African American women persisting in Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) Doctoral   
Programs

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Abstract

Identification and examination of potential internal and external factors that influence some African American females persisting in a Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) doctoral program is the goal of this research. A synthesis of the research reveals that disruptive risk factors, feelings of isolation, oppressive conditions, and intersections of stressors ranging from financial, academic, familial, and personal pressures, challenges the African American female student’s persistence within their doctoral program, however, it does not triumph. In general, doctoral programs in Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) have seen a consistent increase in African American students’ enrollments and completion rates. The implication for future study aims to quantify resilience strategies significant to African American women’s persistence in PH.D. counselor educator programs. With these findings, specific theoretical frameworks and models would culminate into a more robust clinical identity for Black women persisting in the academic pipeline.

Keywords: Persisting, African Americans women, Counselor Education and Supervision (CES)

**African American women persisting in a Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) doctoral program**

Throughout the United States, most-all women still find it necessary to negotiate and integrate multiple marginalized identities in their doctoral counselor education and

supervision (CES) programs to persist. Particularly African American women within the CES programs have been reportedly suffering from the same plight of gender-related pressures but with the added: "double sword" of race bias (Shavers & Moore, 2014; Johnson, Bradley, Knigh, & Bradshaw, 2007). Over the last twenty years, there has been an upward trend of the attainment of doctoral degrees by African American women, for the race bias to be overtly noticeable and documented (Johnson, et al., 2007; Holcomb-McCoy & Bradley, 2003; Gregory, 2001; St. John, 2000). It has also been recorded that the needs and concerns of African American women are commonly ignored, stereotyped, or misunderstood by instructors, school administrators, and other educators (Morris, 2016; Smith-Evans, George, Graves, Kaufmann, & Frohlich, 2014; Rollock, 2007; Guifrrida, 2003). African American women are frequently targets of systemic biases due to this intersectionality of gender and race (Naidoo, 2015). These biases are said to be often held by educators, potentially subjecting African American female students to stereotypes such as being “angry,” “aggressive,” or “promiscuous” (Harris et al., 2017; Rosenthal, & Lobel, 2016; Naidoo, 2015; Guifrrida, 2003). These experiences often result in complex self-change ranging from elation and affirmation to humiliation, confusion, exclusion, and non-recognition at the department and faculty levels (Naidoo, 2015; Smith-Evans et al., 2014, Shavers & Moore, 2014). The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the perceptions and factors of persistence of African American women, in a doctoral counselor education and supervision program, as a catalyst to achieving their educational goals. The aforementioned information leads to the following question: What are the internal and external factors that contribute to the success of the African American women within CES doctoral programs?

**Literature review**

Many higher education institutions strive for diversity and hold this as an important pillar to their mission (Pope & Mueller, 2011). Therefore, many higher education administrators work to establish diversity policies that foster positive campus environments and learning experiences (Pope & Mueller, 2011). However, African American women Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) doctoral students’ often encounter systemic forces of racism similar to those encountered in the broader community (Dollarhide, Mayes, Dogan, Aras, Edwards, Oehrtman, & Clevenger, 2018; Allen, Epps, Guillory, Suh, & Bonous‐Hammarth, 2000). Specific dispositions and experiences of the African American female students include tenacious self-motivation and self-regulation in the face of severely constraining conditions, diverse epistemologies, and hybrid goals (Gleason, Brett & Hayes, Danica, 2019; Guifrrida, 2003; Gregory, 2001). Other dispositions involved more communal orientations, vulnerability regarding funds, complex self-change, and perplexedness about ‘produce new knowledge’ and other requirements of the Ph.D. (Morris, 2016; Naidoo, 2015). Additional research highlighting similar racialized conditions for African American women has been documented in the Ph.D. Counselor Education & Supervision program accredited by the Council for Accreditation for Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2016). Constantine, Smith, Redington, and Owens (2008) conducted a qualitative study with 12 African American counselor educators (seven women) conveyed that respondents experienced microaggressions such as invisibility/hypervisibility, challenges to their qualifications, inadequate mentoring, high service-oriented assignments, gender, and racial discrimination, and pressure to "not be too Black" (Constantine et al., 2008, p. 353).

