 7-11 participants, and variant if they
applied to 3-6 participants. The general and typical results are discussed in depth below, and participant quotes are included to provide rich examples of these categories.

In reviewing the sample demographics, it is important to note that the majority of the participants were participants of color, and only two of the participants identified as European American/White. The data revealed no noticeable differences between these groups in the category results other than participants of color experiencing the additional intersection of marginalized identities: race/ethnicity. Because no differences emerged, all of the participants were included in data analyses.

Table 3-1. Domains and categories emerging from the data ($N = 13$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain/Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying as someone who has been marginalized</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>T (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>V (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactions to marginalization experiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>V (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignoring experiences of marginalization</td>
<td>V (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking the perspective of the oppressor</td>
<td>V (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used to it</td>
<td>V (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silencing self</td>
<td>V (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness/speaking up</td>
<td>V (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiences associated with marginalization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working harder than others</td>
<td>G (13)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical reflections of stereotypes of self and others</td>
<td>G (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving back/Advocacy/Mentoring</td>
<td>G (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalized oppression</td>
<td>G (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health concerns</td>
<td>T (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing overall expectations of rejection from others</td>
<td>V (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling empowered</td>
<td>V (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social belongingness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusion and isolation</td>
<td>T (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>V (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiences specific to economic constraints</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted freedom/limited activity participation compared to peers</td>
<td>G (13)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 3-1. Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain/Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budgeting and future financial planning as a priority</td>
<td>G (13)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comparing self to peers</td>
<td>G (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear and stress related to economic constraints</td>
<td>T (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Success Mechanisms</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>T (11)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scholarship money</td>
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<td>Career motivation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
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<td>Academic motivation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Attitude</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gratitude/Could have it worse</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Optimism</td>
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<td>Growth in perspective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pride</td>
<td>V (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion/Spirituality</td>
<td>V (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Barriers to success</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Not wanting to be a burden/ask for help</td>
<td>T (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-doubt</td>
<td>T (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of transportation</td>
<td>T (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of access/feeling behind/lack of networking opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Family</strong></td>
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<td>Family values</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of family support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not wanting to be like family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Need for financial knowledge growing up to help family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family sacrifice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pressure from family to succeed</td>
<td>V (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideal life with no limitations</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>T (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivy League or better school</td>
<td>T (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happier/more enjoyment in life</td>
<td>V (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same career</td>
<td>V (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different Career</td>
<td>V (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Others’ marginalization experiences</strong></td>
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Table 3-1. Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain/Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>T (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>V (5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: G = general (12-13 of total), T = typical (7-11 of total), V = variant (3-6 of total).

Identifying as someone who has been Marginalized

This domain categorized people into those who identified with being marginalized and those who did not identify with being marginalized. All participants described experiences of marginalization throughout the interviews, but although these experiences would be defined as marginalization, it was typical for participants to deny experiencing marginalization when asked the first interview question while it was variant for participants to endorse experiencing marginalization. For example, participants answered with “No, not really” and “Um, not really.” All participants discussed marginalization experiences related to social class and often related to other pieces of cultural identity as well, highlighting the intersections of marginalized experiences for these first-generation students. Some participants seemed to understand their experiences more clearly as they answered interview questions and some mentioned not realizing how much of an effect some of their experiences have had on their lives.

Reactions to Marginalization Experiences

This domain captured participants’ reactions and behaviors in response to experiences of marginalization. Within this domain, all of the participants’ reactions fell into the variant frequency category, and no general or typical reactions emerged. Participants discussed often responding with acceptance, as they feel this is something they will consistently have to deal with because of their cultural identity and report that they are used to it. One participant stated
that at her university, “If I want to be out of my comfort zone, I have to accept that sometimes I’m going to be in situations where people are just going to be rude or racist or whatever it may be.” Participants also discussed ignoring experiences of marginalization because they do not want to think about it or do not know how to respond to an oppressor. In classrooms, participants talked about feeling uncomfortable and not wanting to share their perspectives. In addition, in an attempt to understand the reasons behind their oppression, participants shared they will take the perspective of the oppressor in order to rationalize their own mistreatment. Finally, a few participants described having reactions but deciding to silence themselves, often feeling they should have said something, while others talked about speaking up and responding with assertiveness. Other participant responses that did not meet the variant category included educating the oppressor, humor, shock, denial, shame, embarrassment, and minimizing.

