Assessing the Career Development and Needs of Lesbian College Students

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Assessing the Career Development and Needs of Lesbian College Students

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Abstract

Lesbian college students have specific career counseling and intervention needs. This study looks at the effects of sexual identity development on the career development process. An analysis of the literature on gender, lesbian development, and career issues was conducted as well as a discussion on historical milestones and roles in higher education. The results of a survey administered to heterosexual female and lesbian college students were included. The limitations and implications for counseling were discussed.
Assessing the Career Development and Needs of Lesbian College Students

Career decision making is a process that occurs in stages throughout a person’s lifetime (Rheineck, 2005). Engels (1994) stated that the career development of a person is affected by his or her values and needs and as these grow and change, career choices may change over a lifespan. Females in the world of work face several obstacles and lesbians face additional discrimination based on sexual orientation (Croteau & Hedstrom, 1993; Orzek, 1992; Hetherington & Orzek, 1989). Research has shown that career development is affected by sexual orientation (Rheineck, 2005). Sexual identity development for lesbians also occurs in stages and depends on both internal and external forces (self-efficacy/supportive social structure) (Dunkle, 1996; Rheineck, 2005). Developmental tasks are often delayed for many individuals while transitioning through the stages of sexual identity development (Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1996; Rheineck, 1995).

Self-efficacy is a key indicator of a person’s awareness of possible career options (Chartrand, Camp, & McFadden, 1992). Self-efficacy is the “belief about one’s ability to organize and execute tasks needed to be successful” (Bandura, 1977). Fassinger (1995) found that the coming-out process usually diminishes the self-esteem of gay men and lesbian women. This often has a negative impact on the self-efficacy of these individuals (Rheineck, 2005). This seems to particularly affect women negotiating lesbian identity development (Hetherington & Orzek, 1989). Some of the barriers facing women in their career development include low self-esteem, stereotyping, discrimination, and harassment (Fassinger, 1995). Additional barriers facing lesbians include sexual identity development and internalized homophobia (Rheineck, 2005).
Lesbian women hold a double minority status. A lesbian is forced to come to terms with the fact that her sexual identity is different from almost everyone else (Sullivan, 1998). As a woman, a lesbian in the world of work is also influenced by factors not usually associated with males including sexual discrimination (Ormerod, 1996). Lesbians in the work force face the same threat of sexual discrimination as their heterosexual female counterparts, but they also face the threat of homophobia if their sexual orientation were revealed (Ford, 1996). According to a study by Keeton (2002), sexual orientation discrimination is the number one career-related concern for gay men and lesbian women. This study also revealed that lesbian women fear this barrier more than gay men (Keeton 2002).

Review of the Literature

This study examines the career development and needs of lesbian college students. Definitions of terms used throughout the study will be provided as well as an overview of gay and lesbian historical milestones in the United States. Sexual identity development will be explored and the impact this has on lesbian college students. The literature review will explore the historical and working experiences of lesbians as well as the impact of gender roles and student development theory on career development and choice. The career development of lesbians will be reviewed as well as the implications of this on career counselors and career services offices on college campuses.

Definitions

Throughout this study there are several terms that will be used repeatedly. For the purpose of this study, heterosexual means a preference for a love and sexual relationship with a person of the opposite sex. The term gay refers to a man who prefers a love and
sexual relationship with a member of his own sex (McNaught, 1993; Martin & Lyon, 1991). Lesbian refers to a woman who prefers a love and sexual relationship with a member of her own sex (Martin and Lyon, 1991). A bisexual person is either a man or a woman who has love and sexual feelings for members of either gender (McNaught, 1993). Homophobia is a “belief system that supports negative stereotypes and maintains that discrimination based on sexual orientation is justified” (Lapierre, 1990). Heterosexism is the “belief that everyone is heterosexual or ought to be” (McNaught, 1993). Internalized homophobia is a self-loathing often attributed to the knowledge of how society reacts and treats gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons (Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1996).

**Historical Milestones**

The term lesbian is derived from Lesbos, a piece of land triangular in shape located in the Aegean Sea where the Greek poetess Sappho was born (Martin & Lyon, 1991). Some of her love poems were addressed to women leading to a theory that she was a lesbian. The United States’ first historical recognition of a lesbian occurred in 1649 when Mary Hammon of Plymouth, M.A. became the first woman arrested for homosexuality (Swade, 2004). In the early history of the United States, women were arrested for dressing or acting like a man (Swade, 2004).

Freud believed all humans were inherently bisexual and refused to label homosexuality as an aberration, though he did believe it to be an outcome of “arrested development” (Miller, 1995). However, Freud was often alone on his stance on homosexuality in the field of psychiatry. Theorists such as Rado and Beiber believed that homosexuality was a result of a poor relationship with the opposite sex and could be
“cured” (Miller, 1995). The American Psychiatric Association published The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Mental Disorders (DSM-I) in 1952 and listed homosexuality as a sociopathic personality disturbance (Miller, 1995). In the DSM-II published in 1968, homosexuality was moved to the “other non-psychotic mental disorders” category (Miller, 1995). Kinsey’s ground breaking research in the 1940s revealed that homosexuality was more common than ever thought, estimating 10% of the population to be homosexual (Miller, 1995). This study led researchers to question the notion that homosexuality was pathological as it seemed to involve a significant portion of the American population (Miller, 1995). At the same time, Kinsey’s findings also seemed to add fuel to the fire of those who believed that homosexuality was a threat to society (Miller, 1995).

In 1937, Nazis began using pink triangles to identify gay men (Miller, 1995). The Nazis targeted gay men because homosexuality was deemed impure (Miller, 1995). The pink triangle would later become a symbol of the gay rights movement (Swade, 2004). During World War II, the United States congress passed a law banning gay men and lesbian women from entering the country (Miller, 1995). This law was repealed in 1990 (Swade, 2004). World War II also marked the first time army officials asked potential recruits the question, “are you a homosexual?” (Miller, 1995). This was also the first time that people with feelings for members of the same sex had an identity (Miller, 1995). These events allowed the word “gay” to become commonplace in American vernacular (Miller, 1995). Shilts (1993) estimated that 80% of women serving in the army during World War II were lesbians as no married women were allowed to serve and one who became pregnant was immediately discharged. D’Emilio (1983) stated that the
armed services were the “almost quintessential lesbian institution”. In 1993, the “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell Policy” was enacted that stated military recruits would not longer be asked about their sexual orientation and gay men and lesbian women could stay in the armed forces as long as they kept their identities a secret (Miller, 1995).

The 1950s were a period of many ups and downs in the gay rights movement. During this time gay men and lesbian women were banned from working in federal jobs (Miller, 1995). The McCarthy era not only condemned communists, but homosexuals as well (Miller, 1995). This eventually had a trickle-down effect on state and local government positions (Swade, 2004). D’Emilio (1983) estimated that on average five homosexuals were dismissed a month from civilian posts from 1947 through April of 1950. Soon after, the number jumped to 60 a month (D’Emilio, 1983). The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was in charge of background checks for government positions (Miller, 1995). They monitored gay bars, watched mail for gay pornography, and recruited informers among other tactics (Miller, 1995). The FBI made life extremely difficult for gay men and lesbian women by notifying employers of their findings (Miller, 1995). In 1975, the U.S. Civil Service Commission began allowing government positions to again be filled by gay men and lesbian women (Miller, 1995).

In 1969, the Stonewall Rebellion took place in New York City. Plainclothes police officers were met with resistance when they attempted to raid the Stonewall, a bar for gay men and lesbian women (Miller, 1995). This event marked the start of the gay rights movement as it is today (Swade, 2004). The first openly gay political candidate (a lesbian) was elected to the Ann Arbor, M.I. city council in 1974 (Swade, 2004).
The first few cases of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) treated in the United States were found in gay men (Miller, 1995). Early on, AIDS was referred to as the “gay disease” (Miller, 1995). AIDS created widespread fear of gay men and lesbian women as the perceived “spreaders” of this disease (Miller, 1995).

In 2003, San Francisco began issuing marriage licenses to gay and lesbian couples. This was eventually halted by the California state government though during this time Massachusetts became the first state to legalize gay marriage (Swade, 2004). This seemed to open up state and national debates regarding gay and lesbian issues (Swade, 2004).

Demographics

Estimating the number of gay men and lesbian women living in the United States is extremely challenging (McNaught, 1993). Determining the number of homosexual men and women living in the United States is so difficult that Gelberg and Chojnacki’s (1996) estimate, five to 25 million, is an incredible range. As members of an invisible minority, it is up to gay men and lesbian women to self-identify in order to be counted. The differing stages of sexual identity development also make this extremely difficult as one may not be fully aware of their gay or lesbian sexual orientation. An often quoted statistic from Kinsey (1948) states that 10% of the male population is exclusively homosexual. There are several problems with this statement. First, there is an additional line to this statistic which states “for at least three years between the ages of 16 and 55” (Kinsey, 1948). The second problem was that Kinsey’s sample was very limited and included men in prisons (Gates & Ost, 2004). Voter exit polls in the early 21st Century showed that four-to-five percent of the population was gay or lesbian. Data from the
2000 United States census suggests that four to six million Americans are gay or lesbian (Gates & Ost, 2004). This would mean that 1.3-2 percent of American women are lesbian (Gates & Ost, 2004).

