ABSTRACT

Title: THE INFLUENCE OF
                                                MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING
                                                TRAINING ON SCHOOL
                                                COUNSELORS' SELF-PERCEIVED
                                                MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE

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With the changing demographics of the school population, the multicultural

competence of school counselors has become increasingly important. This study

examined the influence of formal training and exposure to persons different from the

school counselor on multicultural competence. A demographic questionnaire and the

Multicultural Counseling Inventory (MCI) were mailed to a random sample of American

Counseling Association (ACA) members. Overall, formal training was not correlated

with multicultural competence. However, working with and exposure to people who

were different than the school counselors in terms of race/ethnicity, disability status, and

sexual orientation was correlated with multicultural competence. When asked to

comment broadly on important multicultural experiences that influenced them as

professionals, school counselors mentioned race/ethnicity most frequently. Implications

for training school counselors includes the importance of exposing trainees to people who

are different than them and examining the content and style of school counseling

multicultural courses.

THE INFLUENCE OF MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING TRAINING ON SCHOOL

COUNSELORS' SELF-PERCEIVED MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE

By

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

As the "fourth force" in counseling (Pederson, 1990), multiculturalism has become increasingly important to all counselors. The changing demographics of the United States and school-age population have made multicultural competence important to school counselors in particular. There are now greater numbers of people-of-color in the schools, while the majority of school counselors are still White. More often than not, school counselors are working within the cross-cultural zone (Lee, 2006), working with clients whose culture is different from theirs.

In order to provide the most appropriate services to the changing demographics of students, school counselors must have adequate training. Multicultural training is a part of most, if not all, school counseling training models. Many recent graduates of school counselor training programs have received some sort of multicultural training in the form of a course. Other training opportunities include in-service training, workshops, and exposure to clients of different cultures. With the changing demographics of the school-aged population, the school counseling profession is beginning to realize how important multicultural competence is to meet the needs of students. As we see multiculturalism become the "fourth force" in counseling, we also see school counselors moving towards an emphasis on multicultural competence and social justice (Ratts, DeKruyf, & Chen-Hayes, 2007). There have been several studies emphasizing the importance of multicultural competence for counselors, in general (Sue, Bernier, Durran, Feinberg, Pederson, Smith, and Vasquez-Nuttal, 1982; Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992;

Arredondo & Toporek, 2004), and school counselors in particular (Constantine & Yeh, 2001; Holcomb-McCoy, 2001; Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Yeh & Arora, 2003). Many of them conclude that adequate training is vital to helping school counselors become multiculturally competent. Though it is unclear how school counselors should be trained in multicultural issues, it is evident that more research about the multicultural training of school counselors is necessary.

Statement of Problem

There is a dearth of research that addresses the effectiveness of school counselor multicultural training modules. Does taking courses on multiculturalism help a school counselor trainee become more multiculturally competent? Is in-service training more effective than workshops? Is taking more formal multicultural courses cumulative or is one course sufficient? Perhaps most important is the question of to what degree formal training matters. Is it more effective to simply get exposure to different cultures while working? In essence, how does pre-service, in-service, formal and informal multicultural training influence school counselors' self-perceived multicultural competence?

Purpose

The purpose of the present study is to examine the different training factors that affect self-perceived multicultural competence. Determining what makes a school counselor multiculturally competent has broad implications for training institutions. It is important for colleges and universities to produce school counselors who are multiculturally competent, but it is unclear what the best route to this competence is. Understanding what helps school counselors to become multiculturally competent will help training programs determine what courses to offer, how many, and what the content

of those courses should be. This study also has implications for schools and districts as it would be advantageous for schools to continue to facilitate school counselors' multicultural competence. What is the most effective way that this can be achieved? If school counselors have already taken a multicultural course during their graduate training, is further training necessary? Exploring how these different training methods contribute to multicultural competence is beneficial for these reasons.

The present study will address the following research questions:

1) To what degree does the multicultural competence of school counselors correlate with their multicultural training?

    a. What is the relative importance of graduate multicultural courses and in-service training for producing multiculturally competent school counselors? Is in-service and pre-service multicultural training cumulative?

    b. To what degree does pre-service multicultural training correlate with specific areas of multicultural competence?

    c. To what degree does in-service multicultural training correlate with specific areas of multicultural competence?

2) To what degree does in-vivo exposure to clients of different cultures correlate with specific areas of multicultural competence?

3) Given the opportunity to comment broadly on multicultural experiences that have affected one's work as a professional; what themes emerge?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Importance of Multicultural Competence for Counselors

The United States population is rapidly changing. It has been projected that by the year 2050 the majority of the United States population will be people of color (Greenberg, 2003). In addition, greater numbers of multiracial children are being born and included in the US census. Moreover, the White population is experiencing declining fertility and birthrates. Now more than ever counselors are working within the cross-cultural zone (Lee, 2006). The cross-cultural zone occurs when the counselor and/or the client are not a part of the majority culture. The field of counseling has gone through many changes throughout its history. What began as strictly psychodynamics with Freud at the helm, evolved to include behaviorism and Rogers' humanistic approach. Most recently, multiculturalism has been added as the "fourth force" in the counseling field (Pederson, 1990).

In 1982, Sue, et al. stated that competence in the areas of multicultural awareness, multicultural knowledge, and multicultural skills was necessary for counselors to be successful with all clients. This article was one of the first to recognize that the field of counseling needed a set of competencies in order to determine the multicultural competence of counselors. Ten years later, Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis (1992) published an article that was deemed so important that it was jointly published in the *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development* and the *Journal of Counseling and Development*. Sue, et al. (1992) expanded upon what Sue, et al. (1982) had previously introduced. In this article, the authors stated that integrating multiculturalism into the

counseling profession is urgent, necessary, and ethical. They urged counselors to develop competencies in the areas of beliefs and attitudes, knowledge, and skills. The authors believed that counselor trainees should examine the aforementioned competencies through an awareness of one's own assumptions, values, and biases, understanding the worldview of the culturally different client, and developing appropriate intervention strategies and techniques. Since this article was published, there has been an explosion of studies on the multicultural competence of counselors. The majority of these articles conclude that greater attention, research, and training should be dedicated to the developing adequate multicultural counseling competencies (see Worthington, Soth-McNett, & Moreno (2007) for a review). In addition, several articles and book chapters have discussed the ethical issues involved. Arredondo and Toporek (2004) argue that "ethical practice may be compromised because of mental health practitioners' own unchecked assumptions and perceptions" (Arredondo & Toporek, 2004, p. 48). Watson, Herlihy, and Pierce (2006) discuss the fact that in 1961 there was no mention of multiculturalism in the American Counseling Association (ACA)'s original ethical code, but in 1995 multicultural issues were integrated throughout the document. In 2005, ACA released its most updated ethical code. Due to the increased awareness of the importance of multiculturalism, partly because of the research of Sue and others, the current ACA ethical code *focuses* on multicultural issues. Multicultural counseling competency has been formally recognized as a vital aspect of the counseling profession.

