

2007

# A Quantitative Study Measuring Urban Youth's Conception of Work

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A Quantitative Study Measuring Urban Youth's Conception of Work

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## Acknowledgements

I would like to dedicate this thesis project to my family, who painstakingly have instilled in me the values of hard-work and dedication. My goals would not have been reached without their continued love and support. Thank you Mom, Dad, and Sing.

I would also like to thank the Department of Counselor Education faculty members, staff and fellow colleagues at State University of New York College at Brockport. You all have contributed to this memorable educational experience.

I would also like to give special thanks to the counselors, educators, and administrators at Thomas Jefferson High School. I would like to especially thank Ms. Ruby Bowman, Mrs. Tina Tortora, Mr. Michael Panasen, and Mrs. Kristine Resch. Without their concerted efforts, this project would have not been feasible.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank my supervisor, Ms. Constance Drojak. I have considered myself lucky to have the opportunity to know such a wonderful and genuine person such as you. I am truly grateful for your continued love and support. Thank you!

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### Abstract

In order to understand how urban youth define the concept of work, a quantitative study measuring conceptions of work will be given to 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students at an inner-city school district. The study included sixty high school students enrolled in career and finance management courses or involved in vocational programs such as the Career Exploration Internship program, or the Diversified Cooperative Occupational program. Study results reveal that for categories of race and ethnicity, five of the seven races displayed a higher preference towards intrinsic work belief statements in comparison to extrinsic work belief statements. Narrative data along with questionnaire results suggest that involvement in vocational educational programs influences urban youth's intrinsic work beliefs and impacts their perceptions towards future work.

## A Quantitative Study Measuring Urban Youth's Conception of Work

### Review of the Literature

This project is an initial investigation that will aim to explore and further understand urban youth's conception of work. Today, many urban schools have implemented school-to-work programs, which are also known as vocational education programs to some educators. In 1994, the School-to-Work Opportunities act provided the requisite funding for the implementation of career exploration programs (Visher, Bhandari, & Medrich, 2004). This legislation enabled states and school districts to develop a variety of vocational and educational programs that would help high school students make informed decisions about postsecondary education (Visher et al., 2004). Many students know little about career options or have difficulty conceptualizing their own talents. Countless more are uneducated about what work actually entails, and what preparations are needed for the types of jobs they typically encounter in the media. In many Western cultures, graduating from high school is viewed as a socially constructed milestone that marks the transition from adolescence to early adulthood (Dillon, Liem, & Gore, 2003). When students are faced with the transition of graduating from high school to making life-changing decisions, such as the pursuit of a higher education or to immediately enter into the workforce, the process itself can cause conflicting emotions, pressures, and expectations for the individual (Constantine, Kindaichi, & Miville, 2007). In addition, when students are ill informed about the preparations needed to enter into the workplace, or to further one's education, the process of transitioning from high school to career occurs with added strain (Blustein, Chaves, Diemer, Gallagher, Marshall, Sirin & Bhati, 2002). This is especially true for African-American adolescents, who are at a

considerable risk for experiencing unsuccessful school-to-work transitions (Chaves et al., 2004; Kerpleman & Mosher, 2004), due to their limited knowledge of themselves, their career interests, values and skills. Consequently, in their early years of high school, these same adolescents experience a narrow array of work opportunities, concentrated in retail and services, which may not reflect their own work values (Mortimer, Pimental, Ryu, Nash & Lee, 1996; Zunker, 1998).

Based on Chaves' et al. (2004) study, this project will quantitatively measure urban youth's conception of work, to provide further understanding of youth's beliefs, values, and perceptions towards the world of work. This article will also investigate the current goals of vocational and education programs, career development theories of individual work values and work perceptions, and environment and sociocultural factors that impact urban youth's conceptions towards work. These sections will also be followed by a description of the project's methods, participants' characteristics, results, discussions of the study's results and implications for further study.

#### *Purpose of School-to-work programs*

Vocational and educational programs were intended to inform students about furthering one's education and to ease them through their transition from high school to career (Blustein, Juntunen & Worthington, 2000; Visher et al., 2004). Vocational educational programs, such as the Career Exploration Internship program and the Diversified Cooperative Occupational Program, are developmental programs, which help students develop the entry-level career-based skills needed to sustain future employment. These programs provide students an opportunity to work part-time with local retailers and industries, and offer information on career majors, job shadowing, internships, and

preparatory vocational courses. Both administrators and educators anticipate that the hands on experience that students receive would enable goal setting and recognition of prerequisites required for a postsecondary education (Rojewski & Sheng, 1993). School-to-work programs strive to provide students a meaningful connection between education and work (Blustein et al., 2000), in the hopes that these youths will find their work experiences meaningful and relevant (Chaves et al., 2004).

School-to-work programs are aimed to increase work exposure and prepare youth for the transition from high school-to-work (McWhiter, Rasheed, & Crothers, 2000). However, there has been some controversy in regards to vocational education programs and its intentions to prepare students for the world of work. Some theorists such as Brown and Brooks (1991) would agree that exposure to work experience can provide individual's with a direct opportunity for self-reflection, which would add to their knowledge of career information and their own talents. While others would disagree and add that school-to-work interventions have been designed without the awareness of how recipients of these programs conceive of the relationship of themselves and future occupations (Chaves et al., 2004). Studies measuring urban youth's perceptions towards work have also shown mixed results. Researchers, such as Skorikov and Vondracek (1997) have reported that part-time work in urban youth did not significantly affect their career choices. While other researchers have revealed positive student perceptions in regards to vocational education and to the program's relevance in providing the necessary job skills and employment preparation (Rojewski & Sheng, 1993). Differences in results may not be solely based on the uniqueness of vocation programs, but rather on the student's perception towards work. Despite the efforts of counselors and educators to



assist urban youth in developing work readiness skills and attitudes necessary to be successful in the labor market (Chaves et al., 2004; D'Andrea, 1995), many of these individuals still struggle in the transition from school-to-work (Blustein, et. al., 2000). Perhaps the origins of these struggles can be traced to the individual's perceptions towards work. In a qualitative study, conducted by Chaves et al. (2004) that measured conceptions of work in urban youth, researchers have found that a majority of urban youth view work as a means to obtain financial security and that only a few view work as a means of personal development and self-expression. In other words, youth may not view work as a pathway to a career choice, but as a solely a means to gain financial security.

The school-to-work transition of urban youth, whose primary aspiration following high school graduation is to enter directly into employment rather than college, has become an increasingly important career development issue in the United States in the past decade (Herr, 1996). Students' school to work transition has been well recognized in both the vocational and organizational behavior literatures for its importance in securing future job employment in the nation's youth (Taylor, 1985). Recent school-to-work interventions, designed by federal legislative acts such as the School to Work Opportunities Act, Goals 2000, and Educate America Act, were intended to provide our nation's youth with the necessary skills to become successful participants in the world of work (Stone & Mortimer, 1998). However, there has been a growing concern for our nation's urban youth and their ability to secure future employment. There has been empirical evidence that suggests that urban youth often experience difficulty in moving from school to work. For example, statistical data reveals that a significant portion of

urban youth aged 16 to 24, lack entry-level employment skills (U.S. Department of Labor, 1993). For these individuals, the risk of finding unsatisfying and low-income paying jobs increases (Glover & Marshall, 1993; Wilson, 1996; Loughhead, Liu, & Middleton, 1995). Many of these individuals were found to be underemployed or stalled in positions for which a college degree was not required (U.S. Department of Labor, 2000).

In this study, racial-ethnic minorities are defined as any subordinate ethnic group that differs in terms of language, nationality, culture or religion. These include, but are not limited to, African-Americans, Blacks, Hispanics, Latino/as, and Asians. Minority groups may also be sociologically disadvantaged in terms of wealth, education, social status, and employment. Urban youth will also be a term used in this study to denote adolescents ranging ages 12-19, whose families live in urban areas, are financially impoverished and/or are struggling to make ends meet (Chaves et al., 2004).

Racial-ethnic minority youth commonly experience difficulty in obtaining access to stable and meaningful employment (Chaves et al., 2004). Statistical data reveals that the unemployment rates in the African-American community have remained consistently higher than their white counterparts, despite school-to-work interventions. For example, in 2005, the unemployment rate for African-Americans 16 years and older was twice the rate of whites (U.S. Department of Labor, 2005). However, the differences in employment rates between minority and majority youth remains unclear to some career development theorists (Brown, 2002). To help educators understand the effectiveness of school-to-career programs and predict future employment in urban youth, researchers have begun to explore urban youth's conception of work. To this date, there has been

limited research on youth's conception of work. In this study, researchers will quantitatively measure urban youth's conceptions of work to investigate the concepts, beliefs, and values youth hold towards the world of work.