**Work**

An estimated 1.3- two percent of American women identify as lesbian (2,041,000 – 3,140,000) (Gates & Ost, 2004). Of this, 70 to 91% are employed outside the home (Jay & Young, 1977; Bradford & Ryan, 1987) while the percentage of women as a whole employed outside the home is significantly lower at 50% (Morgan & Brown, 1991). One theory for this states that lesbians are not able to depend on someone else financially and therefore have a greater need to work (Clunis & Green 1988). Men are traditionally the primary breadwinners in the United States and make higher salaries than women in most professions. Other factors for the large number of lesbians in the workforce include the lack of societal support in the form of health insurance for partners, retirement benefits, or other benefits and protections afforded heterosexual married couples (Shallenberger, 1998).

Lesbians, and all gay persons, are considered non-ethnic minorities. There are several characteristics that lead to this designation: few civil rights, hidden private lives, oppression, polarization from the family unit, lack of societal support, and violence (Elliot, 1993). There is also a lack of government protection afforded gay men and lesbian women in the workplace. According to the United States Constitution and a federal court of appeals, citizens have a right to privacy including whether or not to disclose sexual orientation (Hunter, Joslin, & McGowan, 2004). However, there are no federal laws protecting gay and lesbian employees from termination on grounds of sexual

Discrimination at work has an impact on the “vocational behavior, career choice, and psychological well-being” of gay men and lesbian women (Chung, 2001). Creating a safe work environment is essential as it benefits gay and lesbian employees and it allows the family and friends of these employees peace of mind as well. Homophobia reduces work productivity for gay and lesbian employees as well as for their families and friends (McNaught, 1993). Gay men and lesbian women may find it hard to concentrate on work related issues if they are fearful for their well being.

Lesbians usually find that they are forced to control how, when, and where they reveal their sexual identity, if at all (Shallenberger, 1998). This control can come in three forms: pretending to be heterosexual, partially revealing their sexuality, or fully revealing their sexuality (Shallenberger, 1998). One danger of not disclosing sexual preference in the workplace is that lesbian women are often perceived as single by their employers (Morgan & Brown, 1991). The employers in turn may not consider how work demands and travel could affect a lesbian couple (Morgan & Brown, 1991). Gay and lesbian men and women who are afraid to reveal their sexual identity in the workplace exclude a large part of who they are and what they value from their work (McNaught, 1993). Outside of the workplace, gay and lesbian persons who have not revealed their sexual identity in the workplace must continue to hide who they are for fear of encountering a co-worker in public (McNaught, 1993).

Lesbians fear job discrimination and/or termination more than their gay male counterparts if sexual orientation is revealed (Keeton 2002). Several studies have
validated this fear (Shallenberger, 1998). In a study by Saghir and Robin (1973), they found that 12% of their sample lost their jobs when their sexuality was revealed. Bell and Weinberg (1978) found that six percent of their sample had suffered the same consequences. For Schneider (1987), her number was 10%. In a study by Levine and Leonard (1984), 25% of their sample reported experiencing “overt and covert discrimination”, 29% were not hired for a job, were fired, or forced to resign. In the same study, 75% percent of the sample reported experiencing verbal harassment and 10% reported experiencing physical harassment (Levine & Leonard, 1984).

*Gender Roles*

Gottfredson (1981) argued that young people believe a wide range of career opportunities are available to them until gender stereotyping becomes a factor. People are more accepting of others who work in fields that conform to stereotypes, a belief that has implications for lesbian women (Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1996). Lesbians are often stereotyped to hold traditionally male jobs (Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1996). Several examples of male-stereotyped fields include public safety, athletics, and construction. Morgan and Brown (1991) have found that lesbian women are more likely to work in typical male career fields than heterosexual women.

Until the 1990’s, women’s occupational choices were largely ignored in the development of vocational behavior theories (Ormerod, 1996). Women and men were generally thought to make career choices in a similar fashion, though family and work roles for women affect their career choice in a more complex manner (Fitzgerald & Crites, 1980). Research has shown that women typically undersell their strengths and therefore take jobs that require fewer skills and pay less (Fitzgerald & Weitzman, 1992).
Based on a review of the literature on achievement and career motivation in women, Farmer (1976) suggested that women undervalue themselves in the workplace more than men for the following reasons: (1) decreased confidence in academic abilities; (2) fear of doing well; (3) incentive to achieve success motivated by someone else; (4) getting pulled in two different directions, work and home; (5) misunderstandings regarding the history of women in the workplace; (6) inability or lack of desire of women to take greater risks; and (7) understanding of sex-roles in the workplace.

Fitzgerald and Weitzman (1992) stated that women are pressured early on by society to fulfill gender-role expectations and choose fields that “parallel homemaking and nurturing roles”. Often overlooked in women’s career choice research are lesbian women (Ormerond, 1996). Lesbians maintain a double minority status due to gender and sexual orientation (Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1996, Hetherington, 1991). It is generally believed that lesbians do not have to deal with the dichotomy between homemaking and career; that they are less likely to have children and will work for pay throughout their lifetimes (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983). This may be changing as same-sex partnerships become more acceptable by society as more gay and lesbian couples have children. Early research separated homemaking and career as though women had to choose between the two, either or, but not both (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987). More recently research has analyzed career choice in a broader scope to include homemaking as more and more women choose to do both (Ormerod, 1996). Lesbian women who do not face this conflict usually experience greater career success than heterosexual women (Ormerond, 1996). Lesbians who do face this conflict often cannot stop working because they are less likely than their heterosexual counterparts to rely on another breadwinner.
Assessing (Ormerond, 1996). Morgan and Brown (1991) state that there are additional gender-related factors that may impact the career choice of lesbian women, including:

“…greater valuing of androgyny and independence, participation in more gender-nonconforming behaviors, and greater gender-role flexibility…”

Some major gender differences between gay men and lesbian women is the greater likelihood of children in a lesbian household, smaller wages, and decreased socialization for women (Keeton, 2002).

Sexual Identity Development

There are several models of sexual identity development. The majority of the theories are mostly linear in their progression from stage to stage (Fassinger, 1998). More recent theories incorporate societal influences on identity development along with internalized cues (Fassinger, 1998). These theories are less linear than their predecessors and a person can jump around as if on branches of a tree (Fassinger, 1998).

This study will focus on the model developed by Cass as it is the most cited theory on gay and lesbian development (Fassinger, 1998). In Cass’s (1979) model of homosexual identity development, a person transitions through six stages: identity confusion, identity comparison, identity tolerance, identity acceptance, identity pride, and identity synthesis.

In the confusion stage, a person begins to recognize that they may be different but have not labeled their feelings or experiences as gay. In the comparison stage a person begins to associate their feelings or experiences as gay but still acts and behaves as a heterosexual person. In the tolerance stage a person will begin labeling him/herself as a gay or lesbian person and will begin interacting with other gay and lesbian people.

Moving into the acceptance stage, a person begins disclosing to select family and friends
as they become more comfortable with their gay or lesbian identity. In the pride stage a
person will become outspoken and angry regarding gay rights and will usually become
active in the gay community. Finally in the synthesis stage, a person’s private and public
lives will merge as their sexual identity becomes integrated with his/her total identity
(Shallenberger, 1998). It is important to note that there are limitations to this theory.
One major limitation is that this theory, and theories like it, was developed based on
information from gay men and then generalized to include lesbians (Fassinger, 1998).
Other limitations include a lack of testing, biased sample groups, and using measures that
inadequately describe complex stages (Fassinger, 1994, 1998).

*Career Development*

Developmental career counseling theories look at how career decisions are made and
change throughout a person’s lifespan (Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1996). Changes can be
accounted for in the shift in priorities and values a person experiences over a lifetime
(Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1996). These theories move beyond the analysis of work factors
and consider the whole person in career development (Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1996). For
lesbians, it would be necessary to also consider their stage of sexual identity
development. Differing stages of coming out can affect career choice at all levels of
development (Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1996). During the coming out process, lesbians may
be so focused on issues such as societal and familial views that they are unable to spend
any time on their career development (Dunkle, 1996). According to Ford’s (1996)
review of the literature, there are six factors that may influence the career decisions of
lesbians: gender; desire for self-sufficiency and independence; the ability to choose
whether or not to disclose sexual orientation; existing career stereotypes based on gender
and sexual orientation; gender and sexual orientation discrimination; and the overall view of gays and lesbians by the community at large.

According to Super’s (1990) Life-Span, Life-Space approach, career development is a “dynamic, longitudinal, and developmental process essentially consisting of developing and implementing the self-concept”. Super’s approach is developmental in nature and like Cass’s sexual identity development theory, evolves through stages in a linear fashion. Another similarity in both theories is the concept that people can revisit or become stuck in a stage(s) (Dunkle, 1996). Super believed in the idea of self concept as the driving force behind career development (Shallenberger, 1998). A person’s self concept is comprised of several interconnected variables and when one is affected another could be stalled or stopped altogether (Super, 1990). Super believed that the career development process was life long and was optimal when career and personal tasks (self concept) were integrated (Dunkle, 1996). As lesbian women move through Cass’s stages of sexual identity development they are working toward integration of their sexual identity into their whole self. Heterosexual women do not face this struggle and may achieve career and personal integration more quickly.

Super’s (1990) proposed five stages of career development, four of which include sub stages, are: growth; exploration (crystallizing, specifying, and implementing); establishment (stabilizing, consolidating, and advancing); maintenance (holding one’s own, updating, and innovating); disengagement (decelerating, retirement planning, and retirement living).