Although the demographics are changing, the fields of counseling and psychology are still dominated by European-Americans. As a result, more often than not, the cross-cultural zone consists of a White counselor working with a client who is a person-of-

color. This can be problematic because people-of-color report greater dissatisfaction with the counseling experience and are more likely to terminate the counseling relationship prematurely (Atkinson, Morten & Sue, 1998; Cheung & Snowden, 1990). Therefore, it is essential that the counselor possess multicultural competencies so that counselor and client can form a positive and productive relationship.

Importance of Multicultural Competence for School Counselors

Much of what is true for all counselors, in general, is also true for school counselors, specifically. The population of the country is also changing the school population. In many areas, especially urban school districts (Yeh & Arora, 2003), the majority of the students are people-of-color. Despite these changes, the school counselor population is still majority European-American (Yeh & Arora, 2003). Although there is some racial and ethnic diversity in the school counselor population, there is less socioeconomic diversity. The majority of school counselors belong to the middle class or above. Therefore, school counselors who are the same race or ethnicity as a student or family may differ from them in terms of socioeconomic status, which is also an important part of culture. All of these factors indicate that many school counselors are seeing their clients within the cross-cultural zone. Schwallie-Giddis, Anstrom, Sanchez, Sardi, and Granato (2004) express the importance of school counselors being able to understand how they are feeling with respect to the challenging aspects of working with culturally diverse students. This is related to counselors understanding their own attitudes and beliefs when working with clients (Sue, et al. 1992). Because the number of minority students is rapidly increasing in public schools, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) has urged school counselors to ensure that they are providing

appropriate services to children from diverse cultures and backgrounds. Spurred on by the persistent and pervasive achievement gap, there is a growing social justice movement in the field of school counseling (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Howard & Solberg, 2006; Ratts, DeKruyf, &Chen-Hayes, 2007). The school counselor's role is transforming to encompass cultural competence. School counselors, as well as counselors in general, are realizing how important it is to provide the most appropriate services to marginalized individuals. Holcomb-McCoy (2001) states that a "major challenge" facing the field of school counseling today is being able to respond to the needs of a diverse student population. Constantine and Yeh (2001) agree, stating that there is a need to increase the multicultural counseling competence of school counselors so that they will be able to respond to the needs of a changing student population. School counselors face many of the same issues that all counselors do; in order to be competent professionals, they must be multiculturally competent.

It is necessary to discuss the several ways that school counselors, in particular, should be multiculturally competent. In addition to the issues that face all counselors, there are other reasons that are important to mention because they are specific to the culture of schools. Holcomb-McCoy (2004) discusses the areas where a school counselor should be multiculturally competent. She asserts that school counselors should be competent in the areas of multicultural counseling, multicultural consultation, multicultural assessment, understanding racism and student resistance, understanding racial identity development, multicultural family counseling, social advocacy, developing school-family-community partnerships, and understanding cross-cultural interpersonal interactions (Holcomb-McCoy, 2004).

In working directly with students, school counselors must also be aware that they are entering a cross-cultural zone (Lee, 2006) and that this may affect their ability to effectively counsel and adequately assess a student. When working with teachers, counselors also enter a cross-cultural zone (Lee, 2006), which can affect the consultative relationship. In addition, teachers are the people in the schools who most often refer students for counseling. Students are typically referred for either behavioral or academic concerns. Adams, Benshoff, and Harrington (2007) found that while teachers were less likely to refer African-American students for counseling concerning academics, they were more likely to refer them for behavioral issues. Therefore, school counselors do not only have to deal with the cross-cultural relationship between themselves and their students, but also the multicultural issues between the student and teacher. This is directly related to the school counselor's understanding of cross-cultural interpersonal interactions (Holcomb-McCoy, 2004).

It is imperative that school counselors know how to work with their clients to form productive working relationships. The school counselor must be able to quickly form a positive relationship with the student. Understanding how racism and classism affect students and where a given student is in his or her racial identity development will affect the relationship between counselor and student. In this way, culture can affect the relationship between the school counselor and the student, which is why ACA has indicated that multicultural competencies are a vital part of any counselor's competence. Understanding a student's context by forming relationships with his or her family and community and advocating for the student if necessary are also things that a counselor

can do that increases effectiveness. Because of America's ever-changing school-age population, it is imperative for school counselors to be competent in all of these areas.

Multicultural Competence of Counselors

As multiculturalism emerged as a "fourth force" in counseling, researchers became interested in *how* counselors became multiculturally competent. Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis (1992) reported that counselors needed 31 specific multicultural competencies, falling under the categories of attitudes and beliefs, knowledge, and skills. Several studies have shown that these areas are critical to the development of multicultural competence for counselors (Arredondo, Toporek, Brown, Jones, Locke, & Sanchez, 1996; Sue, 2001; Constantine, 2002). Sue, et al. (1992) also recognized that there were several areas in which attitudes and beliefs, knowledge, and skills could be developed. The authors stated that the counselor needed to explore his or her own assumptions, values, and biases; understand the worldview of a culturally different client; and develop appropriate intervention strategies and techniques. For example, under counselors' awareness of their own assumptions, values, and biases, the attitudes and beliefs of multiculturally competent counselors should be "comfortable with differences that exist between themselves and clients in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, and beliefs" (Sue, et al. 1992, p. 482). In developing appropriate intervention techniques and strategies, multiculturally competent counselors should be "aware of institutional barriers that prevent minorities from using mental health services" (Sue, et al. 1992, p. 482). These competencies and others are important for a counselor to possess in order to become multiculturally competent.

Other studies have found that multicultural knowledge (Worthington, Mobley, Franks, & Tan, 2000) and multicultural awareness (Parker & McDavis, 1979) are especially correlated with self-reported multicultural counseling competence. This indicates that simply having an awareness of multicultural issues in the counseling relationship and knowledge of multicultural issues in the world will lead to a counselor perceiving that he or she is multiculturally competent.

