The Relationship Among First-Generation College Student Status and Resilience, Social Support, Perceived Barriers, and Negative Career Thoughts

Vanessa F. Freeman, M. A.
Florida State University
## First-Generation College Students

**Characteristics**
- Racial/Ethnic minorities
- Lower SES backgrounds
- Attend 2-year institutions first
- Less academically prepared
- May delay attendance
- Less social capital

**Expectations & Experiences**
- Lower GPAS
- Repeat or withdraw from more classes
- Spend more time studying
- More perceived barriers
- Work more hours per week
Resilience

Research reveals a significant and positive correlation between resilience and GPA.

FGCS who have higher self-efficacy and optimism may be more resilient.

There may be some differences in resilience levels by race/ethnicity and gender.
Social Support

- Social support helps FGCS feel more connected to the institution.
- Lack of social support has been correlated with lower GPAs and higher levels of social support can lead to higher levels of resilience.
- Social support can lead to persistence to graduation, adjustment to college, life satisfaction, less anxiety and depression.
Perception of Barriers

Race/ethnicity are related to the perception of career barriers.

FGCS are more likely to perceive barriers related to finances, family, discrimination, and preparedness.

Perceived barriers can impact educational aspirations.
Negative Career Thoughts

1. Negative career thoughts and career indecision are related to symptoms of depression.
2. Negative career thoughts can lead to less of a sense of calling.
3. Conflicting findings regarding FGCS and negative career thoughts.
Findings of Recent Research

- No statistically significant differences between groups, both groups reported high levels of resilience
- Statistically significant differences, with non-FGCS perceiving more social support than FGCS
- Statistically significant differences, with non-FGCS perceiving more barriers than FGCS
- No statistically significant differences between groups, both groups had similar levels of negative career thoughts
Findings Continued

- Resilience level and perceived social support predicted 12.8% of the variance in perception of barriers.
- Resilience level and perceived social support predicted 19.8% of the variance in negative career thoughts.
Implications for Practice

- Explore elements in the environment that help build and maintain resilience and build social support networks
- Interventions that help reduce negative career thoughts and build resilience
- Talk with FGCS to learn more about the types of barriers in their education and career they may perceive
- Use a theory, such as CIP, to address negative career thoughts
Conclusion

• The “gap” between FGCS and non-FGCS may be closing
• Supportive campus offices and programs can help FGCS thrive
• Further research needed to continue to understand FGCS’ success
Questions and/or Comments?

For more information email vff13@my.fsu.edu

Thank you!