The first stage in the Life-space, Life-span approach is growth. This period ranges from birth to 14 years of age and is when the career development process begins (Super,
Assessing 21

1990). This is the stage where values, interests, and beliefs are formed (Dunkle, 1996). The growth stage does not have sub stages. The next stage, exploration, generally occurs between the ages of 14 to 25 (Super, 1990). This stage is marked by vocational maturity where self and work environments are explored (crystallizing), career options are narrowed (specifying), and a career is chosen (implementing). People between the ages of 26-44 are said to be in the establishment stage (Super, 1990). During this stage, men and women are experiencing a deeper commitment to a career choice (stabilizing) and a greater mastery of skill sets related to the career choice (consolidating). People in this stage may also be gaining more responsibilities at their jobs (advancing) (Dunkle, 1996). The fourth stage is the maintenance stage which encompasses ages 45 to 65. People in this stage continue to gain more responsibilities and seniority at work (holding on) while competing with younger coworkers (keeping up). This is also a period of innovation as people in this stage invent tools to cope with workplace changes (innovating) (Super, 1990). The fifth and final stage, disengagement, generally begins at age 65. This stage is marked by slowing down (deceleration), preparation for retirement (retirement planning), and retirement (retirement living). Each of these stages has implications for the career development of lesbians.

Not much is known about the early development of lesbians (D’Augelli, 1994). Interests are clarified during the growth stage and gender norms are explored. For lesbian women looking back at childhood, there was often an interest in non-gender conforming occupations (Hetherington & Orzek, 1989). Often gay men and lesbian women who show an interest in non gender-conforming careers will often abandon this interest to fit societal norms (Dunkle, 1996).
The exploration stage is marked by vocational maturity, or the ability to proceed successfully though the stages of career development (Super, 1990). Vocational maturity is likely to be low for lesbian women in the “identity confusion and identity comparison stages” as they are probably experiencing internal homophobia and high levels of stress (Shidlo, 1994). These internal and external conflicts can cause lesbians to put less significance on career development (Shidlo, 1994). Lesbians in both the exploration stage and a late stage of sexual identity development may wrestle with the decision of how “out” they can be in their workplace. Some career options may be discarded during this process (Elliot, 1993).

For most people, the establishment stage is characterized by the development of a firmer self-concept. For lesbian women in the earlier stages of identity development proceeding through the establishment stage, the self-assessment piece is most likely missing (Dunkle, 1996). A career may have been chosen in spite of a lack of complete understanding of the self. This stage may also be marked by recycling for some lesbian women as they manage the coming out process (Shildo, 1994). Not much is known regarding the later stages of sexual identity development and Super’s stages (Dunkle, 1996).

The maintenance stage involves moving past career decision-making to improving on-the-job performance (Super, 1990). Elliot (1993) stated that a large number of gay men and lesbian women begin the coming out process during this stage. For lesbian women, this means dealing with the stressors of the early identity development stage while heterosexual women are moving towards the end of their careers.
Berger (1992) found a lack of studies on gay men and lesbian women in the disengagement stage. This may be due to less stress regarding the coming out process. Older lesbian women are no longer dependant on parents for support (Berger, 1992). At this stage in their lives, gay men and lesbian women may be less concerned or interested in coming out (Weinberg & Williams, 1975). This stage of life can cause issues for lesbian women in that many hospitals and nursing homes may not recognize partners of the same sex (Berger, 1982). This is an issue that still seems to exist today. There may also be roadblocks in terms of end of life wishes and wills. Already facing at least double minority status, lesbian women must also contend with elderly stereotypes (Dunkle, 1996).

The impact lesbian sexual identity development has on career development is not totally clear (Dunkle, 1996). There is some research and speculation on the impact earlier stages of sexual identity development has on Super’s tasks. However, research on the impact of later stages of identity development on the five tasks seems to be lacking (Dunkle, 1996).

Lesbians and Higher Education

It is important for student affairs professionals, and other higher education administrators, to understand student development as this is the lens through which students see their world (McEwen, 1996). Chickering’s seven developmental vectors theory is the most widely used theory of psychosocial student development (Fassinger, 1998; McEwan, 1996a). The seven vectors include developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing purpose, and developing integrity (Fassinger, 1998). Competence, vector one, is achieved through
Assessing intellectual and interpersonal aptitude and the development of physical and manual abilities. College is a time of often overwhelming emotions. The purpose of vector two, managing emotions is not to eliminate emotions but to gain control over them. For the third vector it is important that college students transition from autonomy toward interdependence through self-reliance and the ability to be held accountable for decisions made. This task is also marked by the devaluing of other’s opinions. “Tolerance and appreciation of differences, and capacity for intimacy” (Chickering, 1969) are the two stages associated with vector four, developing mature interpersonal relationships. Identity establishment, vector 5, occurs when the first four stages are synthesized and six tasks are completed:

“comfort with body and appearance; comfort with gender and sexual orientation; sense of self in a social, historical, and cultural context; clarification of self-concept through roles and life-style; sense of self in response to feedback from valued others; self-acceptance and self-esteem; and personal stability and integration” (Chickering, 1969).

The sixth vector, developing purpose, occurs when students can assess needs and wants and learn to create purposeful plans. Finally, developing integrity is the seventh vector. This vector includes three linear though overlapping stages:

“(1) humanizing values-shifting away from automatic application of uncompromising beliefs and using principled thinking in balancing one’s own self-interest with the interests of one’s fellow human beings, (2) personalizing values-consciously affirming core values and beliefs while respecting other points of view, and (3)
developing congruence—matching personal values with socially responsible behavior” (Chickering, 1969).

The first four vectors must generally be completed before the final three vectors can occur (Fassinger, 1998). A female college student who is in the process of lesbian sexual identity development will most likely get stuck somewhere in the first four vectors. For example, females just beginning to recognize their lesbian sexual identity often experience internalized homophobia (Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1996). How is a lesbian college student going to develop interpersonal competence when they are experiencing self-loathing? The fear of homophobic reactions will also most likely temper the development of interpersonal relationships. How are emotions managed in a situation like this? As lesbian college students grapple with these pressing issues, other developmental tasks, such as career development, are delayed (Fassinger, 1998).

Fassinger (1998) points out that Chickering’s theory should not be discarded; rather the unique needs of lesbian (and gay) college students need to be taken into account when working with this population in higher education.

The recognition of gay and lesbian development has other implications. The integration of sexual identity into the whole self needs to be safely fostered by individuals on the college campus (Engleken, 1998). Gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons experience a higher rate of suicide and substance abuse issues than the population at large (Eldridge & Barnett, 1991).

**Career Counseling and Interventions**

It is necessary that career counselors not only demonstrate affirming behaviors towards lesbians, but that they also create a tolerant environment for all clients (Fassinger
A career counselor has no way of knowing, and should not assume a client’s sexual orientation. As stated previously, lesbians are considered members of a non-ethnic minority group and their status is usually hidden or unknown. In order for a lesbian to feel comfortable discussing her sexuality with a career counselor, the lesbian must see consistent and affirming behavior on the counselor’s part toward all clients (Bieschke & Matthews, 1996). These affirming behaviors need to be strong and positive; a lack of negative or homophobic reactions is not enough (Atkinson & Hackett, 1988). These affirming behaviors can include: knowledge of the career and identity development of lesbians, deliberate use of lesbian role models, lesbian friendly programming, and addressing the special issues lesbians face in the world of work (Bieschke & Matthews, 1996). Schwartz and Harstein (1996) offered six areas that typify affirmative gay and lesbian counseling:

“being gay or lesbian is not a pathological condition; the origins of sexual orientation are not completely known; gay and lesbian persons lead fulfilling and satisfying lives; there are a variety of gay and lesbian lifestyles; gay and lesbian persons who attend counseling without a desire to change their sexual orientation should not be forced into change; and gay and lesbian affirmative individual and group counseling should be available” (from Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1996, p. 17).

It is first necessary that a career counselor recognize the fact that lesbians are part of a minority group (Elliott, 1993). This enables the understanding of the outside variables that have affected the career and identity development of lesbians. The personal characteristics of a career counselor are also important. A career counselor’s own sexual orientation and homophobic reactions (or lack of) play a large role in determining the
degree of affirming behaviors they are likely to display (Rudolph, 1988). A lesbian college student who has experienced homophobic reactions may be hesitant to utilize a perceived heterosexual career counselor (Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1996). There seems to be a link between the stage of sexual identity development a gay or lesbian person is in and their ability to work with any counselors (Chojnacki & Gelberg, 1995). The United States maintains a heterosexist cultural climate (Eldridge & Barnett, 1991). Counselor-preparation programs or employers should incorporate training on gay and lesbian issues into their education because all people, regardless of their sexual orientation, have some homophobic and heterosexist values (Eldridge & Barnett, 1991).