Multicultural Competence of School Counselors

The multicultural competence of school counselors is similar to that of counselors in general. However, there are a few ways in which school counselors need additional expertise in order to be multiculturally competent with students, parents, and teachers. Holcomb-McCoy (2004) proposed a checklist of multicultural competencies for school counselors. She advocates that school counselors go through the list and check off whether or not they are competent in these areas. The fifty-one competencies fall under nine categories: Multicultural Counseling, Multicultural Consultation, Understanding Racism and Student Resistance, Understanding Racial and/or Ethnic Identity Development, Multicultural Assessment, Multicultural Family Counseling, Social Advocacy, Developing School-Family-Community Partnerships, and Understanding Cross-Cultural Interpersonal Interactions. Holcomb-McCoy expands upon the previous competencies proposed by Sue, et al (1992) to make them more specific and applicable to the school counselor, though many of the competencies are the same or similar to those proposed in Sue, et al. Competencies specific to the school counselor include working with "community leaders and other resources in the community to assist with student

(and family) concerns" (Holcomb-McCoy, 2004, p. 186) and intervening "with students on the individual and systemic levels" (Holcomb-McCoy, 2004, p. 185).

Others have explored the different areas of multicultural competence and how they relate to school counselors. Constantine and others have published several studies on the attitudes of school counselors and how this affects their multicultural competence and their ability to be effective school counselors. Constantine and Gushue (2003) examined school counselors' ethnic tolerance attitudes and racism attitudes. Participants were in-service school counselors recruited from ASCA. The researchers used a demographic questionnaire, which asked the 139 participants their sex, race/ethnicity, age, highest degree earned, months of counseling experience, and number of formal multicultural courses. Participants were also given the Tolerance Measure (TM; Sutter & McCaul, 1993) and the New Racism Scale (NRS; Jacobson, 1985). The researchers used a coding system to determine the school counselors' multicultural case conceptualization ability (MCCA). Constantine and Gushue found that ethnic tolerance and racism attitudes affect both a school counselor's ability to perform case conceptualizations for immigrant students and self-perceived multicultural counseling competence. Specifically, higher participants' scores on the TM were positively correlated (0.57) with MCCA, whereas higher NRS scores were negatively correlated (-0.19) with MCCA. The number of formal multicultural courses was also a statistically significant variable and positively correlated (0.51) with MCCA.

Primarily interested in multicultural counseling competence and race-related attitudes in White school counselor trainees, Constantine (2002) used pre-service graduate students from Midwestern and Northeast training programs. The 99 White

school counselor trainees were given a demographic questionnaire with the same information as in the Constantine and Gushue (2003) study. Study participants were also given the New Racism Scale (NRS, Jacobson, 1985), the Multicultural Counseling Knowledge and Awareness Scale (MCKAS, Ponterotto, et al., 2000), and the White Racial Identity Attitude Scale (WRIAS, Helms & Carter, 1990). The NRS was given to determine Whites' attitudes towards Blacks. The MCKAS assessed multicultural knowledge and awareness, two areas of multicultural counseling competence. As its title suggests, the WRIAS assesses White racial identity attitudes. Similar to the results from Constantine and Gushue, Constantine found that racist attitudes in white school counselor trainees affect their ability to be multiculturally competent. The participants scores on the NRS were negatively correlated (-0.43) with self-reported multicultural competence.

Constantine and Gainor (2001) focused primarily on the correlation between emotional intelligence, empathy, and multicultural knowledge and awareness. Constantine and Gainor, like Constantine and Gushue (2003), used in-service school counselors who were members of ASCA. The 108 school counselors were given the same demographic questionnaire, the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS, Schutte, et al., 1998), the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI, Davis, 1980), and the MCKAS. The EIS measures emotional intelligence and the IRI measures four dimensions of empathy; perspective-taking, fantasy, empathic concern, and personal distress. Previous multicultural training, EIS, and IRI scores accounted for significant variance of the participants' multicultural knowledge with a univariate effect size of .34, but not multicultural awareness, which only had a univariate effect size of .04. The results

indicate that empathy and emotional intelligence are correlated with the development of a school counselor's multicultural knowledge, but not multicultural awareness.

All of these studies indicate that attitudes and beliefs are important in determining a school counselor's multicultural competence. This aspect of multicultural competence is important for school counselors to possess if they are to be effective with their multicultural school population.

In addition to Constantine and Gainor (2001), others have investigated the importance of multicultural knowledge for school counselors. Holcomb-McCoy (2005), interested in how school counselors perceive their own multicultural competence, recruited 209 school counselors from ASCA to participate in her study. The researcher used the Multicultural Counseling Competence and Training Survey-Revised (MCCTS-R, Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999), which assesses counselors' multicultural knowledge, multicultural awareness, and familiarity with multicultural terminology. Participants were also given a demographic questionnaire asking for sex, race/ethnicity, years of counseling experience, work setting (elementary school, middle school, high school), geographic region, and amount of multicultural training. On a Likert-type scale of 1-4, all counselors reported that they were at least somewhat competent in multicultural awareness, multicultural knowledge, and familiarity with terminology with a mean score of at least 2.0 on all factors. Holcomb-McCoy found that school counselors were slightly more multiculturally aware (mean score=3.37) and familiar with terminology (mean score=3.41). Comparatively, they did not posses as much multicultural knowledge (mean score=2.46). In addition, the standard deviation for multicultural knowledge (standard deviation score=.81) was higher than for awareness or

terminology (standard deviation score=.62), which indicates that school counselors have a higher amount of variance when it comes to multicultural knowledge.

Schwallie-Giddis, et al. (2004) used 13 of 35 school counselor trainees who were participants in a multicultural professional development program in their study. Through a series of open-ended interviews, the examiners found that participants in the 9-month program had increased their overall multicultural competence but were still lacking multicultural counseling knowledge upon exiting the program. Despite scores on the Multicultural Awareness Knowledge Skills Scale (MAKSS; D'Andrea, Daniels, & Heck, 1991) indicating that the group had statistically significant gains in multicultural knowledge $t(14) = 3.25$, $p < .01$, and skill $t(14) = 2.37$, $p < .05$ (pre-treatment awareness data was unavailable), the participants stated that their ability to work with parents and families effectively was diminished because they did not *feel* multiculturally knowledgeable. The participants felt that they did not fully understand the cultural context of their clients and therefore felt unsure about "certain actions, mannerisms, questioning behaviors, and interventions" (Schwallie-Giddis, et al., 2004, p. 19). The participants questioned whether or not their actions were culturally appropriate. The results from this study and others (Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Holcomb-McCoy, 2005; Worthington, et al., 2000; Constantine & Gainor, 2001) indicate that multicultural knowledge is essential to school counselors' multicultural competence.