Experiences Associated with Marginalization

Responses that fell into this domain reflect the effects of living with marginalization experiences. All participants discussed working harder than their peers in academics, career development, and other areas, and one participant reflected,

Like some of my classes I could be the only black kid and stuff, so it’s really weird. Or I feel like, I mean, it’s not said, but I feel like the pressure is on. So I’m like dang. I’m the only black kid in here, so I feel like I have to overachieve to just prove that I belong here.

Another category that all participants fell into was engagement in critical reflections about stereotypes of one’s own cultural identity as well as others’. Participants frequently reflected on the effects of culture, stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. For example, one participant stated,
I realized how much all these labels affect people and that stereotypes do affect people, especially, you know, the first gen [students]. They’re like “Oh you’re poor, you’re Hispanic or you’re an immigrant or something.” You know, these bad associations, so like if you’re a first gen [student], you can’t afford anything here in college or you’re not going to be a legacy for a fraternity or a sorority type of thing.

Generally, participants developed the value of giving back as a result of their experiences, prioritizing helping, mentoring, and advocating for others. Participants consistently reported wanting to give back to those that helped them as well as the importance of helping others succeed. One participant shared, “If anyone ever needed it, I want to give back financially because I’ve received a lot of help financially,” and another said, “I hope one day, after I am financially stable, I’ll be able to give back and help … organizations that have helped me and helped others that can’t- don’t have the funds to have food.”

Although no participants used the term internalized oppression, all but one participant spoke about themselves in ways that reflected internalized oppression. As an example, one participant shared,

I know for example, like physical abilities, women can’t do, for example playing a sport. Men obviously do that better than women. But, that makes me mad because I really wish women could do this thing well. Or, as like for running in general, women are just not genetically made to be as fast as men.

Another participant stated,

I’ll catch myself starting off with a more diluted sense of my personality, just cause I don’t want to scare anybody away, cause I know Hispanics are very passionate and like
emotional and very hyper. So then I don’t- I wouldn’t want to scare away somebody that’s calmer and more laid back.

Typically, participants discussed having mental health concerns while in college, including instances of high stress, difficulty adjusting, ruminating thoughts, worry and anxiety, depression, loneliness, emotional dysregulation, low self-esteem, and trauma. One participant reflected on her experiences opening up to peers, sharing “then it’s like, okay well my mom’s been really sick, or I’ve been homeless, and then they’re like come on, this isn’t the worst thing ever. But it still hurts. It still puts me in a bad, sad place.”

Social exclusion and isolation at college was another typical experience participants reported, describing feeling misunderstood, not good enough, and like an outsider. One individual described not feeling good enough, stating

I am very outspoken. It puts people off, or they don’t want me. Not that they don’t want me, but they find other better people that were chosen. And I’m just like, they’re dumb! But I’m not going to say anything because that’s up to them and not up to me. But I feel like that’s limited my choices, because a lot of things are like “oh we’re diverse” because they have one brown person or one black person or one female and that’s it. But I wasn’t good enough to be their token Hispanic girl, probably because I was too outspoken about it.

Participants who discussed instances of feeling social acceptance were when they were able to relate to those they were with, in their own community, and with campus organizations dedicated to marginalization issues. Other variant categories include developing overall expectations of rejection from other students and feeling empowered.
Experiences Specific to Economic Constraints

This domain categorizes the experiences specific to economic constraints, with three categories including all 13 participants and one including 11. Participants regularly compared themselves to their peers and described restricted freedom to attend academic and social events, visit places and take trips, join extracurricular groups on campus, and explore course and career options. Participants consistently talked about missing out on college experiences and not having as much fun as peers because of their economic constraints. One participant shared, “I’m in the running club here, and so they do a lot of club things where they go out to eat every week or something, and I never really go to those because in my mind I’m like where do they get all this money to go out to eat.”