**African American female attrition rates**

It is well known that pursuit of a doctoral degree can be extremely challenging, as evidenced in the average doctoral student attrition rate, which staggers over the years from 30 percent to 50 percent (Lee, Injung, Bardhoshi, Gerta, Yoon, Eunhui, Sandersfeld, Tyler, Rush, Roma D., & Priest, Jacob B., 2018; Brill et al., 2014; Howard‐Hamilton, 2003; Bair, 1999; Tinto, 1993). In Counselor Education and Supervision (CES), the rate of attrition is approximately 38% (National Opinion Research Center, 2018). Of those who remain, African Americans earned 7.1 percent of the doctorates awarded in the 2017-18 academic school year, despite making up 13 percent of the population (Lee et al., 2018). While these statistics are maybe discouraging, a more encouraging picture is often painted about black women, who earn approximately 65.6 percent of the doctoral degrees awarded to African Americans (Lee et al., 2018; Shavers & Moore, 2014). Additionally, cross all disciplines African American females within a CES program attrition rates are approximately 14.3% (National Opinion Research Center, 2018). A synthesis of the research found that educators generally viewed African American women as motivated and organized, requiring less “surveillance” and nurturing than their male counterparts (Rollock, 2007). Furthermore, some educators have assumed that Black female students are academically self-sufficient, requiring less educational support such as tutoring, performance monitoring, and goal setting (Morris, 2016).

**Why CES degree program**

The goal of a CES program is to train students to be leaders in all areas of the counseling discipline, including counselor education, and to gain competencies in advanced clinical work, supervision, research, teaching, and leadership (Adkison-Bradley, 2013; CACREP, 2016).

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2016) Standards advise CES doctoral programs to prepare students “to work as counselor educators, supervisors, researchers, and practitioners in academic and clinical settings” (p. 52). Furthermore, the required CES internship can include an array of experiences such as clinical practice, research, teaching, supervision, and leadership activities (CACREP, 2016). These CACREP requirements indicate that a professional who wants training and experience in the professorate (e.g., teaching; research), as well as in clinical settings can find a good match in a CES program (Hinkle, et al., 2014). Said differently the CES program may lend itself to the developing and sustaining of African American female students' internal and external persistence. Upon graduation, CES students have various career path options suggesting that they have diverse motivations for pursuing the degree (Hinkle, et al., 2014; Borders, Wester, Granello, Chang, Hays, Pepperell, & Spurgeon, 2012). Although there is no research found regarding the reasons’ individuals choose to pursue a doctorate specifically in CES, the historical purposes of the degree, accreditation standards, enrollment rates, and the work sought by graduates may suggest motivations of furthering their competencies and becoming leaders in the field (Hinkle, Iarussi, Schermer, & Yensel, 2014).

Despite all of the various hardships endured the doctoral African American women in CES programs find a way to triumph. These students are seeming to employ internal and external factors that contribute to their higher educational success. As a group of persisters, they are one-by-one breaking down walls, shattering myths, and perpetuating intellectual activism throughout their communities, using their CES degrees as the vehicle to do it (Joseph, Hailu, & Boston, 2017; Ford & Glimps, 2014; Johnson, 2008, Wright & Cochrane, 2000). Given the steady enrollment rates of African American doctoral females entering into the counseling profession by-way-of obtaining a CES degree, a further look at these students' motivations may benefit CES students, faculty and the CACREP-accrediting body to adapt policies that promote persistence and retention numbers (Joseph, Hailu, & Boston, 2017; Ford & Glimps, 2014; Wright & Cochrane, 2000).