Multicultural skills have been studied less frequently than the areas of attitudes and knowledge because of the difficulty in observing and measuring them. However, a few studies have looked at the development of multicultural counseling skills. The participants in Schwallie-Giddis', et al (2004) 9-month program reported during their

open-ended interviews that their skills had improved because of their involvement in the program, but they still felt that they were not sufficiently multiculturally skilled despite their MAKSS scores that indicated otherwise. Participants still felt that their communication skills and ability to balance the needs of the families and children were underdeveloped.

Alexander, Kruczek, and Ponterotto (2005) studied school counselor trainees participating in an immersion experience in Trinidad. These students went through three phases for this experience: preparation, implementation, and evaluation. During the preparation phase the students networked with counseling professionals outside of the United States, learned more than their fellow counselor trainees about Trinidad and Tobago in their courses, and participated in a series of orientation sessions. During implementation, the students attended orientation upon arrival in Trinidad, participated in experiential activities such as guidance lessons, individual counseling sessions, small group counseling sessions, and completed assignments including written case conceptualizations, interventions, oral presentations, and a portfolio. Finally, during the evaluation phase students received feedback from their international host counselors and their portfolios were reviewed. Because of the extensive process, participants in the immersion experience indicated that they were more multiculturally skilled than before going to Trinidad. However, not all training programs, students, or practicing school counselors have the resources to go to a different country and experience true immersion.

It is important to mention that self-report of multicultural skills can be problematic. Racist, classist, and sexist attitudes and beliefs are often socialized early in a person's life. Therefore participants may be unaware of these feelings. However,

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awareness of one's own attitudes and beliefs is an important part of multicultural competency for all counselors (Sue, et al. 1992). Therefore, obtaining knowledge about self-perceived multicultural competence is an important step in understanding how one develops this competence. This is an important aspect of developing multicultural training modules for school counselors. In the next section, I will discuss training implications for multicultural competence.

Multicultural Competence of School Counselors: Training Issues

Several studies have shown the need for more multicultural counseling training for school counselors, but few have explored what an adequate program would look like. In the 1980s several professionals wrote impassioned articles calling for counselor education programs, which include school counseling, to incorporate multiculturalism into their training (Arredondo-Dowd and Gonsalves, 1980; Ibrahim and Arredondo, 1986; Ponterotto and Casas, 1987). In 1986, the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD), a member organization of the ACA, published a set of multicultural competencies that should be incorporated into all counselor education programs. As a response to this surge in multicultural awareness, many school counseling training programs adopted the one or two course model (Midgette & Meggert, 1991). In this model, the school counselor trainee is required to take one or two "special" courses to fulfill a multicultural requirement. Requiring one course was thought to be an adequate way to introduce multiculturalism into programs, but this way of producing culturally competent school counselors is now outdated. Sadler, Suh, Cobia, Middleton and Carney (2006) propose an overhaul of most school counselor programs to make diversity a "core value" of the program. They propose not only for the curriculum to

change, but also to incorporate diversity into program policy through increased student interaction, increased recruitment of diverse students, and setting and continually revising multicultural goals (Sadler, et al., 2006). Very few programs require their students to take more than one class or incorporate multiculturalism into every facet of the training.

Herring (1998) asked school counselor trainees what they felt were some of the most important issues surrounding multiculturally competent training. There was a lack of consensus about what a satisfactory program should include. Some trainees believed that a focus on social change was important, while others thought that the emphasis should be on the relationship with the individual child. Still others thought that a clarification of the school counselor's role in a school with a diverse population was important to know. This lack of consensus indicates that there are a variety of needs that must be met. Dickson and Jepsen (2007) asked trainees in counselor education programs about how multiculturalism is taught in their respective programs. What the authors found is how students perceived the cultural environment of the program was a significant predictor of multicultural competence, while taking a multicultural course was not. In other words, whether or not students believed that their professors and fellow students were genuinely interested in multicultural issues was a greater predictor of multicultural competence than taking a course. This indicates that a single course may not be the best way to help students become culturally competent. The complexity and difficulty in defining multicultural competence make it difficult for individuals to agree on what is important or pinpoint how cultural competence should be taught. Herring (1998) believes that a self-examination process is important in order to determine what is most salient to each student. Dickson and Jepsen (2007) propose a program-wide or

systemic approach to multiculturalism in counselor education training programs. Both of these changes could enhance multicultural competence of the school counselor trainee.

Butler-Byrd, Nieto, and Senour (2006) and Schwallie-Giddis, et al. (2004) both indicated that an intensive and integrative program may be necessary to meet the needs of school counselor trainees. An experiential component in programs may help to recreate the immersion experience that Alexander, et al. (2005) advocated. Specifically, Butler-Burd, et al. looked at the Community-Based Block (CBB) Program, which required its counselor trainees to "come face-to-face with the consequences of being part of a challenged community" (Butler-Byrd, et al. 2006, p. 380). The program required that these students work with clients in their community. While these programs did not offer the same experience as going to another country, they did provide an in-vivo experience that the authors hoped would be equally effective. Butler-Byrd, et al. reported that trainees' reported increased multicultural competence. Thirty-eight percent of the participants reported increased self-awareness, 18% reported that their counseling/professional skills had increased, 37% reported that learning about diversity had been helpful and 20% mentioned that social justice had been an area of growth. It is important to note that a sizable majority of the participants did not report improvement in these areas, illustrating the difficulty and complexity of multicultural training.

The school counselors in the Schwallie-Giddis, et al. (2004) study participated in a series of seven interventions over a 9-month period. Each intervention included a didactic professional development component. They were all interactive and involved a processing component as well. Schwallie-Giddis, et al. (2004) reported similar results to Butler-Byrd, et al. (2006). One difference was that while the trainees felt more

multiculturally skilled, they did not report feeling *completely* multiculturally skilled. Participants reported challenges such as discomfort working with linguistically and culturally diverse parents and families because they were unsure of how to act in a culturally appropriate way. Both Schwallie-Giddis, et al. (2004) and Butler-Byrd, et al. (2006) asked the participants for their feelings and opinions soon after completing the program. It would be interesting to see if participants' opinions change if asked several years after completing the training and working in the field.