All participants also described prioritizing budgeting and future planning when making decisions in college. Participants talked about closely following their budget in order to have enough money to support themselves and finish college as well as set themselves up well for the future. Here is one example:

I have my money and have to manage it in a way that I can live and save money but not be stressed about how I’m living with this money. I sit down and figure out what’s necessary. I need to pay rent, I need to pay electricity, I need to pay all this, and then it’s just extra money even though it’s money I’m saving. So I limit myself when I need to pay for stuff because I can use that money for when I’m moving to whatever law school I go to because now I know how much it costs to move to college, to move to a city, and that money can help me move to whatever city I go to for law school.
Fear and stress related to economic constraints were seen typically across participants. For example, one participant stated, “I’m very afraid for example when I pay my rent. I’m like oh no I just lost money.” Another reported, “that’s the only time it gets kinda stressful is when the semester starts to end and money starts to run out, so I have to pick which bills I’ll pay for.”

**Success Mechanisms**

Responses that went into this domain provide information on the success mechanisms that help these first-generation, economically constrained students succeed in college and effectively pursue a career. Everyone discussed social support as a reason for their success and progress toward their goals. All participants discussed the importance of emotional social support (e.g., intimacy and acceptance) and most discussed the importance of instrumental social support (e.g., tangible help and guidance). Further, all participants reflected on their resilience helping them cope with their experiences and achieve their academic goals, and everyone emphasized that without the program money they are receiving, they “definitely would not be here” at their current prestigious university.

Generally, participants cited career motivation as a success mechanism, feeling driven by their experiences and determined to succeed in their futures. One participant said, “I think it's just, you know, maybe more persistence in pursuing [my career goals] just because I know I have these people that doubt me and I had these people that tell me I can't do it. It just makes me more motivated.” Typically, participants discussed academic motivation as well, with one participant sharing, “I kind of use as motivation to do well in college just because if I don’t succeed I don’t really know where else I would go in life.” In these students typically, success is also boosted by self-efficacy, or our belief in our ability to achieve our goals. Participants talked about having
confidence in their abilities, believing that hard work pays off, and having plans for if something goes wrong. As an example, one participant stated “the different experiences that I’ve had have made it easier for me to overcome barriers and obstacles in my life. So if something new pops up, I know I can take an action upon it to solve that.”

An additional success mechanism that emerged from the data is attitude, with participants typically reporting gratitude (“I’ve learned a lot about my personal finances just by not having anything at all, and it’s made me I guess appreciate the smaller things”), optimism (“I'm a strong believer of everything happens for a reason, and it'll all work out in the end”), and growth in perspective (“I’ve been able to see someone who’s had a perfect life and someone who hasn’t and how I fit into that. It’s literally given me a completely different perspective, and I am grateful for that”) and variantly reporting pride as a result of marginalization experiences. Religion/spirituality was also discussed with variant frequency, in that belief and hope is helpful as a success mechanism.

**Barriers to Success**

Responses within this domain provide information about barriers that have made it harder for participants to achieve their academic and career goals. Typically, participants described not wanting to be a burden to others and not wanting to ask for help. One participant stated,

> It has been kind of hard to like ask for help, but I feel like there’s plenty of opportunity to get help from people. I guess I’m just kind of standing in my own way, and I feel like especially with this major everyone is so close knit, and it’s so easy to just like, I don’t know, talk to people and I don’t know, be involved, and I just kind of feel like I’m my own worst enemy when it comes to that.
Further, participants typically endorsed feelings of self-doubt that create uncertainty about their ability to achieve their goals. An example of this is “There have been stressors that I’ve maybe questioned if I can achieve my goals. So the worry about that sort of makes me doubt my abilities. I think all of the doubt that I feel is just mostly myself. Just like worrying if I can do it.”