### *Work Values*

Individual's work values have been identified as a critical variable in the career development process (Brown, 2002; Fouad & Winston, 2005). For instance, in the Cognitive Information Processing Theory, developed by Peterson, Sampson, Lenz and Reardon; values or valuing is known as the fourth phase in the Cycle of Information Processing Skills used in Career Decision Making (Peterson et al., 2002). In the valuing phase, clients evaluate and prioritize their course of action according to one's own value system (Peterson et al., 2002). In some instances, values are based on significant others, cultural groups and/or society (Peterson et al., 2002). According to Brown (2002), work values are defined as core beliefs in which individual's experiences are used as standards that guide how they "should" function at work and lead them to set directional goals. In other words, each individual's past work experiences will play a major role in types of future careers chosen (Brown, 2002). Therefore, limited exposure to educational opportunities and vocational information, that may assist the career development process of urban youth, would influence their work values and orientation towards work (Longhead et al., 1995; Loughlin & Barling, 2001).

Much of the previous research on work values has distinguished two types of values, both intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic work values express the desire for autonomy, interest, growth, creativity, and attach the importance to work itself (Ovadia, 2001; Ros, Schwartz, & Surkiss, 1999). Extrinsic work values express job security, level

of pay, benefits such as health insurance, to insure general security and maintenance in their lives (Ovadia, 2001; Ros et al., 1999). Previous research on work values had predicted that differences in intrinsic and extrinsic values would differ according to individuals work exposure, culture, and socioeconomic status (Ovadia, 2001; Ross et al., 1999; Shapiro, 1977).

An early study conducted by Shapiro (1977) confirmed this prediction by measuring work value differences between blacks and whites using the 1973 and 1974 General Social Survey. The assertion was that race would have a major effect on an individual's work values, independent of class. Shapiro's (1977) study revealed that black workers were more likely to value extrinsic values; high income and job security, and less likely to value intrinsic values, or experience feelings of accomplishment, than white workers. Shapiro (1977) suggests that racial discrepancies in the value of job rewards were due to the lower socioeconomic status of these participants. Mortimer, Pimental, Ryu, Nash & Lee (1996) confirms this suggestion and found that individuals in lower-level occupations were more likely to seek out and be motivated by extrinsic needs, while those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds were motivated by intrinsic needs. As was hypothesized, the study revealed a racial discrepancy in work values between blacks and whites, when the social class of these individuals was and was not controlled. When social class had not been controlled, 21 percent more blacks than whites, ranked high income as the most important job reward (Shapiro, 1977). When social class was measured, these numbers were reduced to 17 percent (Shapiro, 1977). According to the study's results, racial differences in values do exist, even after education, occupation, and income are controlled (Shapiro, 1977). Similar studies on

conception of work have suggested similarly, that the concept of work will hold different meanings across varying groups, as a response to sociocultural, historical, and political experiences (Cheatham, 1990; Fouad & Winston, 2005; Smith, 1983).

Ovadia (2001) built upon Shapiro's research by looking at both SES and gender differences between black and white workers, in their valuation of extrinsic and intrinsic work values. Using data on high school student's rating of importance of equality, money, career and family, Ovadia (2001) found that race and gender variables had significant effects on the importance of intrinsic values. Women in the sample placed a higher emphasis on intrinsic work values when compared to men (Ovadia, 2001). An even greater discrepancy was found between races and SES. Whites and middle-class respondents placed less importance on having money, an extrinsic value, when compared to blacks and members of the working class (Ovadia, 2001).

Values are primary factors in choosing, gaining satisfaction, and advancing in a career (Brown, 2002; Fouad & Winston, 2005). However, a number of contextual variables, such as socioeconomic status, family or group influence, history of discrimination, interact with values, to influence occupational choice (Brown, 2002). This is similar to the Cognitive Information Processing Approach theory, which suggests that values are sometimes based on significant others, cultural groups, and or society (Peterson et al., 2002). Authors, such as Lent, Brown & Hackett (1996), concur that an alternative approach to career counseling, one which focuses more consideration to the social-cultural factors of the individual, should be used when dealing with ethnic and minority groups (Brown, 2002; Brown & Brooks, 1991; Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1996). Brown (2002) has noted that in order for career counselors to be effective, they need to

take into consideration the cultural values of the individual, the multiple contexts in which he or she lives in, and how society impacts his or her opportunities and barriers to success.

### *Socioeconomic Status*

Socioeconomic status has been reported as being positively associated with occupational status, aspirations and expectations (Blustein, et. al., 2002; Pearson & Bieschke, 2001). This is consistent with Social Cognitive Career Theory, developed by Lent et al., (1996) which suggests that a person's values and contextual factors interrelate to influence career outcomes. Individuals at a lower socioeconomic status, such as the many urban inner-city youth with lower aspirations and career expectations, may view work differently than students from middle-class backgrounds. A qualitative study conducted by Blustein, et. al., (2002) found that the role of social class plays an important role and has a significant impact on students in the school-to-work transition. This study found that students interviewed from lower class backgrounds viewed work almost exclusively as a means of ensuring their economic survival (Blustein, et. al., 2002). Students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds equated work with receiving money and meeting basic needs, whereas students from higher income backgrounds not only viewed work as a way to receive money, but also as a means to gain intrinsic values, such as training and education, that may be applied to future vocational interests (Blustein, et. al., 2002). Blustein's, et. al. (2002), research results were consistent with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, which suggests that people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds place greater importance on extrinsic values and less importance on intrinsic

rewards in comparison to those from higher economic background (Maslow, 1964; Shapiro, 1977).

### *Environmental factors*

There is little acknowledgement given to differences of ethnicity, race, and oppression of minority groups (Richardson, 1993), and until recently, vocational programs have not been specifically geared toward students who are either academically challenged or are from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Ansell & Hansen, 1971). It has been argued that many of the ideas that have guided the theory and practices of school-to-work programs have been derived from the experiences of middle-class workers with affluent backgrounds (Blustein et al., 2000; Chaves et. al., 2004; Richardson, 1993; Savickas, 1999). It has been previously suggested that the view of work within the middle-class populations differ from those of the lower-class (Blustein et al., 2000; Ovadia, 2001). The assumption was that the middle-class places a greater importance on intrinsic values, such as the opportunity to explore one's interests, and abilities while working (Blustein et al., 2000; Ovadia, 2001; Ross, Schwartz, & Surkiss, 1999; Shapiro, 1977). Differences in work values, between middle class and urban minority youth, may be due to the context that these individuals live in. Studies have found significant results in circumstances where environmental factors such as poverty, unemployment, and exposure to crime, violence and discrimination, greatly affect the quality of life for those individuals, thus impeding the career development of urban youth (Constantine, Erickson, Banks, & Timberlake, 2006; Warner & Weist, 1996). Authors have also argued that urban youth's conception of work will differ from those youth in nurturing environments (Constantine et al., 2006; Kenny, et al., 2003). Given the context

in which urban youth are immersed, these individual's may view work as the result of chance and circumstances, that has little to do with the nature of the occupation or in terms of their own self-evaluation (Hoyt & Lester, 1995). Job opportunities that are available within the inner city and to those that possess limited job training and skills, offer fewer pathways for advancement and self-exploration (Kenny, Blustein, Chaves, Grossman, & Gallagher, 2003; Constantine et al., 2006). As a result, racial and ethnic minorities are restricted to a range of careers offering low pay and prestige (Carter & Cook, 1992). These assertions suggests that minority groups in a deprived living environment lack information about self, occupations, and the world of work, thus influencing their conceptions of work.

#### *Perceived Barriers*

Authors have argued that clients are not passive agents shaped by the environment and do not make career decisions in a vacuum (Cook, Heppner, & O'Brien, 2002; Kenny et al., 2003). Instead, the context in which individual's live in (home, school, and work) gives meaning to the environmental experience and acts on these interpretations in ways that further shapes career decision-making. According to SCCT, the number of barriers one perceives, further shapes adolescent's career-related attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors (Lent et al., 1996). When individuals perceive barriers such as poverty, ethnic and gender discrimination, or lack of social support, it can impact adolescent's career attitudes and behaviors (Fouad & Winston, 2005; Kenny et al., 2003; Patton, Creed & Watson, 2003). Several vocational researchers have noted the potential influence of perceived barriers among urban youth who often face racial/ethnic discrimination and found that these individuals are limited in educational attainment and career advancement (Lent et al.,



1996; McWhirter et al., 2000). Authors have commented that systemic factors along with perceived barriers, negatively impacts urban youth's conceptions of work (Constantine et al., 2006; Fouad & Winston, 2005; Herr & Cramer, 1997). McWhirter et al., (2000) measured perceived barriers and outcome expectations amongst urban high school students enrolled in a nine-week educational class. McWhirter et al. (2000) found that participant's expectations of obtaining a successful and satisfying career, that optimally utilizes the skills of the participant, were significantly higher at the end of the career educational class, when compared to those who took the class during the first quarter. Students that scored higher perceived barriers, also indicated lower outcome expectations (McWhirter et al., 2000). These results were consistent with Gloria and Hird (1999) study which noted that racial minority students, for example Blacks and Hispanics, possess the skills and abilities to be successful in regards to the world of work, but often carry doubts about acceptance into the workplace due to discrimination. Students that scored higher outcome expectations were immersed in a career educational course, in which the course provided students career decision-making skills to explore vocational options, as well as the means to access information about the current job market (McWhirter et al., 2000). Other studies measuring perceived barriers and outcome expectations were also consistent with McWhirter et al., (2000), study in which minority students enrollment in a vocational educational program resulted in their ability to accomplish tasks related to career decision making, thus increasing their confidence and ability to have a clear vision of their goals, strengths and interests (Flores, Ojeda, Huang, Gee & Lee, 2006; Gushue, Clarke, Partzer & Scanlan, 2006). These studies suggest that perceived barriers were overcome through participation in a vocational educational

program, thus influencing outcome expectations amongst minority individuals (Flores et al., 2006; Gushue et al., 2006; McWhirter et al., 2000). Although, outcome expectations and perceived barriers will not be measured in this study, results from previous studies suggests that overcoming perceived barriers influences outcome expectations, which play an integral role in the perceptions of work amongst students participating in school-to-work transition programs.