Yeh and Arora (2003) explored continuing education for in-service school counselors. This study looked at workshop experiences for school counselors. School counselors who previously participated in multicultural workshops reported higher levels of interdependent and independent self-construal (as measured on the Self-Construal Scale, Singelis, 1994). These participants' scores correlated positively with their universal-diverse orientation, which is the awareness and acceptance of similarities and differences between people (Yeh & Arora, 2003). Because these were workshops and not semester-long courses, it is reasonable to assume that the participants increased their awareness and knowledge of multiculturalism for school counselors, but did not increase their skills. However, it can also be assumed that raising awareness and increasing knowledge are important aspects of multicultural competence for school counselors.

In conclusion, many of these studies indicate that training is important in increasing school counselors' multicultural counseling competency. There is a lack of consensus as to the curriculum of these training courses (Herring, 1998). Some believe that knowledge and awareness are important and sufficient in raising one's multicultural counseling competence (Yeh & Arora, 2003; Constantine, 2002; Constantine & Gainor,

2001; Constantine & Gushue, 2003), while others believe that an experiential component to develop skills is essential (Alexander, et al. 2005; Butler-Byrd, et al. 2006; Schwallie-Giddis, et al. 2004). Though there have been a few studies looking at training, more research is needed to determine the training needs of school counselors.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample for this study is a subset of data collected for a national survey on the multicultural competence of counselors. All participants were American Counseling Association (ACA) members.

The return rate for the entire sample of 999 counselors was 31% (N=307). Of those that chose to participate, 91 or 30% identified themselves as school counselors. It was not possible to obtain an accurate estimate of school counselors who are members of ACA, therefore it is not possible to estimate a return rate specifically for school counselors.

The demographics of the sample can be seen on Table 1. There was some diversity in age and years of experience, but very little racial/ethnic diversity. We see from Table 1 that the sample for this study was largely Caucasian. Comparison of this study's sample to that of ACA membership is difficult because only 38.4% of ACA members reported their ethnicity. Therefore, it is hard to say if this demographic information is representative of the ACA population demographics. However, from the data obtained, it appears that there are 2% fewer Caucasians, 3% more Asian-Americans, 1.5% fewer African-Americans, approximately 0.5% fewer Hispanics, and a little greater than 1% more of Other in this study's sample as compared to ACA members. It can be tentatively concluded that this study's sample is approximately as diverse as the ACA population. However, it must be emphasized that this conclusion is tentative and that

more information about the ACA demographics is needed to make a conclusive

comparison.

Table 1

Sample Demographics (Total N = 89)

	Current Sample		ACA Membership	
Demographic	N	%	N	%
Race/Ethnicity				
White	76	85.4	13,781	87.4
Asian-Am.	4	4.5	235	1.5
African-Am.	4	4.5	951	6.0
Hispanic	2	2.2	454	2.9
Other	3	3.4	339	2.2
Age				
21-35	7	7.9		
36-45	22	24.7		
46-55	34	38.2		
55+	26	29.2		
Years of Experience				
1-5	10	11.2		
6-10	25	28.1		
11-15	21	23.6		
16-20	11	12.4		
20+	22	24.7		

We can conclude that the current sample is experienced. The great majority of

the participants are 36 or older (92%), with nearly 70% older than 45. Almost 90% have

been practicing at least six years. This has implications for the possible multicultural

training that these individuals may have received during their graduate work. These

implications will be discussed more in-depth in the discussion chapter.

Procedure

Names and addresses of participants were obtained from a random national sample of American Counseling Association (ACA) members. The ACA provides lists of their members for research purposes. The present research team obtained 999 names and addresses of ACA members of this study. Participants were not chosen for any particular characteristic. An informed consent sheet, briefly explaining the purpose of the study, a demographic questionnaire, and the Multicultural Counseling Inventory (MCI) were compiled and mailed to this list in the spring and summer of 2006. After the respondents sent back their signed letters of consent, the questionnaires and the MCI, numbers were assigned to the respondents to protect their confidentiality. For the purpose of this study, only those who indicated that they were school counselors on the demographic questionnaire were included.

Instrumentation

Demographic Questionnaire. Participants were sent a demographic questionnaire and the Multicultural Counseling Inventory. The demographic questionnaire (Appendix A) consisted of nine questions. The participants were asked about their age, race/ethnicity, gender, number of years in professional practice, and highest degree obtained. The participants were then asked about their professional credentials, professional setting, and nature of multicultural training, checking all that applied. They were then asked to fill in the estimated percentage of clients or students who were culturally different from them with respect to race/ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, disability status, sexual orientation, and religion/spiritual orientation. Finally, there was a fill-in section for the respondent to list any other relevant multicultural experience or

training that they may have received. Nearly 41% of the respondents chose to fill in information about their multicultural experiences.

     Multicultural Counseling Inventory (MCI). The MCI (Sodowsky, Taffe, Gutkin, & Wise, 1994) is a self-report measure. Users rate themselves on 40 questions using a 4-point Likert scale (1= very inaccurate, 2=inaccurate, 3=accurate, 4=very accurate). A higher score indicates a higher level of multicultural competence (Sodowsky, et al., 1994). Seven items (1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 15, & 19) are reverse-scored. All of the reverse-scored items are on the Multicultural Counseling Relationship subscale.