Finally, participants typically discussed the lack of transportation, access to resources, and networking opportunities in both academic and career-related ways. Themes that emerged included no information and guidance from family, feeling behind compared to others, no network of mentors, and limited financial resources to support attainment of academic and career opportunities. One participant reported, “So it’s like lack of opportunities for experience but it also feels like lack of knowledge about opportunities.”

**Family**

This domain grouped responses related to family together and provides information on how participants’ families are associated with their academic and career development. All participants discussed family values being important to shaping their lives, including values of education, determination, overcoming obstacles, and humility. Families emphasized the importance of financial stability and security as well as achieving career aspirations. One participant stated,

It’s because I had the discipline in my earlier years, so I’m not like those other people in high school that smoked weed and stuff. I’m so against that. I guess it all starts with family and what type of ideals they insert into you, and so it started with family and then it progressed to it being myself.
On the other hand, participants typically talked about a lack of family support, not being able to rely on family members, experiencing doubt from family members questioning their abilities, and having to support family members financially. One participant reported,

> I feel like [family are] supposed to be the people that lift you up and give you the support that you need, but when you know, they're doubting you and not necessarily saying that you won't achieve it but just not believing that you're actually doing what you're doing, it's just kinda like well I am and you still don't believe me. I can't prove you wrong. So it's just like, what's it worth if they're not going to believe you no matter what you do. So it just kinda like gets me unmotivated.

Relatedly, participants discussed not wanting to be like family and not wanting to make the same mistakes family members have made. One participant said, “I want to do this for myself just so I don’t have to go in the same paths as my family members.” Another reported, “I don’t want to do what they did. I want to do better for myself have a good career.” Other typical categories included the need for financial knowledge growing up to help family (e.g., “I would always help my mom in the grocery store buying. We had a certain amount of food money per week that we could spend. I was always helping her figure it out. I always knew exactly how much things cost from a fairly young age.”) and family sacrifice (e.g., “I always had food. I always had enough so the fact that they made those sacrifices for me so that I could focus on school.”). Pressure from family to succeed emerged as a variant category.

**Ideal Life with no Limitations**

This domain captured what participants reported would be their ideal life without limitations. Typically, they talked about traveling more often and attending an Ivy League/better
school instead of their present university. Variant categories included being happier and having more enjoyment in life, pursuing the same career, and pursuing a different career.

**Others’ Marginalization Experiences**

When discussing marginalization experiences, participants typically reported that family members have experienced marginalization. As an example, one participant said, “It was just when I went with my dad that I would notice the security following us the entire time. I noticed that ever since I was little.” Friends experiencing marginalization emerged as a variant category.
CHAPTER 4
DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to investigate how first-generation students’ experiences of marginalization and economic constraints are associated with their academic and career development and how these experiences support and interfere with the accomplishment of their goals. PWT was used as a framework to create the interview questions while also aiming to keep them broad. In line with PWT, the data support and extent the theory’s discussion of the importance of experiences of marginalization and economic constraints to first-generation students’ academic and career development. Participant responses were organized into nine domains, including identifying as someone who has been marginalized, reactions to marginalization experiences, experiences associated with marginalization, experiences specific to economic constraints, success mechanisms, barriers to success, family, ideal life with no limitations, and others’ marginalization experiences. All participants discussed working harder than others, critical reflections of stereotypes of self and others, restricted freedom and limited activity participation compared to peers, budgeting and future financial planning as a priority, comparing self to peers, and the importance of emotional social support, resilience, scholarship money, and family values. Results provide support for previous studies as well as extend research on the role of context in academic and career development in first-generation, economically constrained students.