Even an ideal career counselor will not be seen as approachable to lesbian students if the organizational environment in which the counselor works is not affirming (Eldridge & Barnett, 1991). Society currently has a dominant heterosexist culture and gay and lesbian persons will assume all organizations and environments accept this culture unless proven otherwise (Gelberg & Chojnacki 1996). Some of the ways in which career counselors can create an affirming environment is through language and symbols (Gelberg & Chojnack, 1996). Using words like partner instead of girlfriend/wife or boyfriend/husband is one example. The term homosexual should also be avoided as it conjures up associations with the APA mental illness diagnosis (Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1996). Some symbols career counselors can use are Pink Triangles, Safe Zone stickers, or signs displayed in their offices. Displaying gay and lesbian pamphlets and literature is also helpful in creating an affirming environment (Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1996). Additional affirming characteristics include staff trainings, access to and knowledge of
gay and lesbian resources, and relationships with on campus gay and lesbian organizations (Hradsky & Comey, 1992).

A common mistake career counselors often make is delivering the same interventions to both heterosexual and homosexual students (Pope, et al., 1994). As stated previously, the career development process of lesbian women is affected by their sexual identity development and issues of homophobia in the workplace. Therefore lesbian college students need modified or new interventions that specifically address these issues. In individual career counseling sessions, Pope, et al. contends that counselors must discuss coming out issues with their lesbian clients (1994). Issues of workplace discrimination as a lesbian and as a woman must also be addressed (Pope, et al., 1994). Lesbians who belong to an ethnic minority group face further cultural and discrimination issues. Understanding the views of homosexuality by various cultural groups will help the career counselor when working with clients from a variety of ethnic backgrounds (Pope, et al., 1994). For those clients who have not yet come out, affirming behaviors of the counselor as discussed previously could facilitate this process. It is helpful for career counselors to be knowledgeable about careers that tend to be gay and lesbian welcoming and those that are not (Adams, 1997). Career counselors also need to help clients to actively re-consider careers they previously discarded because of gender stereotypes (Gottfredson, 1981). Another relevant issue for lesbian college students is the issue of dual-career relationships. This issue may not be immediately relevant for a lesbian college student however it is important for the career counselor to discuss how this issue can be handled in the workplace. Concerns about how to introduce and present a lesbian partnership are two topics to be addressed (Hetherington, Hillerbrand, & Etringer, 1989).
Group counseling is an effective tool for working with lesbian college students as it provides universality and catharsis. Lesbian college students will know they are not alone and have an opportunity to work with other lesbian students who are in varying stages of sexual identity and career development. On the programming level, there are several research-recommended interventions. Pope, et al. (1994) has gathered the following interventions from the literature:

“Supporting and encouraging gay and lesbian professionals as role models for students; providing information on national lesbian and gay networks of professionals and community people such as the Association for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Issues in Counseling; sharing information on existing local gay and lesbian community resources; offering special programming such as talks by lesbian and gay professionals; facilitating externships or cooperative education placements in gay/lesbian owned or operated businesses; and establishing mentoring programs.”

Assessments are tools often used by career counselors. Again, the use and interpretation of these tools are not the same for heterosexual and gay or lesbian users. Pope (1992) identified some concerns that arise when administering assessments to lesbian clients: apprehension regarding the disclosure of sexual identity in certain areas of the assessment; possible homophobic reactions of the career counselor interpreting the assessment; and issues of sexual orientation and gender role stereotyping. Three major problems with assessments are that issues of sexual identity development, workplace discrimination, and internal and external homophobia are not addressed (Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1996). Awareness of these weakness and explanations as such will help a lesbian client to understand the context of the assessment (Pope, et al., 1994).
Bibliotherapy is an intervention where career counselors assign readings to their lesbian clients. These readings are biographies and/or autobiographies of lesbians who are out to themselves and to society (Belz, 1993). Career Counselors can also create a bibliography of references on lesbian issues (LeVay, 1996). It is also important to address lesbian specific issues in résumé writing and interviewing. Should a lesbian college student list their participation in the on-campus gay and lesbian support group? How do lesbian students answer potentially sensitive questions in the interview process? All of this depends on the organization the client is applying to. Career counselors can advocate for their clients by knowing the equal opportunity employment statements of area employers, and providing information about the gay and lesbian population of the area (Belz, 1993).

It is presumed that sexual identity development causes delays in the career development process for lesbians, but how or when this happens is not clear. A longitudinal study assessing the relationship between these two variables would be the most effective method for researching this topic. Time constraints prevented the use of this measure so a survey was developed to explore the possible impact of lesbian sexual identity development on career development.

Method

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to provide a greater understanding of the career development and needs of lesbian college students to career centers on college campuses. This study is a single-phase research project on the career development and needs of lesbian college students at predominantly heterosexual college campuses. The study
involves the use of a survey distributed to lesbian and heterosexual female college students.

Participants

68 lesbian and heterosexual female undergraduate and graduate college students were surveyed regarding their stage of career development in relation to their stage of sexual identity development (identified only by the lesbian participants). The respondents attend a four-year college in upstate New York. All of the heterosexual female respondents attend the State University of New York (SUNY) at Brockport. SUNY Brockport is a public institution located in a suburb of Rochester, New York. At the time of the survey, there are 6,900 undergraduate students and 1,400 graduate students attending SUNY Brockport. The lesbian female respondents attend either SUNY Brockport or Hobart and William Smith Colleges. Hobart and William Smith Colleges is a small, private liberal arts college comprised of 1,928 students (undergraduate and graduate). The age, race, major, and academic status of all the students varied.

Data Collection Process

The survey used for this study was developed by the primary investigator and has 19 items related to career development tasks. Participants were asked to rank their responses on a 4 point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree), 2 (agree), 3 (disagree), and 4 (strongly disagree). Each participant was also asked to evaluate whether or not their sexual orientation had an impact on each developmental task by indicating yes or no. Item 20 asked participants to identify their age range when they made their career choice. Item 21 was a qualitative question.
The survey was created by the primary investigator. The sexual orientation demographic question was based on Cass’s (1979) six stages of gay and lesbian identity development. Items one to 19 were based on Super’s Life Space, Life Span (1990) approach to career development. Statements one to three were based on the growth stage, statements four to 10 were based on the exploration stage, statements 11-13 were based on the establishment stage, statements 14-16 were based on the maintenance stage, and statements 17-19 were based on the disengagement stage. The statements in every stage (except growth) are further broken down by Super’s sub stages which are exploration (crystallizing, specifying, implementing), establishment (stabilizing, consolidating, advancing), maintenance (holding on, keeping up, innovating), and disengagement (declaration, retirement planning, retirement living). The 19 items and their subcategories are as follows:

1. I have knowledge of, and concern for my future. (growth)
2. I am in control of my own life. (growth)
3. I know the value of doing well in school and at work. (growth)
4. I’ve made my major choice. (crystallizing)
5. I’ve made my career choice. (crystallizing)
6. I have determined what is important to me when choosing a career (i.e., income, prestige, helping others, leisure time, etc.). (crystallizing)
7. I have clarified the type of work I would enjoy doing. (crystallizing)
8. I have narrowed down these types of work to a few options. (specifying)
9. I am taking the necessary steps to implement my career choice (i.e., major choice, internships, work experience). (implementing)
10. I know what graduate school and career options are available to someone with my educational background. (crystallizing)
11. I am secure with my job choice and perform my job duties in a satisfactory manner.  
   (stabilizing)

12. I have developed positive and productive work habits in my career.  
   (consolidating)

13. I have advanced within my career.  
   (advancing)

14. I have decided to stay within my chosen career field.  
   (holding on)

15. I seek development opportunities in my career field  
   (i.e., attend conferences, pursue graduate school).  
   (keeping up)

16. I try to develop new ways of completing tasks in my job.  
   (innovating)

17. I am not as enthusiastic or energized by my career as I once was.  
   (declaration)

18. I am considering retirement.  
   (retirement planning)

19. I have retired.  
   (retirement living)

Item 20 on the survey was created to assess the age range when the participants made their career choice. The age ranges are based on Super’s (1990) stages. Item 21 is a qualitative question that allows participants to be more narrative about their survey responses. The survey asks a series of demographic questions including sex, academic standing, major, minor, registration status, and sexual orientation. Self-identified heterosexual and bisexual students were asked to select the appropriate box only. Self identified homosexual students were asked to choose their current stage of sexual identity development.

Procedures

The survey was administered by faculty, staff, and the primary investigator. Potential faculty, staff members, and student groups were sent an e-mail asking for their participation. Faculty and staff who agreed to participate were either sent a packet of materials including the directions, copies of the statement of informed consent stapled to
the surveys, and a return envelope. Some faculty members and student groups elected to have the principal investigator distribute the survey herself.

Participants were given a statement of informed consent detailing the purpose of the study and how the data they provided would be used. Confidentiality was ensured though participants could choose not to take the survey. The statement of informed consent provided a list of referrals in the event the respondents had any questions about the survey. The statement of informed consent contained campus appropriate referrals for each college. All completed surveys were kept in a secured location throughout the duration of the study.

*Instrument*

The investigator-developed survey is attached as Appendix A.

*Data Analysis*

The percentage of respondents selecting items for each task was computed to give an overall sense of the response rates. Percentages were also calculated for the responses to the question “did your sexual orientation impact this task?”. The mean score for each statement was calculated for comparison purposes and the mean score for the groups of statements within each stage was also calculated. This allowed the principal investigator to gain an overall sense of lesbian responses in comparison to heterosexual responses.

*Results*

*Survey*

*Demographic questions*

*Gender.* For the purpose of this study, only data from surveys completed by females (n=68) was used therefore 100% of the survey respondents were female.
Academic standing. Of the heterosexual female respondents, 79.24% were undergraduate students and 20.75% were graduate students. For the lesbian female respondents, 100% were undergraduate students and 0% were graduate students. Overall, 83.8% of survey respondents were undergraduate students and 16.17% were graduate students.