     The MCI is designed to determine a counselor's multicultural competence in the following areas: Multicultural Counseling Knowledge, Multicultural Awareness, Multicultural Counseling Skills, and Multicultural Counseling Relationship. The Multicultural Counseling Knowledge subscale consists of 11 items that are designed to reflect a counselor's knowledge about the counseling process in general and multicultural issues in counseling. This subscale includes items such as: *I include the facts of age, gender roles, and socioeconomic status in my understanding of different minority cultures* and *I examine my own cultural biases*. The Multicultural Awareness subscale consists of 10 items that are designed to reflect a counselor's awareness of the world as a multicultural place and their own personal feelings about multiculturalism. This subscale includes items such as: *My professional or collegial interactions with minority individuals are extensive* and *I enjoy multicultural interactions as much as interactions with people of my own culture*. The Multicultural Counseling Skills subscale has 11 items and reflects a counselor's skills in exploring multicultural issues during counseling sessions. This subscale includes items such as: *I am able to quickly recognize and*

recover from cultural mistakes or misunderstandings and *I am comfortable with exploring sexual issues*. The final subscale, Multicultural Counseling Relationship, has eight items that measure the counselor's awareness of how multicultural issues impact the counseling relationship.   This subscale includes items such as: *I perceive that my race causes the clients to mistrust me* and *I have difficulties communicating with clients who use a perceptual, reasoning, or decision-making style that is different from mine*. The MCI was chosen because it has been used in several studies to measure multicultural competence (Green, Kiernan-Stern, & Balley, 2005; Roysircar, Gard, & Hubbell, 2005; Bellini, 2003; Bellini, 2002). It was created because there was a need to accurately measure the constructs of multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills, as well as explore the importance of the counseling relationship. The authors of the MCI were attempting to "do a better sampling of the domain of multicultural counseling competencies" (Sodowsky, et al., 1994, p. 139) than previous measures such as Cross-Cultural Competency Inventory-Revised (CCCI-R, LaFrombroise, et al. 1991), the Multicultural Awareness Knowledge Skills Survey (MAKSS, D'Andrea, Daniels, & Heck, 1991), and the Multicultural Counseling Awareness Scale- Form B (MCAS-Form B, Ponterotto, Sanchez, & Magids, 1991).

In developing the measure, two studies were conducted. In study one, the participants were 604 students, psychologists and counselors, who were given an information letter about the MCI, a demographic questionnaire, and the MCI itself. The four-factor oblique solution corresponding to the current subscale accounted for 36.1% of the total variance and was judged to yield the most interpretable solution (Sodowsky, et al., 1994). The Cronbach's alphas were .83 for Multicultural Counseling Skills and

Multicultural Counseling Awareness, .65 for Multicultural Counseling Relationship, .79 for Multicultural Counseling Knowledge, and .88 for the full scale MCI (Sodowsky, et al., 1994). All of the raters (100%) agreed that the test items "adequately covered the content domain of multicultural counseling competencies" (Sodowsky, et al., 1994, p. 142).

Study two (Sodowsky, et al., 1994) used 320 university counselors as participants and was an analysis of the MCI's structural validity. This study was an attempt to validate the four factors (Multicultural Counseling Awareness, Multicultural Counseling Knowledge, Multicultural Counseling Skills, and Multicultural Counseling Relationship) and to support the generalization of the MCI to a different sample. A confirmatory factor analysis was done and all of the 40 MCI items had their highest loading on their respective factor. Study one and study two indicate coefficients of factor congruence of .87 for Multicultural Counseling Skills, .80 for Multicultural Counseling Awareness, .78 for Multicultural Counseling Relationship, and .75 for Multicultural Counseling Knowledge. Results from the studies support the four factors as described.

Data Analysis

The first question that was investigated was: 1) To what degree does the multicultural competence of counselors correlate with their multicultural training? This question was answered by calculating Pearson correlations between reported training and MCI scores. The second question that was answered was a subset of the first question: (a) What is the relative importance of graduate multicultural courses and in-service training for producing multiculturally competent counselors? Is in-service and pre-service multicultural training cumulative? In an attempt to answer this question, two hierarchical

multiple regressions were performed for each of the four MCI subscales (Multicultural Counseling Skills, Multicultural Counseling Knowledge, Multicultural Counseling Awareness, and Multicultural Counseling Skills). For the first hierarchical multiple regression, step one included the two pre-service variables (taking a multicultural counseling class and attending a multicultural counseling workshop) and step two added the in-service variable (receiving in-service multicultural training). For the second hierarchical multiple regression, the steps were reversed. The in-service variable was the first step and the two pre-service variables were the second step. For each of these, I looked for a statistically significant change. This helped determine whether or not adding these variables to one another produced increased self-perceived multicultural competence. Another question to be answered was: (b) To what degree does pre-service multicultural training correlate with specific areas of multicultural competence? To answer this question, Pearson correlations were computed. Pre-service multicultural training was the independent variable and each MCI subscale was a dependent variable. The next question: (c) To what degree does in-service multicultural training correlate with specific areas of multicultural competence, was answered similarly to question (b). Pearson correlations were again computed. In-service multicultural training was the independent variable and the MCI subscales, Multicultural Counseling Knowledge, Multicultural Counseling Awareness, Multicultural Counseling Skills, and Multicultural Counseling Relationship, were the dependent variables.

  2) To what degree does in-vivo exposure to clients of different cultures correlate with specific areas of multicultural competence? This question was answered with Pearson correlations. Participants were asked on the demographic questionnaire to fill in

their estimated percentages of clients or students who were culturally different from them. Exposure percentages of culturally different clients or students (racially/ethnically different, different age range, different socioeconomic bracket, different ability status, different sexual orientation, and different religious/spiritual orientation) were correlated with the four MCI subscales (Multicultural Counseling Knowledge, Multicultural Counseling Awareness, Multicultural Counseling Skills, and Multicultural Counseling Relationship).

The final question that was answered was: 3) Given the opportunity to comment broadly on multicultural experiences that have affected one's work as a professional; what themes emerge? For this study, the participants' open responses were read and coded using open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Merriam, 2002). First, data was analyzed for themes and critical terms. As a result, initial codes emerged. Next, these initial codes were examined. Through this procedure, new codes emerged and the codes were organized into categories. Finally, the data was analyzed again. Comparisons were made between categories and codes and major themes emerged.

RESULTS

Amount of Training

In order to determine the amount of multicultural training that the sample had received, descriptive analyses about the frequency of training were performed. It can be concluded from Table 2 that the sample has received a lot of multicultural training. Nearly 72% of the sample has taken a multicultural graduate course, while approximately 66% have participated in multicultural in-service professional development. A small percentage, 9%, attended a graduate program with a multicultural focus.

There was a large overlap (75%) between participants who attended a program with a multicultural focus and participants who took a multicultural graduate course; therefore multicultural graduate program was taken out of the analyses for cumulative multicultural training. Thirty-eight participants (42.7%) received two types of multicultural training, taking a multicultural graduate course *and* participating in multicultural in-service professional development. Slightly more people (N=47, 52.8%) *either* received in-service multicultural professional development training *or* took a multicultural graduate course. It is clear from Table 2 that a very small percentage did not receive any multicultural training at all (N=4; 4.5%).