Several previous findings were supported in the current study. Participants discussed being less prepared academically (Choy, 2001), having limited family support (Gibbons & Borders, 2010), having limited knowledge about college (Vargas, 2004) and limited social capital (Parks-Yancy, 2012; Tate et al., 2015), experiencing numerous barriers (Spiegler &
and finding less academic resources (Collier & Morgan, 2008). Further, the limited participation in activities designed to advance learning outcomes and less time spent studying are likely a result of the participants’ discussions of limited financial resources and time constraints. Indeed, participants in the present study consistently spoke about working harder than others and having busy schedules. Additionally, the majority of participants identified with a cultural identity comprised of intersections of multiple marginalized identities (e.g., first-generation, ethnicity/race, social class, and gender; Engle & Tinto, 2008). Identifying within multiple marginalized identity statuses has consistently been associated with more harmful outcomes and may heighten the oppression that individuals experience (Bose, 2012; Jyrkinen & McKie, 2012). Investigating visible (e.g., race/ethnicity) and invisible (e.g., first-generation) identity statuses in individuals with varying amounts of privilege and oppression is incredibly important to further understanding the implications of culture and context within the world of work.

Participants consistently described their experiences of marginalization and their reactions to those, including more healthy reactions, such as assertiveness, and more unhealthy reactions, such as silencing themselves. Almost half of the participants discussed their acceptance of their experiences and taking the perspective of the oppressor following experiences of marginalization. Curiosity, empathy, and understanding are important to increasing open mindedness and bringing people together. In perspective taking, participants may be practicing empathy and trying to understand where the other person is coming from instead of judging and rejecting them. However, in accepting and understanding the oppressor’s perspective, participants may be unintentionally confirming harmful thoughts about themselves
and the groups in which they belong. Short-term, this strategy may decrease distress and avoid conflict, potentially keeping the participant safe from violence, but over time this has the potential to reinforce damaging stereotypes and shape individuals’ self-concepts. Future studies must further explore experiences of acceptance and perspective taking in order to gain a clearer understanding of their purpose and subsequent effects.

Another important finding suggests that experiences of internalized oppression (David, 2013) and self-doubt are associated with first-generation students ability to succeed. Prior research suggests that first-generation students are more likely to experience imposter syndrome, or overwhelming feelings of inadequacy despite accomplishments (Canning, LaCosse, Kroeper, & Murphy, 2019), which often leads to feelings of self-doubt. It may be that participants’ feelings of inadequacy are leading to self-doubt no matter how well they have performed academically and prepared professionally. In the consistent comparisons to others that participants described throughout their interviews, students may be gathering information about their own worth through what they see in their peers and subsequently influencing their self-esteem (Mussweiler & Bodenhausen, 2002). Future research should focus on investigating the potential sources of self-doubt to guide the development of interventions.

Results illustrate the large role family plays in the academic and career development of first-generation students and the significant role of economic constraints in academic and career decisions these students must make at college. It may be important to look across groups, investigating differences between students who have support from their families and students who do not. Further, many of the categories within the ideal life domain shed light on what participants may feel like they are missing out on in their experiences of college and beyond.
Almost half of participants described looking for greater happiness and enjoyment in life, which suggests these students may currently be struggling to find enjoyment now. Further exploring what brings students joy and comfort presently may highlight how students may the find time and space for more enjoyment in life.

One finding that stood out was the domain suggesting that participants denied having experienced marginalization in their life although their interview answers aligned with the definition of marginalization. This result may be in line with research on the personal/group discrimination discrepancy (Taylor, Wright, Moghaddam, & Lalonde, 1990). This discrepancy posits that individuals may be more aware of ways that their own identity group is discriminated against while not seeing as much evidence for personal experiences of discrimination, which research suggests may be due to denial of personal experiences of discrimination and/or information processing biases. Future researchers may aim to investigate this personal/group discrimination discrepancy in first-generation students and examine the potential processes leading to this discrepancy.