Major. There were a large number of majors represented in this study. Of the undergraduate heterosexual female respondents (n=42), the most popular major reported was history (21.42%) followed by English (7.14%), sociology (7.14%), psychology (7.14%), and physical education (7.14%). Undeclared students were the second highest number of respondents to this survey at 11.90%. The rest of the majors reported had one respondent (2.38%) each: communication, criminal justice, political science, social work, history/education, geology/water resources, math, health science/education, business, health science, accounting, nursing, international studies, broadcasting/dance, and sociology/psychology. There were two majors represented by the graduate heterosexual female respondents (n=11), history (90.90%) and physical education (9.90%). Of the undergraduate lesbian respondents (n=15), women and gender studies (W&GS) (2), sociology (2), women’s studies and sociology (WS&Soc) (2), and history (2) were represented at 13.33% each. The remaining majors were represented once: arts for
children, psychology, physical education, criminal justice, women’s studies and art education, sociology and Africana studies, and English and film studies (6.66% each).

\[\text{Figure 2: Heterosexual undergraduate major distribution}\]

\[\text{Figure 3: Heterosexual graduate major distribution}\]

\[\text{Figure 4: Lesbian undergraduate major distribution}\]

Minor. Only undergraduate students have minors at SUNY Brockport. All of the heterosexual female respondents are students at SUNY Brockport. The reported minors also came from a broad range of disciplines. Of the total heterosexual female respondents (n=16), 38.09% reported having a minor. English (4.76%), psychology (4.76%), education (4.76%), and political science (4.76%) were reported by two students each. Minors in women’s studies, American history, communication, anthropology,
philosophy, physics, coaching, and sociology were all reported by one student (2.38%) each. All of the lesbian respondents were undergraduate students at SUNY Brockport or Hobart and William Smith Colleges. The most heavily represented minor (n=11) was women’s studies (4) at 36.36%. The remaining minors were represented once: visual arts, political science, sports management, creative writing, lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/queer studies, and sociology (9.09% each).

Registration status. A majority of the heterosexual female survey respondents were full time students (86.79%) while 13.20% were part-time. The majority of lesbian respondents were also full time students (80%) while 20% were part time. Overall 85% of survey respondents were full-time while 15% were part-time.
Sexual orientation. Of the total respondents (n=68), 77.94% reported a heterosexual orientation and 22.05% reported a lesbian orientation.

Stage of sexual identity development. Only those respondents identifying as lesbian responded to this survey item (n=15). One respondent selected stage one (6.66%), no respondents selected stages two or three (0% each), one respondent selected stage four (6.66%), four respondents selected stage five (26.66%), and nine respondents selected stage six (60%).

Survey items
The respondents were asked to use a Likert Scale to rank their level of agreement or disagreement with 19 statements. The respondents could select 1 (strongly agree), 2 (agree), 3 (disagree), or 4 (strongly disagree). Each respondent could also select N/A for not applicable. The respondents were also asked whether or not their sexual orientation had an impact on each task (statement). The 20th item asked respondents to select a range that best fit their answer to the question. The 21st question was a qualitative question.

_Growth stage_

_I have knowledge of, and concern for my future (statement one)._ The majority of heterosexual respondents (n=53) strongly agreed with this statement (75.47%) and agreed with this statement (11.32%). 5.66% disagreed and 7.54% strongly disagreed with this statement. No heterosexual respondents selected N/A for this statement (0%). Most heterosexual respondents (n=48) did not believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (89.58%).

The majority of lesbian respondents (n=15) strongly agreed with this statement (60%) and 20% strongly disagreed. 13.33% agreed and 6.66% disagreed. No lesbian respondents selected N/A for this statement (0%). Most lesbian respondents (n=15) did not believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (66.66%).

![Figure 10: I have knowledge of, and concern for my future](image-url)
I am in control of my own life (statement two). The majority of heterosexual respondents (n=53) strongly agreed (49.05%) and agreed (35.84%) with this statement. 7.54% disagreed and 7.54% strongly disagreed with this statement. No heterosexual respondents selected N/A for this statement (0%). Most heterosexual respondents (n=49) did not believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (89.79%).

The majority of lesbian respondents (n=15) strongly agreed with this statement (60%) and agreed (13.33%). 13.33% disagreed and 6.66% strongly disagreed. One lesbian respondent selected N/A for this statement (6.66%). A majority of lesbian respondents (n=15) did believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (53.33%).
I know the value of doing well in school and at work (statement three). The majority of heterosexual respondents (n=53) strongly agreed (84.90%) and agreed (3.77%) with this statement. 0% disagreed and 11.32% strongly disagreed with this statement. No heterosexual respondents selected N/A for this statement (0%). Most heterosexual respondents (n=50) did not believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (98%).

The majority of lesbian respondents (n=15) strongly agreed (60%) and agreed (13.33%) with this statement. 0% disagreed and 26.66% strongly disagreed with this statement. No lesbian respondents selected N/A for this statement (0%). No lesbian respondents (n=15) believed that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (100%).

The mean scores for heterosexual responses to the growth stage statements are: 1) 1.45, 2) 1.73, and 3) 1.37. The mean scores for lesbian responses to the growth stage statements are: 1) 1.86, 2) 1.53, and 3) 1.93.
The combined mean score for heterosexual responses to the growth stage statements is 1.52. The combined mean score for lesbian responses to the growth stage statements is 1.77.

For the growth stage, the majority of heterosexual respondents did not believe (92.51%) sexual orientation had an impact on the tasks of this stage. 7.48% did believe their sexual orientation had an impact on the tasks in this stage. The majority of lesbian respondents did not believe (71.11%) sexual orientation had an impact on tasks of this stage. 28.88% did believe their sexual orientation had an impact on the tasks of the growth stage.
**Exploration stage**

*I’ve made my major choice (statement four).* This statement is based on Super’s exploration stage/crystallization sub-stage. The majority of heterosexual respondents (n=53) strongly agreed (69.81%) and agreed (7.54%) with this statement. 7.54% of heterosexual respondents disagreed and 13.20% strongly disagreed. One heterosexual respondent selected N/A for this statement (1.18%). Most heterosexual respondents (n=49) did not believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (97.91%).

The majority of lesbian respondents (n=15) strongly agreed (60%) and agreed (6.66%) with this statement. 6.66% disagreed and 20% strongly disagreed with this statement. No lesbian respondents selected N/A for this statement (0%). Most lesbian respondents (n=15) did not believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (53.33%).
I’ve made my career choice (statement five). This statement is based on Super’s exploration stage/crystallization sub-stage. The majority of heterosexual respondents (n=53) strongly agreed (43.39%) and agreed (16.98%) with this statement. 28.30% of heterosexual respondents disagreed and 9.43% strongly disagreed. One heterosexual respondent selected N/A for this statement (1.18%). Most heterosexual respondents (n=48) did not believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (93.75%).

The majority of lesbian respondents (n=15) disagreed with this statement (26.66%) and strongly disagreed (26.66%). 20% agreed with this statement and 20% strongly agreed. One lesbian respondent selected N/A for this statement (6.66%). Most lesbian respondents (n=11) did not believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (57.14%).
I have determined what is important to me when choosing a career (i.e., income, prestige, helping others, leisure time, etc.) (statement six). This statement is based on Super’s exploration stage/crystallization sub-stage. The majority of heterosexual respondents (n=53) strongly agreed (45.28%) and agreed (33.96%) with this statement. 15.09% of heterosexual respondents disagreed and 3.77% strongly disagreed. One heterosexual respondent selected N/A for this statement (1.18%). Most heterosexual respondents (n=48) did not believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (89.58%).

The majority of lesbian respondents (n=15) strongly agreed with this statement (33.33%) and agreed (40%). 0% disagreed with this statement and 26.66% strongly disagreed. No lesbian respondents selected N/A for this statement (0%). Most lesbian respondents (n=15) did believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (53.33%).
I have clarified the type of work I would enjoy doing (statement seven). This statement is based on Super’s exploration stage/crystallization sub-stage. The majority of heterosexual respondents (n=53) strongly agreed (41.50%) and agreed (33.96%) with this statement. 15.09% of heterosexual respondents disagreed and 9.43% strongly disagreed. No heterosexual respondents selected N/A for this statement (0%). Most heterosexual respondents (n=49) did not believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (93.87%).

The majority of lesbian respondents (n=15) strongly agreed with this statement (40%) and agreed (26.66%). 6.66% disagreed with this statement and 20% strongly disagreed. One lesbian respondent selected N/A for this statement (6.66%). Most lesbian respondents (n=15) did not believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (53.33%).
I have narrowed down these types of work to a few options (statement eight). This statement is based on Super’s exploration stage/specifying sub-stage. The majority of heterosexual respondents (n=53) strongly agreed (33.96%) and agreed (35.84%) with this statement. 18.86% of heterosexual respondents disagreed and 5.66% strongly disagreed. Three heterosexual respondents selected N/A for this statement (5.66%). Most heterosexual respondents (n=48) did not believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (95.83%).