Table 2: Amount and Type of School Counselors' Multicultural Training

Type of Training	N	%
MC Grad Course	64	71.9
MC Grad Program	8	9.0
In-Service Prof. Development	59	66.3
EITHER Grad Course OR In-Service	47	52.8
BOTH Grad Course AND In-Service	38	42.7
NEITHER Grad Course NOR In-Service	4	4.5

In-Vivo Exposure

On the demographic questionnaire, participants were asked the percentage of clients that were different from them in terms of race/ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, disability status, sexual orientation, and religion. The results of this question are listed in Table 3. Not all of the participants filled in this part of the questionnaire. Eighty-three people responded to the items about working with clients who are different from them in relation to race/ethnicity and age. Slightly fewer (82) participants responded to working with clients who are in a different socioeconomic bracket and who have a different disability status than they do. Eighty school counselors responded to

working with clients who were different in terms of sexual orientation and religion. Age had the highest mean (92.13% of clients served) and lowest range (50 percentage points). Although all of the other ranges were 100 percentage points (race/ethnicity, disability status, sexual orientation, religion) or nearly 100 percentage points (socioeconomic status; 95 percentage points), the means differed. The lowest mean of all percentages was sexual orientation (14.99), followed by disability status (31.57) and race/ethnicity (37.69). The means of religion (50.30) and socioeconomic status (63.26), though larger, were still much smaller than age.

Table 3: In-Vivo Exposure: Working with Clients Culturally Different From the School Counselor

Clients' Differences from School Counselor	N	Mean	Range	Std. Dev.
Race/Ethnicity	83	37.69	100	32.03
Age	83	92.13	50	13.55
Socioeconomic Status	82	63.26	95	24.46
Disability Status	82	31.57	100	35.99
Sexual Orientation	80	14.99	100	23.40
Religion	80	50.30	100	33.10

Multicultural Competence

Relationship Between Amount of Training and MCI Subscales. Correlations between type of training (taking a multicultural graduate course, participating in a multiculturally-focused graduate program, and participating in multicultural in-service

professional development) and the MCI subscales were performed in order to answer research questions, 1a, 1b, and 1c.

The correlations among MCI subscale scores and type of training are very low and none of them were statistically significant at the p<.05 level (Table 4). However, each type of training correlates differently with each MCI subscale. Although none were significant, it is interesting to note the pattern of correlations. Overall, taking a multicultural graduate course yielded the smallest correlations, while participating in a multicultural graduate program had the largest. The largest correlation between the training variables and the MCI subscales was between participating in a multicultural graduate program and MCI Knowledge (.20). Nearly as large was the correlation between in-service professional development and MCI Skills (.18). The remainder of the correlations was quite small, and again, none were significant. Because none of these correlations are significant, the answer to question 1: *To what degree does the multicultural competence of school counselors correlate with their multicultural training?*, which is the overarching question, is that the multicultural competence of school counselors does not correlate at all with their multicultural training for this sample of school counselors.

Table 4: Correlations Among MCI Subscales and School Counselor Multicultural Training and In-Vivo Exposure

| Counselor Variables | MCI Subscales | | | |
	Knowledge	Skills	Awareness	Relationship
Type of Training				
MC Grad Course	.02	.07	.07	.06
MC Grad Program	.20	.12	.13	.10
In-Service Prof. Development	.10	.18	-.03	.01
Cumulative Training	.21	.03	.10	.05
In-vivo Exposure				
Race/Ethnicity	.33**	.03	.51**	.20
Age	-.11	-.05	-.13	.04
Socioeconomic Status	.03	-.09	-.03	.03
Disability Status	.09	.15	.27*	.15
Sexual Orientation	.14	.23*	.19	.06
Religion	-.08	-.08	-.03	-.01

Note. The in-vivo exposure variables, race/ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, disability status, sexual orientation, and religion, refer to the percentage of clients that are different from the participants.
Cumulative Training includes a multicultural graduate course and in-service professional development. It does not include participating in a multiculturally-focused graduate program.
MCI=Multicultural Counseling Inventory
* p < .05
** p < .01

Relationship with In-Vivo Exposure. The bottom section of Table 4 demonstrates

the correlations among the MCI subscales and the school counselors' in-vivo exposure,

which is the percentage of clients that are different from the participants in terms of race/ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, disability status, sexual orientation, and religion. This analysis was performed in order to answer the second research question: *To what degree does in-vivo exposure to clients of different cultures correlate with specific areas of multicultural competence?* Unlike the correlations between the subscales and types of training, there are some significant correlations here. The percentage of clients different from the counselors in terms of race/ethnicity has two of the largest correlations with the subscales. The correlation between MCI Awareness and race/ethnicity (.51) is the largest, while the correlation between MCI Knowledge and race/ethnicity (.33) is also larger than the others. Both of these correlations are significant at the p< .01 level.

Neither the percentage of clients different from the counselors in terms of age nor socioeconomic status has significant correlations with any of the MCI subscales. Overall, percentage of clients different from the counselors in terms of disability has slightly larger correlations than age or socioeconomic status, one of which is significant at the p< .05 level (MCI Awareness, .27). The percentage of clients different from the counselors in terms of sexual orientation also has a significant correlation with one of the MCI subscales. The correlation between sexual orientation and MCI Skills (.23) is significant at the p< .05 level. All of the correlations between religion and the MCI subscales are negative and none are significant.

Regression Analyses

Because there were some significant correlations between in-vivo exposure and the MCI subscales, further analyses were warranted to answer research question 2: *To*

what degree does in-vivo exposure to clients of different cultures correlate with specific areas of multicultural competence? Separate multiple regressions were performed with each of the MCI subscales as dependent measures. If the regression indicated a variable that contributed significantly to the dependent variable, or MCI subscale, then a stepwise multiple regression was performed. The significant variables were entered in the order of largest to smallest coefficients. All of the in-vivo exposure variables were included. Multicultural graduate program was taken out to prevent unnecessary overlap between variables and outcomes.

As seen in Table 5, Knowledge was the first MCI subscale to be analyzed. The multiple regression revealed that the amount of race/ethnicity counselor/client difference yielded a significant (p<.01) contribution to MCI Knowledge scores. Therefore, a stepwise multiple regression was performed entering race/ethnicity as the first step and the remaining variables for the second step. Race/ethnicity was the only variable that significantly contributed (R^2=.11; p< .05) to scores on the subscale. Adding all other variables yielded a .06 difference in R^2 resulting in a nonsignificant change in R^2.