The range of potential barriers people may perceive have been distinguished as two types; external and internal factors (Patton et al., 2003). External factors, such as the structure of opportunity and environmental constraints related to ethnicity and socioeconomic status, influences the career decision-making process in urban youth and thus influence youth's perceptions of work (McWhirter et al., 2000). In addition, internal factors of the individual, such as perceptions about self, perceived barriers, and perceived structure of job opportunities, impacts minority's perspectives about work and career (Fouad & Winston, 2005; McWhirter et al., 2000). Both internal and external factors combine to influence an individual's perceptions of work, their occupational pursuits and their attainment of educational and career goals (Lent et al., 1996). External challenges, such as work discrimination and perceived work barriers, impact minority's perspectives about work and career (Fouad & Winston, 2005). Although racial minorities and White adolescents from high socioeconomic status do not differ in career interests and aspirations (Arbona, 1990; Evans & Herr, 1991), the lack of accessible jobs available to urban minority youth stifles their occupational interests (Wilson, 1996). This illustrates Gottfredson's career theory, which suggests that individuals preferred occupational choices are eliminated from further consideration, due to factors such as perceived

accessibility of any occupational choice (Gottfredson, 2002). Kao and Tienda's (1998) longitudinal study with minority youth, have shown that both Black and Hispanics exhibit high aspirations at any given point in time, but are less likely to maintain high aspirations throughout high school. These youth may perceive that they have fewer career opportunities and that high paying jobs are difficult to obtain (Constantine et al., 2006). These assertions are based on Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, and Herma (1951), which suggest that career choice is a developmental process, in which career compromises are made between the individual's wishes and occupational possibilities. In turn, urban minority youth may hold unrealistic aspirations and express feelings of hopelessness and resistance (Brown & Brooks, 1991). Urban youth may view work as a means of survival or as a way to get out of a violent community and escape poverty, without viewing work as a means of developing a satisfying career path. This type of thought pattern is in accordance with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, in which a person's needs are arranged in order of their emergence (Maslow, 1964). Indeed, the racial and ethnic discrimination these minorities face, impacts their educational and career development, by diminishing their career aspirations and expectations, thus reducing their motivation for school and career success (Constantine et al., 2006).

### *Parental factors*

Research has shown that parents play an integral role in shaping the job values of their children (Alliman-Brissett, Turner, & Skovholt, 2004; Martin & Tuch, 1993; Palmer & Cochran, 1988). In accordance with the Social Learning Theory developed by Bandura (1977, 1986) people learn predominantly by watching others. Parents, in many cases, are the primary figures in the lives of developing adolescents and have immense

impact on the career decision-making of their children (Palmer & Cochran, 1988). According to the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986), information about the world of work is communicated between parent and child in one of two ways or both ways. Parents may verbally express to their children how they feel about work, or they can express their feelings indirectly through mood or changes in behavior (Barling, 1990; Barling, Zacharatos, & Hepburn, 1999; Piotrkowki & Stark, 1987). Martin & Tuch (1993), further state that parents inadvertently prepare their children for the world of work by internalizing values based on their own occupational experiences. Studies have shown that by the age of 10, children can describe accurately where their parents work, what their parents do, and to some degree are even aware of their parent's level of job satisfaction (Abramovitch & Johnson, 1992; Kelloway & Watts, 1994). As a result, youth are agents to their parents' reactions to work and begin to develop clear perceptions of the world of work (Barling et al., 1999). Consequently, youth's perceptions of their parents' level of satisfaction towards work affects their own career decisions and future conceptions of work (Barling, 1990; Piotrkowski & Stark, 1987). For example, when children witness their parents involved in satisfying occupations, they too begin to develop positive attitudes towards work (Abramovitch & Johnson, 1992; Barling, Kelloway, & Bremermann, 1991; Kelloway & Watts, 1994). On the other hand, if children repeatedly witness their parent's lose their job, or experience job insecurities, they often fail to perceive work to be a potential source of growth and development (Barling, Dupre, Hepburn, 1998; Kelloway & Watts, 1994; Lim & Sng, 2006). As a result, these children may view work in a negative light (Barling et al., 1998). This

suggests that youth's conceptions of work are influenced by their parent's reactions to work (Barling et al., 1991; Kelloway & Watts, 1994).

Other studies have also examined parental values and family backgrounds, and their roles in career development (Loughlin & Barling, 2001; Pearson & Biesche, 2001; Paine, Deutsch, & Smith, 1967). Researchers argue that the social status of one's parents influences the work values of their children (Lim & Sng, 2006; Pearson & Bieschke, 2001; Saleh & Singh, 1973). The social status of one's parents reveals the level of income, type of occupation, and amount of education attained. Studies have shown that a majority of individuals classified as low socioeconomic status, receive less prestigious occupations, hold less than a high school degree, receive less income, and are unable to hold employment at a constant (Barling et al., 1998; Kerckhoff & Campbell, 2001). Job insecurity and attitudes towards money among these individuals can cross over to affect their children's perceptions of work through interactions within the family (Barling et al., 1999; Lim & Sng, 2006). Youth observing parents experiencing fiscal anxiety or job insecurity may be subjected to feelings of uncertainty and powerless (Barling et al., 1999; Lim & Sng, 2006). In turn, youth who continue to observe their parents experiencing fiscal anxiety, and who themselves may experience anxiety over money, will view money as instrumental in alleviating their feelings of self-doubt (Barling et al., 1999; Lim & Sng, 2006). Lim and Sng (2006) argue that youth whose underlying motives for work are to make money, will tend to work for extrinsic reasons, and will be less interested in doing work because they do not view work as having intrinsic meaning. Barling's et al., (1999) study further suggested that when children perceive a parent's feeling of insecurity in the workplace, this in turn affected the child's school performance and

predicted their own work beliefs and work attitudes. Working class parents are also more likely to foster evaluations of jobs that are based on extrinsic values, for example the amount of pay and benefits a person will receive for staying committed to a job (Martin & Tuch, 1993). Whereas, middle class parents would emphasize self-direction and encourage occupational evaluations based on intrinsic job rewards, such as the development of job skills, experience, growth and creativity (Martin & Tuch, 1993; Ros et al., 1999). Studies have found that intrinsic scores in middle-class family members were significantly correlated to intrinsic work values of their children (Kerckhoff & Campbell, 2001; Saleh & Singh, 1973).

Studies have also shown that when parents play a more active role in career planning of their children, it can significantly impact career decisions, and perceptions of their children's future work (Kenny et al., 2003; Palmer & Cochran, 1988; Pearson & Bieshe, 2001). Students were more likely to maintain more positive attitudes about the value of work, viewed work as important to their lives, and expected that their career planning will lead to success and satisfaction in future work (Kenny et al., 2003). For example, a study conducted by Alliman-Brissett et al., (2004), found that when African-American girls receive emotional support in career planning from their parents, they in turn perceived that they can make effective career choices, and that their career decisions will yield positive consequences. Also, respondents in a qualitative study that involved middle-class African-American adults, reported that their parents' expectations of future college attendance, helped them to set education as a priority (Pearson & Bieshe, 2001). In other words, the parents' active and supportive role of them obtaining higher education, assisted them in setting a career path (Pearson & Biesche, 2001). These same

participants indicated that expectations of themselves, work values, and work ethics, were taught by their parents (Pearson & Biesche, 2001). These studies and others support the hypothesis that parents can influence youth's conception of work either positively or negatively.

### Summary

Previous research has suggested that individual's conceptions of work will differ based on the socioeconomic status, environmental factors and parental influences. Based on the large percentage of urban youth who are raised in poverty stricken neighborhoods and exist at low socioeconomic status, researchers hypothesize that urban youth will place more importance on extrinsic values, and will more likely agree to extrinsic work belief statements. This research will support Maslow's Hierachy of Needs theory, which suggests that people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds will place greater importance on extrinsic values and less importance on intrinsic rewards. Researchers hypothesize that agreements towards extrinsic values will perpetuate in urban youth, despite the existence of school-to-work inventions, due to the difficult socio-cultural contexts in which these individuals live in.

