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Social Cognitive Career Theory in a Diverse World: Guest Editors' Introduction

Robert W. Lent[1] and Steven D. Brown[2]

We were delighted to receive an invitation from Bruce Walsh, editor of the *Journal of Career Assessment*, to assemble a special issue devoted to advances in social cognitive career theory (SCCT). This was an opportunity that was too good for us to pass up. The only question was, how should we organize the issue? We ultimately decided to emphasize SCCT's relevance to the career development of a diverse range of persons (e.g., students of color; those facing economic challenges; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender [LGBT] workers; international students and workers) and to issues touching on social justice (e.g., inclusion of underrepresented persons in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics [STEM] fields; understanding the career needs of the unemployed; management of multiple roles in the service of gender equity).

Much of the earliest impetus for developing SCCT was to extend the study of career behavior to a broader range of persons and situations than those highlighted by earlier career theories. Indeed, career scholars had exhorted the field to move beyond its primary fixation with the career development of White, male, middle class, and relatively well-educated persons (e.g., see Fitzgerald & Betz, 1994). Vocational psychology inquiry had also often focused nearly exclusively on students and workers in the United States. Fortunately, the past 20 or so years have seen much progress in the diversification of career development theory and research, and the field seems poised to dramatically extend these advances, relying on a new generation of social justice-minded and internationally oriented theorists and researchers.

Career self-efficacy theory (Hackett & Betz, 1981), the precursor of SCCT, emphasized the ways in which women's career behavior can be limited (and also fostered) through social, familial, and educational influences that become internalized, in part, through perceptions of personal capabilities, or self-efficacy beliefs—a construct adapted from Bandura's (1986) general social cognitive theory. Hackett and Betz's seminal insights were later generalized to the experiences of other understudied groups, such as women of color (e.g., Hackett & Byars, 1996). SCCT built on this sturdy foundation by incorporating additional features of Bandura's theory (e.g., outcome expectations, goals) and highlighting a range of "person input" (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, ability, trait)

[1] Department of Counseling, Higher Education, and Special Education, University of Maryland, College Park, MD, USA
[2] Loyola University Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA

Corresponding Author:
Robert W. Lent, Department of Counseling, Higher Education, and Special Education, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742, USA.
Email: boblent@umd.edu

and contextual (e.g., support and barrier) factors that, through their interaction, are assumed to help shape peoples' educational and career trajectories.

The current special issue gave us the chance to sample inquiry examining SCCT's models in the context of gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, culture, and socioeconomic status, thus representing a notable range of diversity for a single journal issue. The theory itself initially consisted of models of academic and career interest, choice, and performance (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994, 2000). A fourth SCCT model was aimed at understanding satisfaction and well-being in school and work settings (Lent & Brown, 2006, 2008). The most recent SCCT model examines the self-management of a variety of adaptive career behaviors across the life span (e.g., decision-making, job searching, role transitioning; Lent & Brown, 2013). The current set of articles highlight research on the interest and choice models but also feature several articles on the newer satisfaction and self-management models. Given space limitations, we are unable to summarize each model's primary predictions or the research testing them. Instead, we refer readers to the theory development articles themselves (e.g., Lent et al., 1994); a recent overview of SCCT (Lent, 2013); and meta-analyses of research on the interest, choice (Sheu et al., 2010), and performance models (Brown et al., 2008; Brown, Lent, Telander, & Tramayne, 2011).

The following articles are divided into two sets. The first section presents four focused reviews of the literature linking SCCT to social class/status (Flores, Navarro, & Ali, 2017), job loss and job finding (Thompson, Dahling, Chin, & Melloy, 2017), the participation of underrepresented persons in STEM fields (Fouad & Santana, 2017), and the career development of students and workers beyond the United States (Sheu & Bordon, 2017). The second section consists of seven original research studies testing SCCT's various hypotheses in relation to (a) the interests and choices of African American college students (Dickinson, Abrams, & Tokar, 2017), (b) the academic well-being of Spanish college students (Lent et al., 2017), (c) the counseling outcomes of Belgian career clients (Verbruggen, Dries, & Van Laer, 2017), (d) the academic persistence of first-generation college students in STEM majors (Garriott, Navarro, & Flores, 2017), (e) the workplace sexual identity management of LGBT workers (Tatum, Formica, & Brown, 2017), (f) the multiple role management intentions of college students (Roche, Daskalova, & Brown, 2017), and (g) the academic well-being of Chinese college students (Sheu, Liu, & Li, 2017). In addition to the range of populations and contexts they represent, these studies involve four of SCCT's five models, including some of the first studies designed explicitly to test the new career self-management model.

It is our hope that the articles in this special issue convey the range of applicability of SCCT's models and that they will inspire other researchers to extend the theory to new cultures, social justice themes, and additional populations that remain underserved or understudied by vocational psychology.

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