**Factors: internal and external**

Researchers have typically portrayed intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as dichotomous for promote high-quality learning () Investigating to gain knowledge and understanding of factors contributing to African American female students’ persistence in CES programs may help academic institutions better meet their students’ needs, improve the quality of their academic experiences, and increase their retention and degree completion rate (Creswell and Miller, 2002).

**Internal factors**

Previous literature suggested a confluence of internal factors that motivate an individual to pursue a doctoral degree (Hinkle et al., 2014; Protivnak, & Foss, 2009). Intrinsic incentives influence both the decision to pursue a doctoral degree and the ability to persevere to its completion (Ivankova & Stick, 2007; Wellington & Sikes, 2006). Some African American female students may find the intellectual challenge and stimulation of doctoral work rewarding (Scott, Brown, Lunt, & Thorne, 2004); while others seek out the personal challenge and have a love for learning (Church, 2009; Ivankova & Stick, 2007). Other motivations are to achieve a personal goal, find pleasure in learning, prove one’s abilities to others, and gain confidence (Jablonski, 2001; Leonard, Becker, & Coate, 2005). Recent research reflects African American student’s desire to be a professor in Counselor Education (Shavers & Moore, 2014; Hinkle et al., 2014). These students were said to be motivated by the various academic roles, a dedication to training counselors, and the flexibility of the academic position and schedule (Hinkle et al., 2014; Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004).

Further research conducted by scholar Gazzola and team revealed that African American CES female student’s intrinsic incentives persistent motivations are closely tied to their passion for developing their identity as counselors, either in enhancing it or in preserving it (Gazzola, De Stefano, Audet, & Theriault, 2011). With a strong clinical identity, these students are motivated by their desire to shape the profession by training future counselors, with their counselor identity superseding a professor's identity (Gazzola, De Stefano, Audet, & Theriault, 2011).

The final persistent factor can serve both internal and external motivation for the CES African American students, that is their desire to succeed for family and community amid obstacles (Rockinson-Szapkiw, Sosin, & Spaulding, 2018; Hinkle et al., 2014). This factor of persistence emerges from a dedication to family, influenced by familial support, community, and societal values (Lenz, Sangganjanavanich, Balkin, Oliver, & Smith, 2012).

**External factors**

The extrinsic incentives influence both the decision to pursue a doctoral degree and the ability to persevere to its completion includes the desire to experience a new learning environment (Ivankova & Stick, 2007). Many students are driven by the external rewards that can occur upon completion of the doctorate in the form of professional gain, such as to enter or advance in a career (Ivankova & Stick, 2007; Jablonski, 2001; Scott, et al., 2004) and to remain viable in a profession (Laurent, Steffey, & Serdlik, 2008). Additionally, key external factors of a CES college education is the long-term earning potential and other benefits, such as increased productivity, contributions to a professional field or discipline, community service activities, and involvement in political issues (Santicola, 2013).

The quality of the academic program and relevance of the course work is a major focus for CES student’s external factors for persisting. When students are concentrating on learning, their involvement with courses positively impacted the students’ persistence (Ivankova & Stick, 2007). Likewise, the quality of academic advising and an advisor’s commitment to students’ doctoral journey also add to the student’s level of persistence, although it differentially affected students’ persistence (Ivankova & Stick, 2007). The flexibility and convenience of an online learning environment contributed to the students who persisted as they had high comfort levels with technology, good writing skills and were comfortable interacting with other students online (Hock, & Mellard, 2011; Ivankova & Stick, 2007).

The notion that one’s religiosity, and alas spirituality, might influence the CES persistence as the doctoral journey may be perceived as a calling from God. This may result in the would appear to be somewhat intuitive but external factors for persisting for some African American female CES students (Smith, Maroney, Nelson, Abel, & Abel, 2006). Finally servicing as both internal and external incentives for doctoral students, Lovitts and Nelson’s (2000) research shows “a high correlation between integration into a department’s social and professional life (becoming part of a community) and successful completion of the Ph.D.” Therefore, by CES students assimilating into the graduate community, this may be one possibility for overcoming barriers (Lovitts and Nelson, 2001). It is also noted that graduate faculty play a substantial role in student persistence and departure and “the single most important factor in student decisions to continue or withdraw is the relationship with a faculty advisor” (Lovitts and Nelson, 2000, p. 48).