### Method

#### *Participants*

Participants for this study consisted of 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders, enrolled in a Career and Finance Management course, Career Exploration Internship program, and/or the Diversified Cooperative Occupational program in an urban city school located in Western New York. Career and Finance Management is an elective curriculum, designed to assess work skills, interests, and abilities, for students interested in exploring careers in

the future. Students who are enrolled in a school-to-work program, such as Career Exploration Internship program or Diversified Cooperative Occupational program, must have an attendance rate of 90 percent or above and maintain a G.P.A. of 2.0. Students enrolled in CEIP or Diversified Co-Op access personal skills, abilities, and interests, and apply these attributes in a work setting. Students enrolled in Career Exploration Internship program experience work exposure in the school setting, whereas students enrolled in the Diversified Cooperative Occupational Program experience job training with local retailers and area businesses outside the academic environment.

School reports indicate that 95% of the participants in this study meet the economic criteria and qualify for free or reduced lunch program. Out of the 60 total participants in this study, six were 9<sup>th</sup> graders, fourteen 10<sup>th</sup> graders, twelve 11<sup>th</sup> graders, and twenty-eight were considered 12<sup>th</sup> graders during the time of the research. Participants' ages ranged from 14 to 20, with a mean age of 16.81. Participants' self-reported gender was 53% female and 47% male.

Initially, the researcher had designated six categories of ethnicity for the study. One of these categories was Black/African American/Caribbean. The researcher noted that participants, although not solicited, clearly defined themselves either as African-American, Black or Caribbean, even though these racial classifications were put into one category. The researcher refers to African-Americans as those persons whose descendents are from a predominant unmixed African ancestry. Blacks are classified as those whose ancestors are from Africa, European and/or of predominantly black, non-Hispanic Caribbean countries (Marable, 1997; Waters, 1991). Although, the terms Hispanic and Latino/a are not synonymous (Hispanic refers to those of Spanish speaking



nations of America, whereas Latino/a refers to descendents of Spanish or Portuguese speaking countries of Latin America, including Brazil, Columbia and Mexico), the researcher decided to group these two different ethnic groups into one category for the ease of classification. The same was done with Asian/Asian-American and Pacific Islanders. Participants' self-reported ethnicity were 17% Hispanic or Latino, 18% African-American, 47% Black, 2% Caribbean, 8% Asian/Asian-American or Pacific Islander, 7% Caucasian, with the remaining 2% self-identifying themselves as an unidentified group.

### *Procedure*

This research was approved by the university's human subjects review board and by the principal of the high school where the research was conducted. A non-random sampling of participants of this study, were recruited by a class roster, indicating students' enrollment either in Career and Finance Management, CEIP, or Diversified Cooperative Occupational Program. Parent consent forms and non-minor consent forms were distributed to 224 students enrolled in either one or both school-to-work vocational electives. Out of 224 students, 159 students did not bring in consents forms, declined participation, or their parents objected to their child's participation in the survey. The remaining 65 students willing to participate in the research were scheduled to take the questionnaire one week later. The survey was administered at the school library, during the last twenty minutes of the student's elective course. Of the 65 students scheduled to take the questionnaire, only 60 were present the day of testing. The remaining five students were either sick or absent.

*Measures*

An eighteen question, “Conceptions of Work”, item questionnaire was developed by the researcher, based the work by Chave’s et al., (2004) qualitative study on urban youth’s perceptions of work. The purpose of the questionnaire was to quantitatively measure youth and adolescent perceptions of work. The sample included only those students involved in one or two school-to-work programs, such as Career and Finance Management, Career Exploration Internship program, or Diversified Cooperative Occupational Program. Five items were used to obtain demographic information regarding the age, gender, grade level, race/ethnicity, and parents’ occupation, for participants in the study. Using previous statements from participants in Chave’s et al., (2004), four items were used to access the degree of extrinsic work beliefs (e.g., “Work is a necessity. A person must work in order to provide for themselves and their family.” “If work pays well, I will stay even though I hate it.”). Seven items were used to measure the degree of intrinsic work beliefs (e.g., “Work is a way to help others and the community.” “I work to acquire skills and experience.”). One item measured participant’s perceptions of work as a form of physical labor (e.g., “Work is a form of manual labor.”) and the last item inquired whether family members taught participants in the study the value of work. Participants also had the option to add any additional comments at the end of the questionnaire. Narrative data would allow researchers to observe urban youth’s reasons, motivations, and perceptions towards work. Items 6-18 were rated using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Participant’s scores were grouped according to race/ethnicity self-reported responses. For the present study, items were summed to compute mean scores for the

two subscales; extrinsic and intrinsic work beliefs. Mean scores within each of the two subscales indicate the degree of acceptance in work belief statements. Low mean scores, with a range of 1 to 3, indicate lower levels of acceptance to work belief statements, whereas, high mean scores of 3 to 5, indicate high levels of agreement to work belief statements.

## Results

Table 1 presents race-specific means, standard deviations and correlations for all variables under study. The results of the statistical analyses suggest that in general, the variables in our study were not significantly correlated as hypothesized. The researcher analyzed the data based on the total sample (N=60). Mean scores revealed that for categories of race and ethnicity, five of the seven races displayed a higher preference towards intrinsic work belief statements in comparison to extrinsic work belief statements. Caribbean was the only race that showed a greater preference toward extrinsic values. The level of preference was found by calculating the variance between extrinsic and intrinsic average values. Asian and white extrinsic values showed significantly higher variations from the mean than the other five races with standard deviation values of 1.66 and 1.56, respectively. However, Hispanic and white intrinsic values showed significantly higher standard deviations from the mean when compared to the other five races, with values of 1.06 and 1.53, respectively. Caribbeans and Whites displayed the highest amount of variance (2.36) and (-0.81), respectively, between extrinsic and intrinsic scores, followed by African-American (-0.57), Blacks (-0.41), and Hispanic (-0.15). The race categories of Other and Caribbean contained only one participant, and thus displayed zero standard deviation values. These categories were later eliminated from of further analysis, due to the low numbers of participants and low standard deviation scores.

Table 1

Summary Statistics for Race vs. Extrinsic and Intrinsic Values

| Race Code | Race      | Extrinsic Averages | Extrinsic Standard Deviations | Intrinsic Averages | Intrinsic Standard Deviations | Variance of Extrinsic and Intrinsic Average Values |
|-----------|-----------|--------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 1         | African   | 3.91               | 1.09                          | 4.48               | 0.59                          | -0.57  |
| 2         | Black     | 3.48               | 0.88                          | 3.89               | 0.92                          | -0.41  |
| 3         | Hispanic  | 3.58               | 0.70                          | 3.73               | 1.06                          | -0.15  |
| 4         | Caribbean | 3.5                | 0                             | 1.14               | 0                             | 2.36   |
| 5         | Asian     | 2.5                | 1.66                          | 2.49               | 0.01                          | 0.01   |
| 6         | White     | 2.94               | 1.56                          | 3.75               | 1.53                          | -0.81  |
| 7         | Other     | 3.25               | 0                             | 4.57               | 0                             | -1.32  |

Table 2

Correlations of Race versus Extrinsic and Intrinsic Values

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| Correlation of Race vs. Intrinsic Value | -0.21711884  |
| Correlation of Race vs. Extrinsic Value | -0.222939045 |
| Correlation of Q18 vs. Extrinsic Value  | 0.588593274  |
| Correlation of Q18 vs. Intrinsic Value  | 0.627746016  |

Table 2 displays the correlations of race with the average intrinsic and extrinsic values. A -0.22 correlation exists for race vs. intrinsic average values and a -0.22 correlation was calculated for race vs. extrinsic average values. Both correlation values are considered low which indicates that race is a poor predictor of intrinsic and extrinsic average values. A correlation of 0.63 was shown between Q18 and intrinsic value and a correlation 0.59 between Q18 and extrinsic value.

Table 3

Summary Statistics Q12

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| Q12 Mean   | 3.316666667 |
| Q12 Standard Deviation                                     | 1.228084724 |
| % Students that scored 1 standard deviation above the mean | 18%         |
| % Students that scored above the mean                      | 47%         |

Table 3 displays summary statistics for question 12 of the survey, “Work is a form of manual labor.” The average value was 3.32 with a standard deviation of 1.23. The percentage of students that scored one standard deviation above the mean was 18%. In addition, the percentage of students that scored above the mean was 47%.

Table 4

Summary Statistics Q 18

|                                       |             |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| Q18 Mean                              | 3.933333333 |
| Q18 Standard Deviation                | 1.412614677 |
| % Students that scored above the mean | 70%         |

Table 4 displays summary statistics for question 18 of the survey, “My family members have taught me the value of work.” The average value was 3.93 with a standard

deviation of 1.41. The percentage of students that scored above the mean was 70%. In addition, the percentage of students that scored one standard deviation above the mean was 0%.

### Discussion

The purpose of the study was to examine urban youth's perception of work, using an eighteen question "Conceptions of Work" questionnaire. The sample included only students involved in one or more vocational educational programs. This questionnaire was developed by the researcher, based on previous the work by Chave's et al., (2004) qualitative study on urban youth's perceptions of work. Using a Likert-type scale of 1 to 5, the questionnaire aimed to improve researchers understanding of urban youth's and adolescent's perceptions of work, by measuring agreements or disagreements towards work belief statements based on intrinsic and extrinsic values. The sixty participates who participated in the research study were involved in school-to-work programs, such as Career and Finance Management, Career Exploration Internship program, or Diversified Cooperative Occupational Program. The purpose of the study was to gain further understanding of the effectiveness of school-to-work programs, their effects on student participants, and how they impact urban youth's perceptions of work.