**Limitations**

These findings should be critically evaluated within the present sample’s demographic characteristics. These participants were academically high achieving students, as evidenced by their acceptance into their university’s scholarship program, and further research must be conducted with first-generation students across the continuum of academic achievement. Further, it is possible these students may be more connected to campus because of the events and activities associated with their scholarship program. There may be key differences in the role of marginalization and economic constraints in first-generation students lives who have not had the
opportunities to achieve as highly in academics and find as much support from a campus organization. Additionally, many of these students appeared to have previous knowledge about marginalization and diversity initiatives, which may have provided a stronger foundation for the discussion of marginalization experiences. In addition to defining the term, it may be important in future studies to explore how familiar participants are with the construct of marginalization and how it may impact those experiencing it. Most participants were sophomore students, and it may be beneficial to gather more information from seniors who have had more experiences in college and may be able to reflect in a different way on how these experiences have shaped their academic and career paths. Although examining experiences within the intersections of identity is a strength of the current study, the researchers did not gather much information on ability status other than experiences that participants discussed regarding their mental health. Ability status is often left out of discussions when studying identity, and it is important to incorporate our understanding of how this frequently invisible identity may intersect with others and correlate with academic and career development.

Regarding the research team, many of the members were trained in CQR methods for this study only, and a team of researchers with more experience in CQR may have challenged and/or analyzed the data more intensely. Although power dynamics were addressed and minimized, the undergraduate students within the team may have felt less comfortable sharing any dissenting perceptions. Also, some team members left during the completion of the project after graduating from their undergraduate institution, and the new member may not have had as much experience with the raw data as the original team members did through each step of the research process.
Future research must aim to gather more information about the participants and continue to encourage deep, analytical discussions in qualitative research methods.

Additionally, although team members discussed and challenged biases associated with the study constructs in depth, these biases may have had some effect on the interpretation of the present study data. Qualitative data programming software may be used in future studies in order to minimize potential team member error and limit the amount of interpretation needed. Finally, the auditor did not review every step of the research process because of the number of team member reviews at each stage, but the outside perspective at each stage of the project may have been beneficial in reducing potential researcher biases.

**Implications**

Implications include guidance on clinical work with first-generation students and opportunities for the creation of preventative or intervention programs aimed at improving academic and career development. The present study as well as previous study findings describe both empowering and oppressive experiences for first-generation students, and it is crucial for clinicians to acknowledge the breadth involved in the first-generation experience and how this may impact students on an individual, interpersonal, and systemic level. Reflecting on the participants’ discussions about resilience and attitude, strength-based approaches may be more effective in providing understanding and validation for these students. A deeper understanding of these students’ experiences may help clinicians guide students in ways that are more attainable and realistic for their lives. Further, acknowledging and exploring how clinicians’ cultural identities may be impacting their approach may help mitigate the potentially harmful effects of related biases and assumptions.
Considering the quantity of categories outlining the potentially harmful role of marginalization and economic constraint experiences on development, it is important for clinicians to prioritize the exploration of the development of internalized oppression, challenge imposter syndrome, and decrease self-doubt. Research shows that the values affirmation intervention (Cohen, Garcia, Apfel, & Master, 2006; Harackiewicz et al., 2014) challenges any potential confirmation of stereotypes or oppression within an individuals’ understanding of themselves. In focusing on self-compassion and worthiness, students may begin to reshape their understandings of themselves and create more positive representations of the groups in which they identify. This intervention may increase positive self-regard, decrease self-doubt, and increase healthy identity development.

Since working with first-generation, economically constrained students involves work on an individual and a systemic level, clinicians must take a more active role in securing basic needs as well as disseminating information to their clients. Clinicians may have to take more of a consultant role and provide resources and information that will aid in students’ academic and career development. Collaboration with case managers, financial aid offices, diversity committees, career centers, and other campus and community organizations will be essential in providing valuable information and creating a network for students that they are not able to establish on their own.

Results of the present study suggested that many of the participants experience mental health concerns, limited support from family, and pressure from family to succeed, but these students also reported suppressing their help-seeking behaviors. This may be a combination of not wanting to be a burden, having limited knowledge of campus resources, and having limited
free time. Efforts to increase access to mental health resources and information about what is available on university-wide levels may help increase help-seeking behaviors in first-generation students. Additionally, outreach programming can be developed and utilized as a way to bring psychoeducation and therapeutic interventions to spaces where first-generation students may be spending their time. This may be through their courses, residence halls, trusted organizations, and/or other campus initiatives. Further, drawing from discussions in the present study about interactions the participants had with their peers, continuing-generation students seem to lack the education regarding the marginalization first-generation students experience as well as the combined detrimental effects of intersecting marginalized identities. Curriculums and collegiate programs that educate all students on cultural identity, power, and oppression are critical for the prioritization of social justice and the progress in improving academic and career development across all students. Advocacy, activism, and allyship initiatives must be developed in order to see real change in ensuring respect for diversity, equity, and access to opportunities.
APPENDIX A
DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

Demographic Form

Please tell us a little about yourself. This information will be used only to describe the sample as a group.