**Risk factors**

Many risk factors are challenging the African American student’s persistence within their doctoral program (Christner, 2016; O’Malley, 2014). Prove-them-wrong syndrome provided motivation to combat stereotypes and overcome adversity with an attitude of relentless hard work and determination (Shavers & Moore, 2014). Both part-of-a-bigger-whole and prove-them-wrong syndromes helped participants to persist academically but took a toll on their overall well-being (Shavers & Moore, 2014). While these strategies portray resiliency, because these women are persisting academically, they also can be “double-edged swords,” when they compromise black women’s overall well-being (Shavers & Moore, 2014). The stereotype that African Americans are not competent in academic domains is one that African American women in doctoral programs are faced with on a continuous basis (Shavers & Moore, 2014). As a result, African American doctoral students often feel that they must work harder to defy stereotypes.

Other major attributing risk factors include African American female students experiencing feelings of isolation, oppressive conditions, and intersections of stressors ranging from financial, academic, familial, and personal pressures within their CES program (Christner, 2016; Shavers & Moore, 2014; Abel, Abel, & Smith, 2012; Gonzalez 2006). Other researchers claim a much higher dropout rate among African American female students pursuing their CES doctoral degrees is a consequence of the format of their educational pursuit; distance education (DE) (Carr, 2000; Diaz, 2000).

Persistence in DE is a complex phenomenon influenced by a multitude of factors: challenges set by the distance learning environment, personally related internal and external variables, computer literacy, ability to access requisite technology, time management, and absent or questionable support from an employer and/or family (Kember, 1990). The student population is composed of mainly part-time adult students, who often have numerous and demanding commitments to work, family, and social lives (Ivankova and Stick, 2003; Finke, 2000; Holmberg, 1995).

**Limitation**

African American female students’ experiences within a CES program, was reviewed by analyzing literature, data collection methods, and findings in various research studies using search engine including but not limited to: 1) American Counselor Association journal article database 2) ACA division- Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) journal article database 3) Liberty University Library 4) Academic Search Premier, 5) Academic Search Complete, 6) ERIC, 7) Ebsco Host, 8) PsychINFO, 9) Education Full-text Education Source, 10) Professional Development Collection, and 11) Women's Studies International. Considering the abundance of research already existing about persistence within a doctoral program it was surprising to be faced with limited research specific to the targeted variables. The aforementioned databases were accessed seeking the yield of more narrow and recent information. The variables contributing to the success of African American female students, as it relates to persistence within a CES program was limited.

Table 1.1 Teams searched

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Black female counselor educators | Internal and external factors |
| Persistence; African American female Persisters in Higher Education | Success in Higher Education OR Graduate OR Doctoral Studies |
| Black women in doctoral Studies | Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) |
| Blacks OR Black (African American)s | Higher Education OR Graduate OR Doctoral Studies |
| Black (African American) Females OR Women OR Black Females OR Women | Contribution to the success of women within CES doctoral programs |
| Black women motivations | Success in CES doctoral studies |
| Theories of African American female (Black women) students’ persistence | Models; theoretical frameworks; CACREP |