Based on previous studies, (Blustein et al., 2002; Chaves et al., 2004; Ovadia, 2001; Mortimer et al., 1996; Shapiro, 1977), the researcher hypothesized that participants from low socio-economic backgrounds would be more apt to agree with work belief statements based on extrinsic values rather than intrinsic values. The researcher also hypothesized that racial discrepancies in work belief statements would also occur between African-American and Blacks when compared to White participants. The



researcher's expectations were based on previous studies by Shapiro (1977) and Ovdia (2001), which suggested that black workers placed more value on extrinsic rewards and less on intrinsic rewards when compared to white workers. Unexpectedly, the researcher's findings did not confirm these hypotheses made by the Ovdia (2001) and Shapiro (1977) studies. Correlations of race with the average intrinsic and extrinsic values were considered low, (-0.22 correlations for race vs. intrinsic average values and a -0.22 correlation for race vs. extrinsic average values) which indicates that race is a poor predictor of intrinsic and extrinsic values.

Our results had indicated that across seven categories of racial backgrounds, five of the seven race categories agreed more strongly with intrinsic work belief statements in comparison to extrinsic work belief statements. This suggests that urban youth view work not only as a means of gaining financial security, but also as a means of gaining personal satisfaction and self-expression. African-Americans had the highest average scores for intrinsic work belief statements (4.48) followed by Blacks (3.89), Whites (3.75), and Hispanics (3.73). Whites however, displayed the highest amount of variance (-0.81) between extrinsic and intrinsic scores, followed by African-American (-0.57), Blacks (-0.41), and Hispanic (-0.15). Asian participants displayed the lowest amount of variance (-0.01) between extrinsic and intrinsic scores. This suggests that white respondents do not perceive work only as a mean of gaining financial security, and are more apt to agree that future work allows them opportunities to gain personal satisfaction in the workplace than African-American, Black, Hispanic and Asian participants in the study. These results are consistent with Ovdia's (2001) study, which suggested that white respondents would place less importance in having money and place higher

emphasis on intrinsic work values, when compared to minority members. However, data reveals that African-American, Black, Hispanics, and Asian perceive work as a means to gain both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, which are inconsistent to Ovadia's (2001) study. Narrative data from these minority participants further illustrates these perceptions. For example, a male, Hispanic, 18 year-old participant #49, stated, "I feel that work should be something you want to do and pays well. Too many people have financial issues because they have no job, and too many times people hate their jobs. These days, you will need a Master's degree or a Ph.D. to get the job you want, so study up!". Participant # 52, a black, 18 year-old female further adds, "I believe jobs should be something you enjoy doing. That's my opinion for right now. Because I feel that you should enjoy what you are doing, while making money." Participant # 7, a 16 year-old, Black, 10<sup>th</sup> grade male also comments, "I think working is a very good thing for everyone. You meet new friends and your communication gets better. You can buy things you want in life, and support a family." Participant # 59, a black, 17 year-old female also adds, "I enjoy working. Working allows me to learn more things and gives me more experience. I may need it down the line. Working is not only a good learning experience, but it also allows you to meet a lot of people and make money also. I also enjoy working because I contribute to my community and I don't become dependent. Working teaches you responsibility and that is why I enjoy working." Narratives from these participants are consistent with our results, which suggest that minority participants perceive work as a place to gain both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards.

Researchers compared mean scores of intrinsic and extrinsic work statements. Averages of scores suggest that minority participants more strongly agree with work

statements of intrinsic values compared to extrinsic work belief statements. Narrative data from these participants further illustrates these perceptions. For example, participant # 29, an eleventh grade, 16 year-old Black male states, “Work can be defined in many ways, but I believe the greatest joy in working is helping others and making their lives easier, etc. Also, when others fuse working with helping, they enjoy their work more.” Participant #44, a 19 year-old African-American female adds, “Work is great because you get more experience and skill. Work is something you need in your life. When you work, you get to know more people and learn a lot of things you didn’t know before.” Participant #48, an 18 year-old, Black male comments, “I feel working is a very important part of life. Without working, life will be less meaningful.” Examples of participants narrative data suggests that urban youth express the desire for autonomy, interest, and growth within the work place. Research data suggests that mean scores averaging above a 3 in both extrinsic and intrinsic work beliefs, along with narrative data, indicates that urban youth participating in school-to-work programs view work not only as a means of gaining financial security, but also as an activity for personal growth and development. These observations are not consistent with the results of Blustein et al., (2002); Chaves et al., (2004); Ovadia (2001) and Shapiro (1977) studies which suggested that a majority of urban youth view work primarily as a means of ensuring survival and not as a primary means of attaining internal satisfaction.

Differences in results may be due to individuals’ enrollment in vocational education programs, such as career and finance management, Career Exploration Internship program, or Diversified Cooperative Occupational program. Involvement in such vocational programs allows students to explore job opportunities, access personal

skills and abilities, gain access to career information, and be involved in job shadowing and career internships that are consistent with individual's interest and goals. Narrative data along with questionnaire results suggest that involvement in vocational educational programs influences urban youth's intrinsic work beliefs and impacts their perceptions towards future work.

### *Dimensions of work*

To more clearly understand urban youth's perceptions towards further dimensions of work, the researcher asked if participants view work as a form of manual labor. 18% of the participants strongly agreed that work is a form of manual labor, indicating that they viewed work in terms of a physical action. 47% of the participants showed a slight agreement to this statement, whereas the remaining 53% showed a slight or strong disagreement towards viewing work as a form of manual labor.

Narrative data from participants illustrated other dimensions of work urban youth perceive. One participant commented that work is a way to keep oneself occupied. Participant #24, an 18 year-old, 11<sup>th</sup> grade Black female writes, "I feel I don't just work to work. I like what I do sometimes and it helps me to not just be out running the streets." Others view work as a way to way to connect with others and the community. For example, participant #16, a 10<sup>th</sup> grade 16 year-old Asian female states, "I think work could be boring at times, but it also could be fun because you get to meet a lot of great people." Participant #35, an 18 year-old 12<sup>th</sup> grade Hispanic female adds, "I enjoy the people I work with and the company."

*Values Learned From Family Members About Work*

Participants were asked in question 18, whether family members taught them the value of work. A majority of the survey participants, 70% indicated that they strongly agreed that family members taught them the value of work, with average scores between 4 and 5. This indicates that urban youth students, enrolled in vocational education programs, have also received some advice about work from family members. Previous research has shown that parental values and reactions to work, affects their children's perceptions towards work (Barling et al., 1999; Piotrkowski & Stark, 1987). Other studies have also shown that when parents play a supportive role in the career planning of their children, it can significantly impact career-making decisions and perceptions of their children's future work (Palmer & Cochran, 1988; Pearson & Bieshe, 2001). Although the study participants were enrolled in a vocational education program, this study results suggest that when parents play an active role in the career planning of their children, such as teaching the values of work, it can impact the perceptions of their children's future work.

*Limitations*

This project is an initial quantitative investigation on urban youth's perceptions of work, which was carried out in an urban high school in Rochester, New York. The questionnaire, which was developed by the researcher, was not piloted before the study and did not measure for reliability or validity of data results or testing measures. The questionnaire was developed to measure agreements and disagreements towards work statements based on intrinsic and extrinsic values. However, the questionnaire does not measure whether participants would place preference over intrinsic or extrinsic work

values. The researcher suggests that in future research, a rating scale of 1-10, would be a better indicator for strong preference for intrinsic and extrinsic values. The researcher suggests that interpretation of these results should be done with caution. Also, the use of these findings should not be generalized beyond the population involved in the study. Other high schools, with different educational systems, or students' involvement with other vocational educational programs, may warrant different results. In addition, the study's findings do not generalize to those students who are disengaged or habitually miss school and other school tasks. Similarly, limitations inherent within the self-report survey methodology should also be kept in mind when interpreting results. Reliance on self-reported methodology is limited by students' self-awareness and their willingness to respond honestly to questionnaire statements.

#### *Implications for counselors*

Research results extend school educators and counselors understanding of how African-American, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and Whites perceive of the world of work, which provides important insights regarding the developmental contextual framework of urban high school students. Data results indicate that African-American, Black, Hispanics, and Asians perceive work as a means to gain both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. These results have theoretical implications for current models of career development and suggest that perceptions of work among youth are multidimensional as opposed to one-dimensional. This research article discussed at length the socio-cultural factors that may impact urban youth's perceptions of work. It is recommended for counselors and educators to explore the socio-cultural factors at play when working with students on areas of career exploration. Urban youth may face unique challenges, such as

drug use, violence, gang influence, and concerns of death, due to the environmental context in which many of these youth live. Studies have shown that when individuals perceive barriers such as poverty, ethnic and gender discrimination, and lack of social support, it can negatively impact adolescent's career attitudes and behaviors (Fouad & Winston, 2005; Kenny et al., 2003; Patton, Creed & Watson, 2003). In addition, perceived barriers impact the outcome expectations of minorities in securing a job that is both economically and personally satisfying. Studies have shown that when participants perceive a greater number of obstacles, they were less likely to engage in school activities and less likely to define a career identity ((Flores et al., 2006; Gushue et al., 2006; McWhirter et al., (2000). Although the researcher in this study did not measure perceived barriers, it is an important factor in understanding youth's perceptions towards work. Both the perceptions of educational and vocational barriers are noteworthy to discuss in future studies in relation to career perceptions. In addition, counselors might want to work with students to identify perceived barriers and develop healthy preventive strategies.