What is your age, in years? ____ (free response)

What is your gender?
● Male
● Female
● Transgender
● Other

What ethnicity do you primarily identify with?
● African/African-American
● Native American
● Middle Eastern
● Asian/Asian American
● Asian Indian
● Hispanic/Latino/a American
● Pacific Islander
● Caucasian
● Other

What is your religious affiliation?
● Protestant
● Catholic
● Other Christian
● Mormon
● Jewish
● Muslim
● Buddhist
● Hindu
● Agnostic
● Atheist
● Spiritual/Non-Religious
● Other

How would you identify your sexual orientation? (please check the one best descriptor):
● Exclusively heterosexual
● Bisexual
● Exclusively homosexual
What year of college are you currently in?
- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Greater than 4 years

What is your current GPA _______(Free response)

How would you identify your current social class?
- Lower class
- Working class
- Middle class
- Upper middle class
- Upper class

How would you identify your childhood social class?
- Lower class
- Working class
- Middle class
- Upper middle class
- Upper class

What is your current relationship status?
- Single/never married
- Married
- Divorced
- Separated
- Remarried
- Living with partner
- Widowed
Think of this ladder as representing where people stand in the United States.

At the top of the ladder are the people who are the best off – those who have the most money, the most education and the most respected jobs. At the bottom are the people who are the worst off – who have the least money, least education, and the least respected jobs or no job.

The higher up you are on this ladder, the closer you are to the people at the very top; the lower you are, the closer you are to the people at the very bottom.

Where would you place yourself on this ladder?

Please place a large “X” on the rung where you think you stand at this time in your life, relative to other people in the United States.

Indicate where you fall on the ladder above

- ☐ 10. Top rung
- ☐ 9
- ☐ 8
- ☐ 7
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 1. Bottom rung

People sometimes describe having a calling in life, often to a specific job or career. Do you have a calling? YES  NO
Interview Protocol

- Describe goals before interview
- Define marginalization and economic constraints

1. What comes to mind when you think about your experiences of marginalization in your life? (Probe: Others’ experiences of marginalization)

2. Tell me about a specific time when you experienced marginalization. (Probe: How do you cope with or move on from these experiences?)

3. What comes to mind when you think about any difficult experiences meeting financial responsibilities in your life? (Probe: Others’ experiences of economic constraints)

4. Tell me about a specific time when you were unable to meet financial responsibilities. (Probe: How do you cope with or move on from these experiences?)

5. How have your experiences with marginalization and/or difficulties meeting financial responsibilities impacted your experience of college?

6. How have your experiences with marginalization and/or difficulties meeting financial responsibilities impacted your motivation toward and ability to pursue a career?

7. How do these experiences affect how you approach similar barriers or other obstacles in your life?

8. What specifically has gotten you through and helped you move forward in life and achieve your goals? (Probe: What has helped you succeed in college?)

9. What specifically has hindered your ability to succeed and achieve your goals?

10. If there were no limitations for you, how would your life be different?

11. What are your thoughts about your own resilience? (Probe: How has resilience helped you move forward in life and achieve your goals?)
LIST OF REFERENCES


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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jessica W. England graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park with a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology and minor in human development and Loyola University Maryland with a Master of Science degree in counseling psychology. After graduating, she taught undergraduate courses at Loyola University Maryland and the following year relocated to Gainesville, Florida for her doctoral studies in counseling psychology at the University of Florida. She is currently completing her pre-doctoral internship at the University of Florida Counseling and Wellness Center.