As mentioned before there was not a shortage of research regarding general student’s persistence in graduate programs, ranging from all fields and disciplines. Three major theories of students’ persistence: Tinto’s (1998, 1975, 1987, 1993) Student Integration Theory, Bean’s (1985, 1980, 1990) Student Attrition Model, and Kember’s (1990, 1995) Model of Dropout from Distance Education Courses, appeared frequently. Besides, the works of these scholars served as a theoretical foundation for many other studies found. Yet, there were limited theories and models which focused primarily on African American female students in CES programs. Most models geared at explaining attrition of distance adult students, shared and differing approaches to persistence (Protivnak & Foss, 2009). While these prominent researchers and their works did not mention African American especially, they did not exclude them (Ivankova & Stick, 2007). With this, their principle components helped identify critical internal and external factors presumably impacting students' persistence, such as entry characteristics, goal commitment, academic, and social integration, and external forces (family, friends, and employers) were used to enhance the limited African America specific information located (Protivnak & Foss, 2009; Ivankova & Stick, 2007). Extensive literature review also revealed that graduate students’ persistence in a program of study seldom is the result of the influence of one students’ persistence in a distributed doctoral program but several (Protivnak & Foss, 2009; Ivankova & Stick, 2007). It would be a significant contribution to the field to know what these factors are specifically for African American women. Based on these factors and the principle components from the development of theories of students’ persistence a set of variables could test for the predictive power of internal and external factors on doctoral African American female students’ persistence in the CES programs.

**Implication for future**

The three prominent areas identified as risk factors to the African American CES student’s persistence are feelings of isolation, oppressive conditions, and intersections financial, academic, familial, and personal stressors (Christner, 2016; Shavers & Moore, 2014; Abel, Abel, & Smith, 2012). Over the years several studies noted that feeling connected to faculty through mentorship has positive influences on CES students’ persistence and success in their doctoral programs (Borders, Wester, Granello, Chang, Hays, Pepperell, & Spurgeon, 2012; Winkle-Wagner, Johnson, Morelon-Quainoo, & Santiague, 2010). Although mentorship practices have been addressed in the literature about students who aspire to be counselor educators and researchers (Borders et al., 2012; Wright & Cochrane, 2000), mentorship for students who aim to be clinicians appears to be less prevalent due resulting in feelings of isolation (Borders et al., 2012; Wright & Cochrane, 2000). This point seems emphasized for African American females (Christner, 2016; Shavers & Moore, 2014). Research shows these students experience elevated feelings of persistence when they have mentoring relationships with faculty members with whom they had shared interests, motivations, and professional endeavors (Christner, 2016). A successful collaborative environment where faculty invited students to teach or write, were responsive to students' needs and generally made students feel included also lend itself to African American female student’s amplified persistence metric (Christner, 2016).

It is proposed, upon successful enrollment of a PH.D. CES program, that each African American female student be given the mentoring Scale (Gloria, 1993) to obtain baseline data to which students perceive they have a mentor within the academic setting. After successful completion of each year, the students are re-assess to identify if they perceive someone on campus care about their educational success and to inquire with whom they could identify as a role model. Implementation of this activity can be useful for increasing student involvement and gaining a sense of purpose within their program, which are helpful factors in finding self-assuredness and belonging for African American women CES doctoral students (Hughes & Kleist, 2005). Opportunities for faculty mentorship seem more likely when a strong academic match is present which may result in increased persistence for retention (Walker, 2006).

To address the two remaining risk factors to the African American family CES student's persistence, oppressive conditions, and intersections financial, academic, familial, and personal stressors, the use of the Cultural Congruity Scale (CCS) and College Self-Efficacy Inventory (CSEI) scales would be applied. Much-like the aforenoted format, the students would be given these assessments immediately after successful enrollment into the CES program for a baseline evaluation. Following this, the student will annually re-assess to monitor progression and perception of change.