Qualitative inquiry, made prior to students enrollment in a vocational education program, would enhance educators understanding of minority students' career interests and career expectations. To provide a clearer understanding of the complex relationship between students and perceptions of work, other factors such as selection of educational track, students' part-time employment, student perceptions towards vocational education, and students' motivation towards education, should also be taken into consideration. In addition, future research should consider examining minority youth's perceptions of work in both urban and suburban areas across the country.

Our results suggest that student involvement in vocational educational does positively impact urban youth's perceptions towards work. However, a comparative study on students' involvement and non-involvement in vocational educational programs would provide researchers a clearer understanding of the effectiveness of school-to-work interventions and how it impacts students' perceptions towards work. Narrative data from participants indicates a willingness to engage in personally and financially satisfying work life. Many of the students surveyed seemed to view work as more than just a means of gaining financial security. Vocational interventions may ease students' career-decision making process, and help them make more informed choices in future careers.



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Appendix A  
Consent Forms

### Statement of Informed Consent

Dear Parents/Guardians:

My name is Margery Poon and I am a graduate student pursuing a Master's Degree in Counselor Education at SUNY College at Brockport.

This form describes the purpose of a research study being conducted with urban adolescents at Thomas Jefferson High School. The purpose of this research project is to complete a thesis project as a graduate requirement for a degree in Counselor Education from the State University of New York College at Brockport.

The purpose of the research project is also to learn how urban youth define work. Learning how urban youth define work will help future educators increase the effectiveness of school-to-career programs in Thomas Jefferson High School, and possibly other schools in the Rochester City School District.

Currently, your son or daughter is enrolled in one of these school-to-career programs. To increase the effectiveness of the Rochester City School District school-to-career programs, an anonymous questionnaire will be given to those participating. The questionnaire will seek to determine how urban youth define work. The study will take about 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

In order for your child to participate in this study, your informed consent is required. You are being asked whether or not you would like your son or daughter to participate in this research project. Any information that your child gives in this study will remain confidential and will only be known to the primary investigator. Except for this consent form, all questionnaires will be given a code number. Your child's name will not be put on any questionnaires. If publications in scientific journals arise from this research, results will be given anonymously and in-group form only, so that your child cannot be identified.

If you would like your son or daughter to participate in the project and agree with the statements at the bottom of the sheet, please sign below. You may change your mind at anytime and withdraw your son or daughter from the study without penalty, even after the study has been conducted.

I understand that:

1. My son's or daughter's participation in the project is completely voluntary. He or she has the right to refuse to answer any questions.
2. My son's or daughter's confidentiality is assured. My child's name will not be put on any questionnaires. If publication arises from this research, my son or daughter's results will not be identified by name.
3. My son or daughter will not suffer from any anticipated personal risks.

4. My son's or daughter's participation involves reading and answering a questionnaire, which will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.
5. Approximately 200 to 225 people will participate in the study. The results will be used for the completion of a thesis at SUNY College at Brockport.
6. Data will be kept in a secured, locked filing cabinet in a locked office in the Counseling Office at Thomas Jefferson High School. All consent forms and questionnaires will be shredded at the end of the Spring 2007 semester.
7. This research is not part of any regular school program and is not being conducted by the school. My son or daughter's participation will not affect her grades.

I am the parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ . I have read and understood the above statements. All of my questions about my son or daughter's participation in this study have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to my son or daughter's participation in this study, realizing that he or she may withdraw without penalty at anytime during the research process. Completion of this form indicates my consent to my son or daughter's participation.

If you have any question, you may contact:

Faculty Advisors: Dr. Thomas Hernandez  
 (585) 395- 5498  
[thernandez@brockport.edu](mailto:thernandez@brockport.edu)

Dr. Patricia Goodspeed  
 (585) 395- 5493  
[pgoodspe@brockport.edu](mailto:pgoodspe@brockport.edu)

On-Site Supervisor: Constance Drojak  
 (585) 458-2280 ext. 1044  
[connie.drojak@rcsdk12.org](mailto:connie.drojak@rcsdk12.org)

Student Researcher: Margery Poon  
 (585) 395-5436  
[mpoon@brockport.edu](mailto:mpoon@brockport.edu)

Parent/Guardian signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Statement of Informed Consent

Dear Student:

My name is Margery Poon and I am a graduate student pursuing a Master's Degree in Counselor Education at SUNY College at Brockport. The purpose of this research is to complete a thesis project as a graduate requirement for a degree in Counselor Education from the State University of New York College at Brockport.

The purpose of the research project is also to learn how urban youth, such as yourself define work. Learning how students like yourself, define work will help future educators increase the effectiveness of school-to-career programs in Thomas Jefferson High School, and possibly other school-to-career programs located in the Rochester City School District.

In order to participate in this study, your informed consent is required. You are being asked to make a decision as to whether or not you would like to participate. If you want to participate in the project, and agree with the statements at the bottom of the sheet, please sign below. Even after consent has been given, you may change your mind at any point during the study and withdraw without penalty.

I understand that:

1. My participation is voluntary and I have the right to refuse to answer any questions.
2. My confidentiality is assured. There will be no way to connect my name with the responses given on the questionnaire. If publication results from this research, I will not be identified by name.
3. My participation involves reading and answering a questionnaire, which will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.
4. The results from this study will be used to complete a thesis/project at SUNY College at Brockport.
5. Data will be kept in a secured, locked filing cabinet in a locked office in the Counseling Office at Thomas Jefferson High School. All consent forms and surveys will be shredded at the end of the Spring 2007 semester.
6. My participation in this study will not affect my grades.

If I have any question, I may contact:

Faculty Advisors: Dr. Thomas Hernandez  
(585) 395-5498  
[thernandez@brockport.edu](mailto:thernandez@brockport.edu)

Dr. Patricia Goodspeed  
(585) 395- 5493  
[pgoodspe@brockport.edu](mailto:pgoodspe@brockport.edu)

On-Site Supervisor: Constance Drojak  
(585) 458-2280 ext. 1044  
[connie.drojak@rcsdk12.org](mailto:connie.drojak@rcsdk12.org)

Student Researcher: Margery Poon  
(585) 395-5436  
[mpoon@brockport.edu](mailto:mpoon@brockport.edu)

Signature of consent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Statement of Informed Consent

Dear Student:

My name is Margery Poon and I am a graduate student pursuing a Master's Degree in Counselor Education at SUNY College at Brockport. The purpose of this research is to complete a thesis project as a graduate requirement for a degree in Counselor Education from the State University of New York College at Brockport.

The purpose of the research project is also to learn how urban youth, such as yourself define work. Learning how students like yourself, define work will help future educators increase the effectiveness of school-to-career programs in Thomas Jefferson High School, and possibly other school-to-career programs located in the Rochester City School District.

In order to participate in this study, your informed consent is required. You are asked to make a decision as to whether or not you would like to participate. If you want to participate in the project, and agree with the statements at the bottom of the sheet, please sign below. Even after consent has been given, you may change your mind at any point during the study and withdraw without penalty.

I understand that:

7. My participation is voluntary and I have the right to refuse to answer any questions.
8. My confidentiality is assured. There will be no way to connect my name with the responses given on the questionnaire. If publication results from this research, I will not be identified by name.
9. My participation involves reading and answering a questionnaire, which will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.
10. The results from this study will be used to complete a thesis/project at SUNY College at Brockport.
11. Data will be kept in a secured, locked filing cabinet in a locked office in the Counseling Office at Thomas Jefferson High School. All consent forms and surveys will be shredded at the end of the Spring 2007 semester.
12. This research is not part of any regular school program and is not being conducted by the school. My participation in this study will not affect my grades.

**I am 18 years of age or older.** I have read and understand the above statements. All my questions about my participation in this study have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in the study realizing I may withdraw without penalty at any time. Signing my name below indicates my consent to participate.