The majority of lesbian respondents (n=15) strongly agreed (20%) and agreed (33.33%) with this statement. 26.66% disagreed and 13.33% strongly disagreed. One lesbian respondent selected N/A for this statement (6.66%). Most lesbian respondents (n=15) did not believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (60%).
I am taking the necessary steps to implement my career choice (i.e., major choice, internships, work experience) (statement nine). This statement is based on Super’s exploration stage/implementing sub-stage. The majority of heterosexual respondents (n=53) strongly agreed (45.28%) and agreed (35.84%) with this statement. 9.43% of heterosexual respondents disagreed and 9.43% strongly disagreed. No heterosexual respondents selected N/A for this statement (0%). Most heterosexual respondents (n=48) did not believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (97.91%).

The majority of lesbian respondents (n=15) strongly agreed (33.33%) and agreed (20%) with this statement. 13.33% disagreed and 33.33% strongly disagreed. One lesbian respondent selected N/A for this statement (6.66%). Most lesbian respondents (n=15) did not believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (86.66%).
I know what graduate school and career options are available to someone with my educational background (statement ten). This statement is based on Super’s exploration stage/crystallization sub-stage. The majority of heterosexual respondents (n=53) strongly agreed (41.50%) and agreed (32.07%) with this statement. 16.98% of heterosexual respondents disagreed and 9.43% strongly disagreed. No heterosexual respondents selected N/A for this statement (0%). Most heterosexual respondents (n=47) did not believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (97.87%).

The majority of lesbian respondents (n=15) strongly agreed with this statement (40%) and agreed (26.66%). 20% disagreed with this statement and 6.66% strongly disagreed. One lesbian respondent selected N/A for this statement (6.66%). Most lesbian respondents (n=15) did not believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (86.66%).
The mean scores for heterosexual responses to the exploration stage statements are: 4) 1.63, 5) 2.04, 6) 1.77, 7) 1.92, 8) 1.96, 9) 1.83, and 10) 1.94. The mean scores for lesbian responses to the exploration stage statements are: 4) 1.93, 5) 2.85, 6) 2.2, 7) 2.07, 8) 2.36, 9) 2.43, and 10) 1.93.

The combined mean score for heterosexual responses to the exploration stage statements is 1.87. The combined mean score for lesbian responses to the exploration stage statements is 2.25.
For the exploration stage, the majority of heterosexual respondents did not believe (95.25%) sexual orientation had an impact on the tasks of this stage. 4.74% did believe their sexual orientation had an impact on the tasks in the exploration stage. The majority of lesbian respondents did not believe (63.45%) sexual orientation had an impact on tasks of this stage. 36.54% did believe their sexual orientation had an impact on the tasks of the exploration stage.

Establishment stage

*I am secure with my job choice and perform my job duties in a satisfactory manner (statement 11).* This statement is based on Super’s establishment stage/stabilizing sub-stage. The majority of heterosexual respondents (n=53) strongly agreed (22.64%) and agreed (33.96%) with this statement. 18.86% disagreed and 3.77% strongly disagreed. Eleven heterosexual respondents selected N/A for this statement (20.75%). No heterosexual respondents (n=46) believed that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (100%).

The majority of lesbian respondents (n=15) strongly agreed (26.66%) and agreed (26.66%) with this statement. 6.66% disagreed with this statement and 13.33% strongly disagreed. Four lesbian respondents selected N/A (26.66%). Most lesbian respondents (n=13) did not believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (76.92%).
I have developed positive and productive work habits in my career (statement twelve).

This statement is based on Super’s establishment stage/consolidating sub-stage. The majority of heterosexual respondents (n=53) strongly agreed (32.07%) and agreed (28.30%) with this statement. 1.88% disagreed and 3.77% strongly disagreed. Eighteen heterosexual respondents selected N/A for this statement (33.39%). No heterosexual respondents (n=47) believed that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (100%).

The majority of lesbian respondents (n=15) strongly agreed (26.66%) and agreed (33.33%) with this statement. 0% disagreed and 13.33% strongly disagreed. Four lesbian respondents selected N/A for this statement (26.66%). Most lesbian respondents (n=11) did not believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (72.72%).
I have advanced within my career (statement thirteen). This statement is based on Super’s establishment stage/advancing sub-stage. The majority of heterosexual respondents (n= 53) strongly agreed (13.20%) and agreed (26.41%) with this statement. 11.32% disagreed and 3.77% strongly disagreed. Twenty nine heterosexual respondents selected N/A for this statement (45.28%). No heterosexual respondents (n=46) believed that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (100%).

The majority of lesbian respondents (n=15) disagreed (26.66%) or strongly disagreed (20%) with this statement. 6.66% agreed with this statement and 20% strongly agreed. Four lesbian respondents selected N/A for this statement (26.66%). Most lesbian respondents (n=8) did not believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (87.5%).
The mean scores for heterosexual responses to the establishment stage statements are: 11) 2.05, 12) 1.66, and 13) 2.10. The mean scores for lesbian responses to the establishment stage statements are: 11) 2.09, 12) 2.27, and 13) 2.64.

The combined mean score for heterosexual responses to the establishment stage statements is 1.94. The combined mean score for lesbian responses to the establishment stage statements is 2.33.
For the establishment stage, none of the heterosexual respondents believed sexual orientation had an impact on the tasks of this stage (100%). The majority of lesbian respondents did not believe (78.12%) sexual orientation had an impact on tasks of this stage. 21.86% did believe their sexual orientation had an impact on the tasks of the establishment stage.

**Maintenance stage**

*I have decided to stay within my chosen career field (statement fourteen).* This statement is based on Super’s maintenance stage/holding-on sub-stage. The majority of heterosexual respondents (n=53) strongly agreed (22.64%) and agreed (20.75%) with this statement. 11.32% disagreed and 3.77% strongly disagreed. Twenty-two heterosexual respondents selected N/A for this statement (41.51%). No heterosexual respondents (n=46) believed that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (100%).
The majority of lesbian respondents (n=15) strongly disagreed (40%) or disagreed (6.66%) with this statement. 13.33% strongly agreed with this statement and 13.33% agreed. Four lesbian respondents selected N/A for this statement (26.66%). Most lesbian respondents (n=11) did not believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (63.63%).

![Figure 45: I have decided to stay within my chosen career field](image)

![Figure 46: Did your sexual orientation impact this task?](image)

*I seek development opportunities in my career field (i.e., attend conferences, pursue graduate school) (statement fifteen).* This statement is based on Super’s maintenance stage/keeping-up sub-stage. The majority of heterosexual respondents (n=53) strongly agreed (18.86%) and agreed (26.41%) with this statement. 9.43% disagreed and 3.77% strongly disagreed. Twenty-two heterosexual respondents selected N/A for this statement (41.51%). No heterosexual respondents (n=46) believed that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (100%).
The majority of lesbian respondents (n=15) strongly agreed (6.66%) and agreed (40%) with this statement. 13.33% disagreed and 20% strongly disagreed. Three lesbian respondents selected N/A for this statement (20%). Most lesbian respondents (n=11) did not believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (81.81%).

![Figure 47: I seek development opportunities in my career field](image)

![Figure 48: Did your sexual orientation impact this task?](image)

*I try to develop new ways of completing tasks in my job (statement sixteen).* This statement is based on Super’s maintenance stage/innovating sub-stage. The majority of heterosexual respondents (n=53) strongly agreed (20.75%) and agreed (28.30%) with this statement. 3.77% disagreed and 5.66% strongly disagreed. Twenty-two heterosexual respondents selected N/A for this statement (41.51%). No heterosexual respondents (n=43) believed that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (100%).

The majority of lesbian respondents (n=15) strongly agreed (13.33%) and agreed (33.33%) with this statement. 6.66% disagreed with this statement and 20% strongly disagreed. Four lesbian respondents selected N/A for this statement (26.66%). No
lesbian respondents (n=10) believed that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (100%).

The mean scores for heterosexual responses to the maintenance stage statements are: 14) 2.32, 15) 1.97, and 16) 1.90. The mean scores for lesbian responses to the maintenance stage statements are: 14) 3.0, 15) 2.58, and 16) 2.45.

The combined mean score for heterosexual responses to the maintenance stage statements is 2.06. The combined mean score for lesbian responses to the maintenance stage statements is 2.68.
For the maintenance stage, none of the heterosexual respondents believed sexual orientation had an impact on the tasks of this stage (100%). The majority of lesbian respondents did not believe (81.25%) sexual orientation had an impact on tasks of this stage. 18.75% did believe their sexual orientation had an impact on the tasks of the maintenance stage.

**Disengagement stage**

*I am not as enthusiastic or energized by my career as I once was (statement seventeen).* This statement is based on Super’s disengagement stage/declaration sub-stage. The majority of heterosexual respondents (n=53) strongly disagreed (22.64%) and disagreed (13.20%) with this statement. 9.43% agreed and 7.54% strongly agreed. Twenty-five heterosexual respondents selected N/A for this statement (41.51%). No
heterosexual respondents (n=42) believed that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (100%).

The majority of lesbian respondents (n=15) strongly disagreed (20%) and disagreed (20%) with this statement. 13.33% strongly agreed with this statement and 13.33% agreed. Four lesbian respondents selected N/A for this statement (26.66%). Most lesbian respondents (n=10) did not believe that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (90%).