The Cultural Congruity Scale (CCS) is based on the Perceived Threat Scale (Ethier & Deaux, 1990), the 13-item CCS examined students' perceptions of the congruence between their values and those of the university. The assessment may directly target the CES students' experience of oppression. The information gained may overtly dismiss feelings of lower congruence and reflect a greater cultural fit than the African American female student originally perceived. On the other hand, this scale may prove to validate the African American female students’ (and other ethnic and racial minority students’) experiences and create opportunities for policy changes that may directly attribute to the student’s variance in persistence decisions. One example of a policy change, maybe to include 1% (or more) of an African American woman representation on the core faculty/ staff. Protivnak and Foss (2009) found that CES students were more successful when they had inclusive relationships with faculty members with whom they had shared interests, motivations, and professional endeavors. It was also determined that departmental culture influenced CES doctoral students’ successful completion of their program and cited examples of collaborative environments where faculty invited students to teach or write, were responsive to students’ needs, and generally made students feel included (Protivnak & Foss, 2009; Hoskins & Goldberg, 2005).

Gender-oriented research found that female doctoral students have more difficulties in coping with their studies, triggered for instance by experiences with or lack of different support systems (Schmidt & Umans, 2014). The final scale College Self-Efficacy Inventory (CSEI) would be used to validate the student’s confidence balancing financial, academic-related tasks, familial, and personal stressors (Harper & Quaye 2007; Solberg et al., 1993). Research shows African American females students require community support as they advance in their academic CES careers (Evans-Winters, 2005; Gafford-Muhammad & Dixson, 2008). This on-going need assessment will monitor course efficacy, social efficacy, and home-life efficacy.

Finally, if the student does appear in jeopardy of dropping out, a Persistence/Voluntary Dropout Decisions Scale (PVDDS) would be administered (Gloria, Robinson-Kurpius, Hamilton, & Willson, 1999). This scale was developed to assess the persistence decisions of college students, with lower scores reflecting more positive decisions about persisting in college (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980). The results of this hypothesis postulates that higher levels of social support, more comfort in the university environment, and positive self-beliefs would be associated with more positive academic persistence decisions of African American female students, assessed by Persistence/Voluntary Dropout Decisions Scale. With continued examination and application of research-informed recommendations, racial and ethnic minority students will be more likely to persist to graduation (Harper & Quaye 2007; Gloria et al., 1999).

Much-needed social change will occur based on the findings from the suggested the research above. African American women and other minorities have struggled over the years to find their place in higher education (Bradley, & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004). From this data they are several potentials for the development of specific African American females’ advancements within their CES programs; starting with inclusive policy changes, theoretical approaches, and models for future generations female scholars. Similar to the barriers minorities face socially and culturally in America, minorities in higher education are still working toward fairness and equality (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004). As long as research is consistently working to decrease those barriers and forums are created to explore experiences of minorities in higher education, change can occur starting the African American women (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004).

**Conclusion**

The researcher deduced from the findings that individuals cannot stop their lives in order to pursue a doctoral degree (Santicola, 2013). CES students must be at a point in their life where they feel prepared to take on the challenge of intense learning and be able to manage their lives at the same time (Santicola, 2013). It became clear in this research that persistence strategies must be used in tandem with retention strategies. While there are a substantial number of barriers that prevent African American female students from persisting in their program here are six recommendations for addressing some hindrances to these students found in the research: 1) policymaking initiatives, 2) financial considerations, 3) web site strategies, 4) degree mapping, 5) faculty presentation, and 6) on-going assessment and monitoring for perception and experiences (Haile, Emmanuel, & Dzathor, 2016; Santicola, 2013).

Implication for the future research is grounded and guided by the *intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and self-determination theory* to facilitate proactive engagement of African American female students by autonomy-supportive social contexts which will, in turn, promote high-quality learning, persistence and successful completion of their CES doctoral program (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The proposed approach offers a new way of examining the experiences of African American female students in CES programs to advance innovative knowledge that will inform policy and further future research agenda. The aim with the approach is to develop a robust counselor’s identity, in turn, is an aspect of self-actualization that is needed for persistence, engagement, and sustained success in the pursuit of a counselor education and supervision doctoral degree (Kuo, Woo, & Washington, 2018; Scott Rigby; Deci, Patrick, & Ryan, 1992).

