The purpose of this study was to provide an in-depth understanding of the career development experiences of urban minority adolescents from their own perspectives. The investigation used the Structured Career Development Interview (SCDI), a 48-item, open-ended questionnaire based on the nine career constructs critical in the formation of vocational self-understanding. Consensual Qualitative Research Methodology (CQR), a rigorous and standardized approach to qualitative research, was employed to analyze the data in a systematic way. Twelve students (4 Hispanics, 7 African Americans, and 1 Somalian/African; 10 females, 2 males) from an urban public middle school and high school in Kansas City, Missouri participated in the study.

The results suggested a progressive career maturity among participants. Older students displayed more direction and focus about their career interests. Ten of the twelve participants reported above average grade point averages; only eight students had a 3.0 gpa or better. Participants reported high career expectations and aspirations despite demographic, social, and economic challenges. The participants offered parental support as the primary source of emotional, but not instrumental support; teachers, counselors, and school administrators were less supportive. Premature foreclosure to diverse career interest was characteristic of all participants.

Recommendations include: (1) interventions must be early and most proceed through K12 years; (2) school counselors and teachers must collaborate to develop curriculum and experiences that connect current behaviors with future achievement; and (3) parents must be encouraged to become more instrumentally involved in the career interests of their students.