I am considering retirement (statement eighteen). This statement is based on Super’s disengagement stage/retirement planning sub-stage. The majority of heterosexual respondents (n=53) selected N/A for this statement (60.37%). Of the remaining respondents 0% strongly agreed, 1.88% agreed, 1.88% disagreed, and 35.84% strongly disagreed with this statement. No heterosexual respondents (n=38) believed that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (100%).
The majority of lesbian respondents (n=15) selected N/A for this statement (60%). Of the remaining respondents 0% strongly agreed, 0% agreed, 20% disagreed, and 20% strongly disagreed with this statement. No lesbian respondents (n=9) believed that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (100%).

I have retired (statement nineteen). This statement is based on Super’s disengagement stage/retirement living sub-stage. The majority of heterosexual respondents (n=53) selected N/A for this statement (69.81%). Of the remaining respondents 0% strongly agreed, 0% agreed, 1.88% disagreed, and 28.30% strongly disagreed with this statement. No heterosexual respondents (n=37) believed that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (100%).

The majority of lesbian respondents (n=15) selected N/A for this statement (66.66%). Of the remaining respondents 0% strongly agreed, 0% agreed, 6.66% disagreed, and
26.66 strongly disagreed. No lesbian respondents (n=9) believed that their sexual orientation had an influence on this task (100%).

![Figure 58: I have retired](image)

The mean scores for heterosexual responses to the disengagement stage statements are: 17) 2.96, 18) 3.86, and 19) 3.94. The mean scores for lesbian responses to the disengagement stage statements are: 17) 2.7, 18) 3.5, and 19) 3.8.

![Figure 59: Did your sexual orientation impact this task?](image)

The combined mean score for heterosexual responses to the disengagement stage statements is 3.59. The combined mean score for lesbian responses to the disengagement stage statements is 3.33.
For the disengagement stage, none of the heterosexual respondents believed sexual orientation had an impact on the tasks of this stage (100%). The majority of lesbian respondents did not believe (96.43%) sexual orientation had an impact on tasks of this stage. 3.57% did believe their sexual orientation had an impact on the tasks of the disengagement stage.

*About how old were you when you made your career choice?* The majority of heterosexual respondents (n=53) selected the age range of 14-24 (75.47%) for this question. The break-down of responses for the rest of the age ranges are as follows: 25-44 (13.20%), 4-13 (5.66%), no answer (5.66%), 45-65 (0%), and over 65 (0%). The majority of lesbian respondents (n=15) selected the age range of 14-24 (60%) for this question. The break-down of responses for the rest of the age ranges are as follows: 25-44 (20%), no answer (20%), 4-13 (0%), 45-65 (0%), and over 65 (0%).
Did your sexual orientation have an influence on your major or career choice? If so, *in what way?* The results of the qualitative question vary. Of the heterosexual female respondents (n=45), three wrote yes, their sexual orientation had an influence on their major or career choice. All three respondents stated that as a woman they wanted the flexibility to work and have children. The remaining 42 respondents reported no impact of sexual orientation on major or career choice. Five of the lesbian respondents who answered this question (n=13) reported that their sexual orientation did have an impact on their major or career choice. The remaining eight respondents stated that their sexual orientation did not have a direct impact on their major or career choice.

*Combined mean score*

The combined mean scores for all tasks in each stage for the heterosexual respondents are: 1) 1.52, 2) 1.87, 3) 1.94, 4) 2.06, and 5) 3.59. The combined mean scores for all tasks in each stage for the lesbian respondents are: 1) 1.77, 2) 2.25, 3) 2.33, 4) 2.68, and 5) 3.33.
Discussion

The findings of this study support current research regarding the career development of lesbians. Little to no current research exists specifically on the impact of sexual identity development on the career development of lesbian college students. As demonstrated in the literature review, lesbians focus a lot of time and energy on their sexual identity development and put other tasks such as career development aside. This is not an issue facing heterosexual female college students. The results of the survey support the evidence of a delay in career development and lack of self-efficacy of lesbian college students in relation to heterosexual female college students. Lesbian college students need specific career counseling and interventions that support their needs.

The United States Census Bureau (2006) estimates that there are 157 million females living in the United States. According to Gates & Ost (2004) 1.3- two percent of American females identify as lesbians. This means that 2,041,000 – 3,140,000 lesbian females live in the United States. The total population of students at both SUNY Brockport and Hobart and William Smith Colleges is approximately 10,228. According to survey responses, the percentage of female students identifying as lesbian is .14%. This number is much smaller than the national average. Of the 68 survey respondents, 22% reported as being lesbian. This number is much higher than the national average.
There are a few reasons for these results. Not every student at both colleges was given the survey. Specific classes and groups were targeted at SUNY Brockport for an anticipated large number of lesbian respondents. The only students targeted at Hobart and William Smith Colleges were members of the campus gay alliance. The large percentage range demonstrated here (0.14 – 22 percent) further affirms the need for specialized career services for lesbian college students. Lesbians are part of a hidden minority and there is no way to accurately estimate the number of females identifying as lesbian on a college campus. We know from research that a lesbian college student may be more willing to work with a career counselor when they view consistent and affirming behavior on the counselor’s part toward all clients (Bieschke & Matthews, 1996).

The results of the survey clearly show a delay or lack of confidence by lesbian college students in the completion of most tasks in Super’s Life-Space, Life-Span approach to career development. Combined mean results for lesbian respondents in the growth, exploration, establishment, and maintenance stages show a negative gap in relation to the heterosexual female respondents mean results. As college students, chronologically the lesbian respondents should have successfully completed the tasks of the growth stage. The mean score of the lesbian responses to this group of questions is 0.25 higher than the heterosexual respondents. Not much is known about the early development of lesbians (D’Augelli, 1994). The growth stage is a time of clarifying interests, values, and beliefs (Dunkle, 1996). Adult lesbian women retrospectively report an interest in typically male careers as children (Hetherington & Orzek, 1989). However, children seem to be rewarded for gender conforming behavior and therefore perusal of non-traditional careers may be put off to meet societal norms (Morrow, Gore, & Campbell, 1996). Lesbian
college students may still be pursuing careers that don’t quite fit their interests, values, and beliefs causing discord and lack of reconciliation between the future career and internal wants and needs. The exploration stage encompasses the typical age range of traditional college students. The combined mean scores for the questions in this stage is .38 points higher for lesbian respondents than heterosexual respondents. For lesbian students just beginning their sexual identity development, this period may be marked by internalized homophobia and low vocational maturity (Dunkle, 1996). The lesbian respondents were not as confident in the crystallization of some tasks and therefore were unable to confidently state that they had narrowed career options or have worked to implement a career choice. The high mean score (2.85) for lesbian respondents to statement five, “I have made my career choice”, has implications for career counseling. A majority of lesbian respondents selected “disagree” or “strongly disagree” as a response for this statement. The mean score for heterosexual respondents to this statement was also high (2.04) but there is still a significant gap between groups. Choosing a career is a primary task of the college experience. The lesbian respondents are reporting low confidence in this choice in relation to their heterosexual peers. The tasks associated with the establishment stage would not be relevant to most college students. However, at least two of the lesbian respondents reported in the qualitative question that they were pursuing at least their second career. The combined mean score for lesbian responses was .39 points higher than the heterosexual responses. The establishment stage is a period of stabilizing, consolidating, and advancing (Super, 1990). Lesbian respondents had higher combined mean scores for the first two stages and therefore would not have high confidence in the completion of the tasks associated with
this stage. There was a significant increase in N/A responses for both groups to the questions associated with this task which supports the supposition that college students have not reached this stage yet. The biggest gap in mean scores occurred in the maintenance stage as the lesbian mean score was .62 points higher than heterosexual responses. It seems that the lesbian respondents would have significantly higher scores on these tasks which include “staying within my chosen career field” when they showed high scores in crystallizing and implementing during the exploration stage. The N/A responses for these tasks were also very high which supports the supposition that college students have not yet reached this stage. The wording used when describing the tasks of the establishment and maintenance stages may have been vague for respondents. Wording that indicated that these tasks occur while in a chosen career would possibly have clarified for respondents that they haven’t reached these tasks yet. The combined mean scores for the disengagement stage were surprising. The lesbian combined mean score was .26 points lower than the heterosexual combined mean score. While a majority of both groups selected N/A for all tasks, several lesbian respondents selected strongly agree and agree to the task of “I am not as enthusiastic or energized by my career as I once was”. As mentioned earlier, some lesbians may select majors or careers to fulfill societal expectations. The lack of enthusiasm and energy for their career may be due to the fact that they chose a career that did not fulfill their beliefs and values.

The majority of the lesbian respondents reported that they were in either stage five or stage six of their sexual identity development. In stage five, lesbians feel a pride for their identity and are becoming more active with the lesbian community. In stage six, lesbians experience a synthesis of their private and public identities as their sexuality becomes a
fully integrated part of themselves. Since outreach to two gay and lesbian support groups provided a bulk of the lesbian survey responses, this may account for the large numbers in these two stages. Students most likely feel a level of comfort in their sexuality in order to participate in a group specifically for gay and lesbian students. Despite the large number of lesbian respondents identifying with stages five and six, there is still a significant lag behind heterosexual respondents in most of the tasks. It seems that although a majority of the lesbians are comfortable with their sexuality, they are still less confident in their career development than their heterosexual peers.