If I have any question, I may contact:

Faculty Advisors: Dr. Thomas Hernandez

(585) 395-5498  
[thernandez@brockport.edu](mailto:thernandez@brockport.edu)

Dr. Patricia Goodspeed  
(585) 395- 5493  
[pgoodspe@brockport.edu](mailto:pgoodspe@brockport.edu)

On-Site Supervisor: Constance Drojak  
(585) 458-2280 ext. 1044  
[connie.drojak@rcsdk12.org](mailto:connie.drojak@rcsdk12.org)

Student Researcher: Margery Poon  
(585) 395-5436  
[mpoon@brockport.edu](mailto:mpoon@brockport.edu)

Signature of consent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Appendix B  
Questionnaire

Questionnaire for Participants

(Please note: Questionnaire was created by Margery Poon)

1. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Gender?            Male                    Female

3. Grade level?    9<sup>th</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> 11<sup>th</sup> 12<sup>th</sup>

4. Please circle the racial/ethnic background that you most identify with?

- a) Black/African-American/Caribbean
- b) Hispanic/Latino
- c) Asian/Pacific-islander
- d) Caucasian/White
- e) Native American
- f) Other \_\_\_\_\_

5. Please list parent(s)' and/or guardian(s)' occupations.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

6. I would want to work even if I had all the money I could ever want.

Strongly disagree      1          2          3          4          5          Strongly agree

7. I work to get paid.

Strongly disagree      1          2          3          4          5          Strongly agree

8. Work is a necessity. A person must work in order to provide for themselves and their family.

Strongly disagree      1          2          3          4          5          Strongly agree

9. Work is a way to help others and the community.

Strongly disagree      1          2          3          4          5          Strongly agree

10. I work to acquire skills and experience.

Strongly disagree      1          2          3          4          5          Strongly agree

11. Work is a reflection of who I am.

Strongly disagree      1          2          3          4          5          Strongly agree



Appendix C

Table of Data

Table of Data

| # student | Age | Gender (M/F) | Grade | Ethnicity |      | Q6 | Q7 | Q8 | Q9 | Q10 | Q11 | Q12 | Q13 |
|-----------|-----|--------------|-------|-----------|------|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|           |     |              |       | Race      | Code |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |
|           |     |              |       |           |      |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |
| 2         | 15  | F            | 9     | African   | 2    | 3  | 5  | 5  | 5  | 5   | 4   | 3   | 5   |
| 8         | 17  | F            | 10    | African   | 2    | 5  | 2  | 5  | 5  | 5   | 5   | 1   | 5   |
| 13        | 17  | M            | 10    | African   | 2    | 5  | 4  | 5  | 5  | 5   | 5   | 5   | 5   |
| 14        | 17  | M            | 10    | African   | 2    | 4  | 5  | 5  | 4  | 5   | 3   | 3   | 5   |
| 17        | 18  | F            | 10    | African   | 2    | 5  | 5  | 5  | 5  | 4   | 4   | 3   | 5   |
| 19        | 17  | M            | 10    | African   | 2    | 5  | 5  | 5  | 5  | 4   | 4   | 5   | 5   |
| 31        | 16  | F            | 11    | African   | 2    | 3  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 4   | 4   | 4   | 4   |
| 42        | 18  | F            | 12    | African   | 2    | 3  | 1  | 3  | 3  | 1   | 2   | 1   | 3   |
| 44        | 19  | F            | 12    | African   | 2    | 3  | 5  | 5  | 5  | 5   | 5   | 3   | 5   |
| 50        | 18  | F            | 12    | African   | 2    | 3  | 5  | 5  | 5  | 4   | 5   | 4   | 5   |
| 53        | 19  | F            | 12    | African   | 2    | 3  | 5  | 5  | 5  | 5   | 5   | 3   | 5   |
| 10        | 17  | M            | 10    | Asian     | 5    | 3  | 5  | 5  | 5  | 5   | 5   | 3   | 5   |
| 11        | 14  | M            | 10    | Asian     | 5    | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1   | 1   | 1   | 1   |
| 12        | 15  | M            | 10    | Asian     | 5    | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1   | 1   | 1   | 1   |
| 16        | 16  | F            | 10    | Asian     | 5    | 1  | 2  | 1  | 1  | 1   | 1   | 5   | 1   |
| 36        | 18  | M            | 12    | Asian     | 5    | 4  | 4  | 5  | 4  | 5   | 5   | 4   | 5   |
| 3         | 16  | F            | 9     | Black     | 1    | 5  | 5  | 5  | 5  | 4   | 5   | 4   | 4   |
| 5         | 14  | M            | 9     | Black     | 1    | 1  | 5  | 5  | 2  | 1   | 1   | 3   | 3   |
| 7         | 16  | M            | 10    | Black     | 1    | 1  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 2   | 2   | 1   | 3   |
| 9         | 17  | F            | 10    | Black     | 1    | 4  | 3  | 5  | 5  | 5   | 5   | 5   | 5   |
| 15        | 17  | F            | 10    | Black     | 1    | 2  | 5  | 5  | 3  | 5   | 2   | 4   | 1   |
| 18        | 17  | M            | 10    | Black     | 1    | 5  | 4  | 5  | 5  | 5   | 5   | 4   | 4   |
| 20        | 16  | F            | 10    | Black     | 1    | 5  | 5  | 5  | 4  | 5   | 3   | 4   | 5   |
| 21        | 16  | F            | 11    | Black     | 1    | 5  | 5  | 5  | 5  | 5   | 5   | 5   | 3   |
| 22        | 16  | F            | 11    | Black     | 1    | 1  | 5  | 5  | 5  | 3   | 5   | 4   | 2   |
| 23        | 17  | F            | 11    | Black     | 1    | 2  | 4  | 3  | 5  | 5   | 3   | 4   | 2   |
| 24        | 18  | F            | 11    | Black     | 1    | 3  | 2  | 4  | 3  | 4   | 3   | 4   | 4   |
| 25        | 16  | M            | 11    | Black     | 1    | 5  | 1  | 5  | 5  | 5   | 1   | 5   | 1   |
| 26        | 18  | M            | 11    | Black     | 1    | 4  | 2  | 4  | 5  | 5   | 4   | 3   | 5   |
| 28        | 18  | M            | 11    | Black     | 1    | 3  | 3  | 5  | 3  | 5   | 3   | 3   | 5   |
| 29        | 16  | M            | 11    | Black     | 1    | 3  | 5  | 5  | 4  | 5   | 5   | 3   | 4   |
| 34        | 18  | M            | 12    | Black     | 1    | 4  | 4  | 4  | 3  | 3   | 3   | 2   | 4   |
| 37        | 17  | M            | 12    | Black     | 1    | 5  | 1  | 5  | 5  | 5   | 5   | 3   | 5   |
| 38        | 18  | F            | 12    | Black     | 1    | 3  | 5  | 3  | 5  | 4   | 3   | 4   | 4   |
| 39        | 17  | F            | 12    | Black     | 1    | 5  | 5  | 5  | 4  | 5   | 5   | 2   | 4   |
| 40        | 18  | M            | 12    | Black     | 1    | 1  | 5  | 5  | 4  | 3   | 3   | 5   | 3   |
| 48        | 18  | M            | 12    | Black     | 1    | 2  | 4  | 4  | 2  | 3   | 4   | 2   | 4   |
| 52        | 18  | F            | 12    | Black     | 1    | 5  | 3  | 5  | 5  | 5   | 1   | 3   | 5   |
| 54        | 18  | F            | 12    | Black     | 1    | 4  | 5  | 5  | 5  | 5   | 5   | 4   | 5   |
| 55        | 18  | F            | 12    | Black     | 1    | 2  | 5  | 5  | 3  | 5   | 4   | 3   | 2   |
| 56        | 18  | M            | 12    | Black     | 1    | 2  | 5  | 1  | 3  | 2   | 4   | 3   | 5   |
| 57        | 18  | M            | 12    | Black     | 1    | 5  | 5  | 5  | 5  | 5   | 5   | 5   | 3   |
| 59        | 17  | F            | 12    | Black     | 1    | 3  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 1   | 2   | 1   | 2   |
| 60        | 17  | M            | 12    | Black     | 1    | 5  | 5  | 5  | 5  | 5   | 4   | 4   | 5   |
| 6         | 18  | M            | 9     | Caribbean | 4    | 1  | 3  | 3  | 1  | 2   | 1   | 3   | 1   |
| 1         | 15  | M            | 9     | Hispanic  | 3    | 4  | 3  | 4  | 4  | 4   | 4   | 4   | 5   |
| 4         | 15  | M            | 9     | Hispanic  | 3    | 5  | 5  | 5  | 5  | 5   | 5   | 5   | 3   |
| 27        | 16  | F            | 11    | Hispanic  | 3    | 1  | 3  | 1  | 1  | 2   | 2   | 1   | 1   |
| 30        | 16  | F            | 11    | Hispanic  | 3    | 2  | 5  | 5  | 2  | 4   | 4   | 5   | 4   |
| 32        | 16  | F            | 11    | Hispanic  | 3    | 2  | 3  | 3  | 4  | 4   | 3   | 3   | 3   |
| 35        | 18  | F            | 12    | Hispanic  | 3    | 5  | 3  | 5  | 4  | 4   | 4   | 2   | 5   |
| 43        | 18  | F            | 12    | Hispanic  | 3    | 1  | 4  | 5  | 4  | 4   | 3   | 3   | 3   |
| 47        | 18  | F            | 12    | Hispanic  | 3    | 5  | 2  | 5  | 5  | 5   | 5   | 3   | 4   |
| 49        | 18  | M            | 12    | Hispanic  | 3    | 4  | 5  | 5  | 5  | 5   | 3   | 4   | 3   |
| 51        | 17  | F            | 12    | Hispanic  | 3    | 3  | 5  | 5  | 4  | 4   | 3   | 4   | 4   |
| 58        | 20  | M            | 12    | Other     | 7    | 4  | 3  | 5  | 5  | 5   | 4   | 2   | 4   |
| 33        | 18  | M            | 12    | White     | 6    | 2  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 2   | 2   | 2   | 1   |
| 41        | 18  | M            | 12    | White     | 6    | 3  | 4  | 2  | 2  | 2   | 2   | 4   | 5   |
| 45        | 18  | F            | 12    | White     | 6    | 5  | 5  | 5  | 5  | 5   | 5   | 3   | 5   |
| 46        | 18  | F            | 12    | White     | 6    | 5  | 5  | 5  | 4  | 5   | 5   | 5   | 5   |