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**Appendix: Grading Rubric for Practical Article Submission I and II**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **CAREFULLY FOLLOW THE GENRE AND STYLE YOU FIND IN THE ARTICLES YOU DOWNLOAD FROM THE JOURNAL YOU SELECT** | Comments |
| 1 | Proper APA (6th Edition) Style: Title page through references and everything in between. | Journal article required specific word count for abstract |
| 2 | Paper Organization: Includes a clear, succinct abstract, introduction and conclusion that summarizes paper’s contents, and clearly articulated transitions between the primary sections of the paper. | Attempting APA 7th edition |
| 3 | Professional, Scholarly, Publishable Quality: Correct grammar, spelling, syntax, use of verbiage, tense, etc. | This is a weak area that requires on-going development |
| 4 | **ALL** points and facts presented in the paper are supported by proper use of citations and references to current empirical and theoretical literature. | I really enjoyed this assignment and I hope I captured all points and facts available |
| 5 | **Content, General Guidelines**  **Title** —It is specific and has a clear focus. It appropriately sets the readers’ expectations for what they will learn.  **Abstract** —It is a concise summary of the entire piece and not just a paragraph lifted from the manuscript. The abstract does the article justice and piques interest in reading the entire work without being cryptic.  **Introduction** —The introduction builds interest and strides confidently into the topic and focus.  **Pronouncement paragraph** —The manuscript includes a pronouncement paragraph and what is previewed there matches the main headings of the article.  **Main headings** —The headings are specific to the focus of the article and are consistent in format ~~(e.g., all stated as questions, each begins with a verb; they effectively guide the reader through major shifts in the argument).~~  **Body of the manuscript** —There no more than 3–5 main headings that are evenly balanced in terms of length.  **Literature review** —The evidence base is current and authoritative with just a few classic sources. It uses original sources rather than textbooks. The review of the literature is thorough, current, persuasive, and synthesized.  **Transitions** —reading through the article, the transitions are smooth.  **Examples** —The examples provided resonate with the experience of counseling professionals. There are not too few or too many and they were not too long.  **Visual material**—Figures, tables, charts, graphs, and/or other visual material are helpful and worthy of publication. They are original and focused very specifically on the topic of the article.  **Length and clarity** —The manuscript is not too wordy in places (i.e., in need of condensing) nor are there places where the material requires further development (i.e., where not enough explanation is given).  **Conclusion** —The conclusion: (1) briefly “recaps” the main ideas (2) moves from specific to more general ideas (3) revisits the main thesis that was explained in the introduction (4) gives a genuine sense of wrapping everything up and sending readers on their way | . No heading for the pronouncement paragraph  . Abstract met the word count  . Key words were added  . Doi or retrieve information added  . I struggle to find recent research using the following specifiers: CES, doctoral program, African American, female, especially, in the ACES library.  . I wonder if I was at the edge of research or perhaps, I was not diligent enough in my empirical review  . I strive to recap and revisit the main points |
| 6 | Reference page is in proper APA style and citations throughout are ample and are primary (not secondary) sources. | Standard met |
| 7 | Assignment is double spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman | Standard met |
| 8 | Follow the author guidelines or what you see in the articles you download from the journal regarding use of first person. Either way (first or third person) it must be appropriately professional and scholarly. | There were limited encounters with first person references with the CES journal articles |
| 9 | Assignment is of proper length (18-22 pages) [not including title page, abstract, references and required appendices]) DO NOT EXCEED PAGE LIMIT. | Page length requirement was met and not exceed. |
| 10 | Few, if any, quotations that are brief and are in proper APA format. | Special attention was paid to avoid direct quotes and to synthesize the findings. |
| 11 | Include a copy of the author guidelines for the article as an appendix item. Include a copy of the grading rubric filled out as a self-assessment as an appendix item (submission one only) | Grading rubric/ self-assessment completed. |
|  | Total Points (Points will vary based on quality of each section)- Submission I: 190 Submission II: 250 |  |