As the survey statements began addressing the stages beyond the exploration stage, more and more respondents selected N/A as a response. Most college students fit within the age range of the exploration stage and should have developmentally moved through the growth stage. Selecting N/A for tasks related to later stages is appropriate because most of the survey respondents probably have not reached those stages yet. The survey did not include a demographic question asking for the current age of survey respondents. College students are typically 17-23 years of age so it is assumed for the purpose of this study that the respondents fall within this age range. However, several heterosexual respondents were graduate students and two qualitative responses from lesbian students indicate that they are pursuing a second career based on their sexual orientation. The coming out process can hinder self assessment and a career choice made during this time is made with an unclear picture of the self (Dunkle, 1996). This can cause a lesbian to recycle to previous career development stages, for example causing a middle-aged woman to re-visit the exploration stage (Shildo, 1994).
While a majority of survey respondents did not believe their sexual orientation had an impact on the various tasks, a significant number of lesbian respondents did so particularly in the exploration stage. It is possible that the lesbian respondents were unaware of how their sexual orientation impacted various career tasks. The heterosexual respondents had fewer than 10% report an effect of sexual orientation on the tasks in the growth and exploration stages. In the establishment, maintenance, and disengagement stages, no heterosexual respondents reported an effect of sexual orientation on the tasks in that stage. Based on several responses to the qualitative question, it seems that several heterosexual respondents interpreted the term sexual orientation to mean gender. There were significantly higher yes responses from the lesbian respondents, particularly in the exploration stage. Traditional college-aged students would be experiencing the exploration stage. The lesbian respondents were almost evenly divided on tasks four, five, six, seven, and eight in the exploration stage in terms of view of impact. The responses to the qualitative question showed that a majority of the lesbian respondent’s choices of majors or careers was either impacted directly by their sexual orientation or that they are aware of the possible connection. Two lesbian respondents are pursuing a second career that was influenced by experiences they had as lesbians. One of these respondents reported having a relationship with a woman who passed away from an illness. This woman entered a field where she could help others with this illness. One of the lesbian respondents acknowledged the need for research on possible careers, “…would like to be able to find a career that allows me to be open about my sexuality…” The responses from the heterosexual female respondents showed that they did not believe their sexual orientation played a role in their career or major choice. Three heterosexual
female respondents reported yes, however their answers showed a definite confusion of the definition of sexual orientation. All three reported wanting a job that will allow them to work and be a mother. Two of the heterosexual female respondents reported an understanding of the impact a person’s sexual orientation could have on these choices. One woman wrote: “No, however with family members being gay I know that if I was gay it would affect my career choice in some way. It is much easier for acceptance when married and straight than being gay which is truly sad.” Two respondents stated that they either did not believe in homosexuality or that they did not see how sexual orientation impacts major or career choice. This lack of understanding supports a need for college-wide training for students.

The typical age range for when the survey respondents made their career choice was 14-24, the exploration stage. The typical college student will fall within this age range and choosing a career path during college is an appropriate task. Three lesbian respondents did not choose any of the options for this statement. This correlates with the high mean score for statement five on the survey, “I have made my career choice”. No heterosexual respondents left this statement blank. It is difficult to draw any more inferences from this data as the respondents were not asked to provide their current age.

The results of this survey show that despite a large number of lesbian respondents in the higher stages of sexual identity development, there is a still a delay in career development in relation to the heterosexual respondents. This is very important for career counselors as it indicates that even for lesbian students who have transitioned into the last two stages of sexual identity development, they are still struggling to catch-up to their heterosexual classmates in terms of career development.
Limitations and Implications of Study

Limitations

The first limitation of this study was in the creation of the survey. Due to time constraints the survey and survey items could not be tested for validity. A question on the survey asking the age of the respondents would have been very useful in the interpretation of data. It seems that several survey respondents did not know the definition of sexual orientation, confusing it with gender. Adding wording such as “In your career” would have clarified the context of several of the questions, such as “I am secure with my job choice and perform my job duties in a satisfactory manner.” A question as to whether the respondent currently works in their chosen career would have assisted in the analysis of several of the late-stage questions.

The results of the survey had to be generalized due to the small number of lesbian respondents. As members of an invisible minority, it is up to lesbian college students to self-identify on the survey in order for the data to be used. The survey was originally distributed to students at SUNY Brockport but the low response rate required distribution at another Rochester-area college. The Institutional Review Board processes at other colleges and the brief time-frame only allowed the data collection from one other college.

Implications for Counseling

The population of gay men and lesbian women will continue to grow in the United States as “gay culture” becomes part of the norm and gay and lesbian issues are addressed. However, gay and lesbian persons are still invisible, non-ethnic minorities who have few workplace rights.
As stated in the literature review, the coming-out process can stretch out over a long period of time which can cause delays in career development (Gelber & Chojnacki, 1996). Creating an affirmative organizational climate will facilitate the safe development of all students including lesbians. Understanding the career-related barriers of lesbians will help career counselors to better prepare these clients for employment. Further research is needed on career counseling interventions for lesbians who are in the later stages of sexual identity development but who have not yet completed the appropriate career development tasks.

Conclusion

The results of this survey support the need for specialized career counseling and interventions for lesbian students. Lesbians in college may not make informed major and career choices as they are focused on their sexual identity development. The results of this survey also show that lesbians who have successfully transitioned through their sexual identity development are still lagging behind their heterosexual peers in career development. It is necessary that career counselors be knowledgeable about the stages of sexual identity development and how this impacts the career development process. It is also necessary that career counselors be aware that integration of personal and sexual identities does not guarantee greater career salience. There are several interventions that career counselors can utilize to assist lesbian clients in their career development. The use of lesbian mentors, internship programs in affirming organizations, knowledge of lesbian community resources, and group counseling are a few such interventions. Career counselors need to be affirming of all clients in order to facilitate the coming-out process of lesbian clients, members of an invisible non-ethnic minority.
References


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Appendix A

Survey

• Sex: Male _______ Female _______
• Academic Standing: Undergraduate _______ Graduate _______
• Major: ___________________________________________________
• Minor: ___________________________________________________
• Registration Status: Full Time _______ Part Time _______
• Sexual Orientation (If you identify as heterosexual or bisexual, please select the appropriate box. If you identify as gay/lesbian, please select your stage of sexual identity development):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heterosexual</th>
<th>Gay/Lesbian</th>
<th>Bisexual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__ Stage 1 (early stage): I have experiences or feelings that might be labeled gay/lesbian.</td>
<td>__ Stage 2 (early stage): I believe I may be gay/lesbian but I pretend to be straight.</td>
<td>__ I identify as Bisexual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__ Stage 3 (middle stage): I tentatively associate myself with being gay/lesbian.</td>
<td>__ Stage 4 (middle stage): I have begun to take on a more permanent identity as a gay/lesbian person and have selectively disclosed my sexuality to family and friends.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__ Stage 5 (late stage): I am proud to be gay/lesbian and am active in the gay/lesbian community.</td>
<td>__ Stage 6 (late stage): My sexual identity is one with my total identity. My public and private images as a gay/lesbian person have merged.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Directions: Below are a set of statements related to career development. Please rate your agreement with the statements on a scale of 1-4, 1 (Strongly Agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Disagree) 4 (Strongly Disagree). Please also indicate yes or no as to whether your sexual orientation (heterosexual, gay/lesbian, or bisexual) impacted this choice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement</th>
<th>Did your sexual orientation impact this task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I have knowledge of, and concern for my future.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 N/A yes no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am in control of my own life.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 N/A yes no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I know the value of doing well in school and at work.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 N/A yes no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I’ve made my major choice</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 N/A yes no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I’ve made my career choice</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 N/A yes no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I have determined what is important to me when choosing a career (i.e., income, prestige, helping others, leisure time, etc.)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 N/A yes no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. I have clarified the type of work I would enjoy doing.
   1 2 3 4 N/A  yes no

8. I have narrowed down these types of work to a few options.
   1 2 3 4 N/A  yes no

9. I am taking the necessary steps to implement my career choice
   (i.e., major choice, internships, work experience).
   1 2 3 4 N/A  yes no

10. I know what graduate school and career options are available
    to someone with my educational background.
    1 2 3 4 N/A  yes no

11. I am secure with my job choice and perform my job duties in a satisfactory manner.
    1 2 3 4 N/A  yes no

12. I have developed positive and productive work habits in my career.
    1 2 3 4 N/A  yes no

13. I have advanced within my career.
    1 2 3 4 N/A  yes no

14. I have decided to stay within my chosen career field.
    1 2 3 4 N/A  yes no

15. I seek development opportunities in my career field
    (i.e., attend conferences, pursue graduate school)
    1 2 3 4 N/A  yes no

16. I try to develop new ways of completing tasks in my job.
    1 2 3 4 N/A  yes no

17. I am not as enthusiastic or energized by my career as I once was.
    1 2 3 4 N/A  yes no

18. I am considering retirement.
    1 2 3 4 N/A  yes no

19. I have retired.
    1 2 3 4 N/A  yes no

About how old were you when you made your career choice (circle one)?
4-13  14-24  25-44  45-65  Over 65

Did your sexual orientation have an influence on your major or career choice? If so, in what way?

Dear Student:
In the event that you should need to speak to a professional staff person regarding this questionnaire, the following offices have professional personnel available to all students with concerns and/or questions.

Principal Investigator:  Kathleen Schreier
Career Services
Thompson Hall
(585) 395-5421
Career Services: Thompson Hall  
(585) 395-2159  

Counseling Center: Hazen Health Center  
(585) 395-2207