Table of Data

| # student | Q14 | Q15 | Q16 | Q17 | Q18 | Extrinsic Score<br>(Q7,Q8,Q14,Q17) | Extrinsic Average<br>Score<br>(Q7,Q8,Q14,Q17) | Extrinsic Standard<br>Deviation<br>(Q7,Q8,Q14,Q17) | Intrinsic Score<br>(Q6,Q9,Q10,Q11,<br>Q13,Q15,Q16) | Average<br>Intrinsic Score<br>(Q6,Q9,Q10,<br>Q11,Q13,Q15,<br>Q16) | Intrinsic Std.<br>Dev.<br>(Q6,Q9,Q10,<br>Q11,Q13,Q15,<br>Q16) | Extrinsic - Intrinsic |
|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------------------------------|---|--|--|---|---|-----------------------|
| 2         | 4   | 5   | 5   | 5   | 4   | 19                                 |   |  | 32.00  |   |   |                       |
| 8         | 1   | 5   | 5   | 1   | 2   | 9                                  |   |  | 35.00  |   |   |                       |
| 13        | 1   | 5   | 5   | 3   | 5   | 13                                 |   |  | 35.00  |   |   |                       |
| 14        | 5   | 5   | 5   | 4   | 5   | 19                                 |   |  | 31.00  |   |   |                       |
| 17        | 1   | 5   | 5   | 1   | 5   | 12                                 |   |  | 33.00  |   |   |                       |
| 19        | 5   | 4   | 5   | 5   | 5   | 20                                 |   |  | 32.00  |   |   |                       |
| 31        | 3   | 5   | 4   | 4   | 5   | 14                                 |   |  | 29.00  |   |   |                       |
| 42        | 3   | 5   | 3   | 2   | 3   | 9                                  |   |  | 20.00  |   |   |                       |
| 44        | 5   | 5   | 5   | 3   | 4   | 18                                 |   |  | 33.00  |   |   |                       |
| 50        | 5   | 5   | 5   | 5   | 5   | 20                                 |   |  | 32.00  |   |   |                       |
| 53        | 5   | 5   | 5   | 4   | 5   | 19                                 | 3.91  | 1.09   | 33.00  | 4.48  | 0.59  | -0.571428571          |
| 10        | 5   | 5   | 5   | 3   | 4   | 18                                 |   |  | 33.00  |   |   |                       |
| 11        | 1   | 1   | 1   | 1   | 1   | 4                                  |   |  | 7.00   |   |   |                       |
| 12        | 1   | 1   | 1   | 1   | 1   | 4                                  |   |  | 7.00   |   |   |                       |
| 16        | 3   | 1   | 1   | 2   | 1   | 8                                  |   |  | 7.00   |   |   |                       |
| 36        | 4   | 5   | 5   | 3   | 5   | 16                                 | 2.50  | 1.658312395  | 33.00  | 2.49  | 2.03  | 0.014285714           |
| 3         | 5   | 5   | 4   | 4   | 5   | 19                                 |   |  | 32.00  |   |   |                       |
| 5         | 5   | 5   | 5   | 3   | 5   | 18                                 |   |  | 18.00  |   |   |                       |
| 7         | 3   | 2   | 1   | 3   | 2   | 8                                  |   |  | 13.00  |   |   |                       |
| 9         | 2   | 5   | 5   | 5   | 5   | 15                                 |   |  | 34.00  |   |   |                       |
| 15        | 1   | 5   | 5   | 1   | 4   | 12                                 |   |  | 23.00  |   |   |                       |
| 18        | 2   | 5   | 5   | 2   | 5   | 13                                 |   |  | 34.00  |   |   |                       |
| 20        | 2   | 5   | 5   | 3   | 5   | 15                                 |   |  | 32.00  |   |   |                       |
| 21        | 1   | 5   | 5   | 5   | 5   | 16                                 |   |  | 33.00  |   |   |                       |
| 22        | 5   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 5   | 20                                 |   |  | 23.00  |   |   |                       |
| 23        | 2   | 5   | 5   | 4   | 5   | 13                                 |   |  | 27.00  |   |   |                       |
| 24        | 2   | 4   | 5   | 4   | 3   | 12                                 |   |  | 26.00  |   |   |                       |
| 25        | 5   | 5   | 1   | 5   | 5   | 16                                 |   |  | 23.00  |   |   |                       |
| 26        | 1   | 5   | 5   | 1   | 5   | 8                                  |   |  | 33.00  |   |   |                       |
| 28        | 3   | 5   | 3   | 1   | 5   | 12                                 |   |  | 27.00  |   |   |                       |
| 29        | 4   | 5   | 5   | 2   | 5   | 16                                 |   |  | 31.00  |   |   |                       |
| 34        | 2   | 2   | 1   | 3   | 1   | 13                                 |   |  | 20.00  |   |   |                       |
| 37        | 1   | 5   | 5   | 1   | 5   | 8                                  |   |  | 35.00  |   |   |                       |
| 38        | 3   | 5   | 4   | 2   | 1   | 13                                 |   |  | 28.00  |   |   |                       |
| 39        | 3   | 5   | 5   | 3   | 4   | 16                                 |   |  | 33.00  |   |   |                       |
| 40        | 5   | 4   | 3   | 4   | 4   | 19                                 |   |  | 21.00  |   |   |                       |
| 48        | 3   | 4   | 4   | 1   | 5   | 12                                 |   |  | 23.00  |   |   |                       |
| 52        | 3   | 5   | 5   | 1   | 5   | 12                                 |   |  | 31.00  |   |   |                       |
| 54        | 2   | 4   | 5   | 1   | 3   | 13                                 |   |  | 33.00  |   |   |                       |
| 55        | 3   | 5   | 5   | 4   | 5   | 17                                 |   |  | 26.00  |   |   |                       |
| 56        | 3   | 5   | 5   | 4   | 5   | 13                                 |   |  | 26.00  |   |   |                       |
| 57        | 3   | 5   | 5   | 3   | 5   | 16                                 |   |  | 33.00  |   |   |                       |
| 59        | 3   | 1   | 1   | 2   | 1   | 7                                  |   |  | 12.00  |   |   |                       |
| 60        | 4   | 5   | 4   | 4   | 5   | 18                                 | 3.48  | 0.876463251  | 33.00  | 3.89  | 0.92  | -0.410714286          |
| 6         | 5   | 1   | 1   | 3   | 3   | 14                                 | 3.5   | 0  | 8.00   | 1.14  | 0.00  |                       |
| 1         | 3   | 4   | 4   | 2   | 4   | 12                                 |   |  | 29.00  |   |   |                       |
| 4         | 1   | 5   | 5   | 3   | 5   | 14                                 |   |  | 33.00  |   |   |                       |
| 27        | 4   | 1   | 1   | 3   | 2   | 11                                 |   |  | 9.00   |   |   |                       |
| 30        | 4   | 5   | 5   | 2   | 4   | 16                                 |   |  | 26.00  |   |   |                       |
| 32        | 3   | 3   | 1   | 5   | 3   | 14                                 |   |  | 20.00  |   |   |                       |
| 35        | 2   | 5   | 5   | 1   | 5   | 11                                 |   |  | 32.00  |   |   |                       |
| 43        | 3   | 5   | 3   | 4   | 3   | 16                                 |   |  | 23.00  |   |   |                       |
| 47        | 2   | 5   | 5   | 4   | 5   | 13                                 |   |  | 34.00  |   |   |                       |
| 49        | 3   | 5   | 3   | 3   | 4   | 16                                 |   |  | 28.00  |   |   |                       |
| 51        | 5   | 4   | 5   | 5   | 5   | 20                                 | 3.58  | 0.697714523  | 27.00  | 3.73  | 1.06  | -0.153571429          |
| 58        | 1   | 5   | 5   | 4   | 3   | 13                                 | 3.25  | 0  | 32.00  | 4.57  | 0.00  | -1.321428571          |
| 33        | 2   | 1   | 2   | 1   | 2   | 5                                  |   |  | 12.00  |   |   |                       |
| 41        | 1   | 5   | 5   | 3   | 4   | 10                                 |   |  | 24.00  |   |   |                       |
| 45        | 1   | 5   | 5   | 1   | 1   | 12                                 |   |  | 35.00  |   |   |                       |
| 46        | 5   | 5   | 5   | 5   | 5   | 20                                 | 2.9375  | 1.559580606  | 34.00  | 3.75  | 1.531417022   | -0.8125               |