Table 5: Regression Analyses for Multicultural Counseling Knowledge

Step	Counselor/Client Difference	b	SEb	β	R^2	ΔR^2	Sig. ΔR^2
1	Race/Ethnicity	.01	.00	.32**	.11		.01
2	Model 2				.17	.06	.66
	Race/Ethnicity	.01	.00	.31*			
	MC Grad Course	.04	.14	.04			
	In-Service	.16	.12	.16			
	Age	-.00	.00	-.09			
	SES	-.00	.00	-.09			
	Disability	.00	.00	.09			
	Sexual Orientation	.00	.00	.08			
	Religion	-.00	.00	-.07			

Note. * $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

The next MCI subscale analyzed was Skills (Table 6). None of the variables yielded a significant contribution to the scores on this subscale. Therefore, a stepwise multiple regression was not performed. All of the variables produced a combined R^2 value of .10.

Table 6: Regression Analyses for Multicultural Counseling Skills

Step	Counselor/Client Difference	b	SEb	β	R^2	ΔR^2	Sig. ΔR^2
1	MC Grad Course	-.06	.14	-.05	.10	.50	
	In-Service	-.05	.13	-.05			
	Race/Ethnicity	.00	.00	.03			
	Age	-.00	.00	-.04			
	SES	-.00	.00	-.15			
	Disability	.00	.00	.20			
	Sexual Orientation	.00	.00	.20			
	Religion	-.00	.00	-.10			

Note. * $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

As seen in Table 7, MCI Awareness was the next subscale to be analyzed. The multiple regression yielded three variables (race/ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status) with a significant contribution to the subscale. As in the Knowledge subscale, the amount of race/ethnicity counselor/client difference yielded the largest contribution to the MCI Awareness subscale with an R^2 value of .27 ($p<.01$). When the amount of disability counselor/client difference was added in the second step, there was an R^2 change of .07 yielding an R^2 value of .33 ($p=.01$). Adding socioeconomic status counselor/client difference in the third step significantly contributed to the R^2 value (.08) resulting in $R^2=.41$ ($p<.01$). All other variables do not contribute significantly to the R^2 value. The remaining variables added only .02, which was not significant at the $p<.05$ level.

Table 7: Regression Analyses for Multicultural Counseling Awareness

Step	Counselor/Client Difference	b	SEb	β	R^2	ΔR^2	Sig. ΔR^2
1	Race/Ethnicity	.01	.00	.52**	.27		<.01
2	Model 2				.33	.07	.01
	Race/Ethnicity	.01	.00	.49**			
	Disability	.01	.00	.26*			
3	Model 3				.41	.08	<.01
	Race/Ethnicity	.01	.00	.54**			
	Disability	.01	.00	.37**			
	SES	-.01	.00	-.30**			
4	Model 4				.43	.02	.85
	Race/Ethnicity	.01	.00	.53**			
	Disability	.01	.00	.36**			
	SES	-.00	.01	-.32**			
	MC Grad Course	-.09	.14	-.07			
	In-Service	.16	.12	.16			
	Age	-.01	.13	-.01			
	Sexual Orientation	.00	.00	.08			
	Religion	.00	.00	.01			

Note. * p < .05
** p < .01

The final MCI subscale analyzed was Relationship (Table 8). This analysis yielded similar results to that of MCI Skills. None of the individual variables contributed significantly to the scores on this subscale, therefore a stepwise multiple regression was not performed. All of the variables combined yielded an R^2 value of .07.

Table 8: Regression Analyses for Multicultural Counseling Relationship

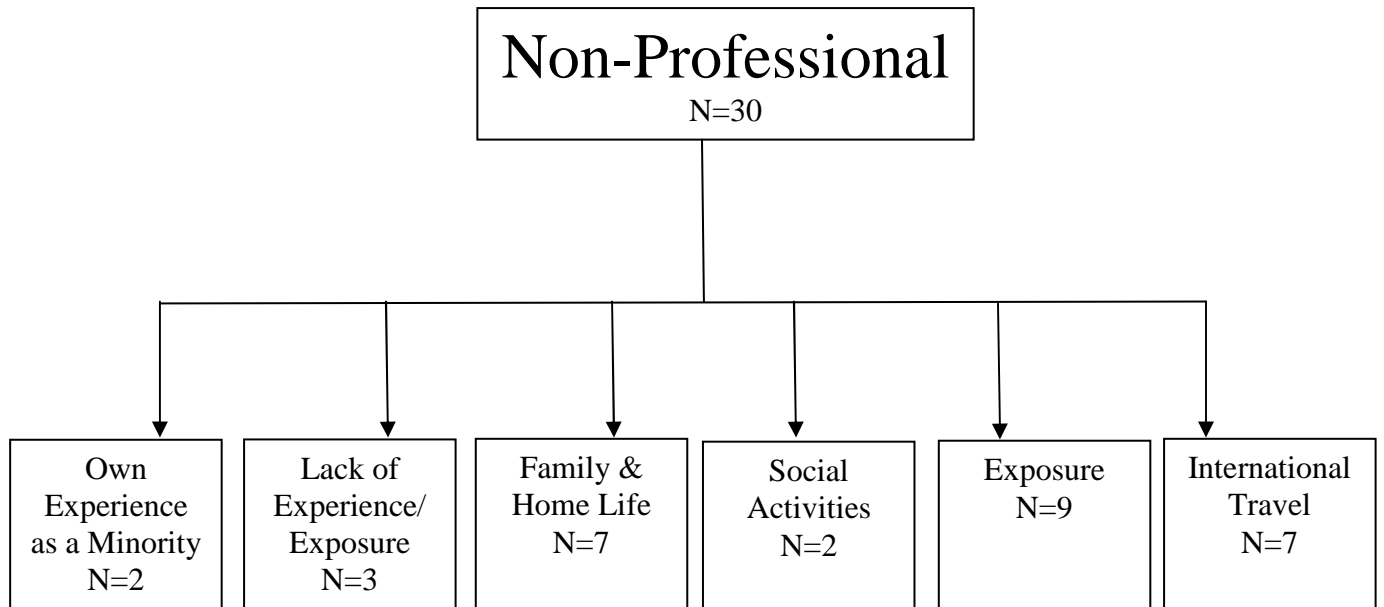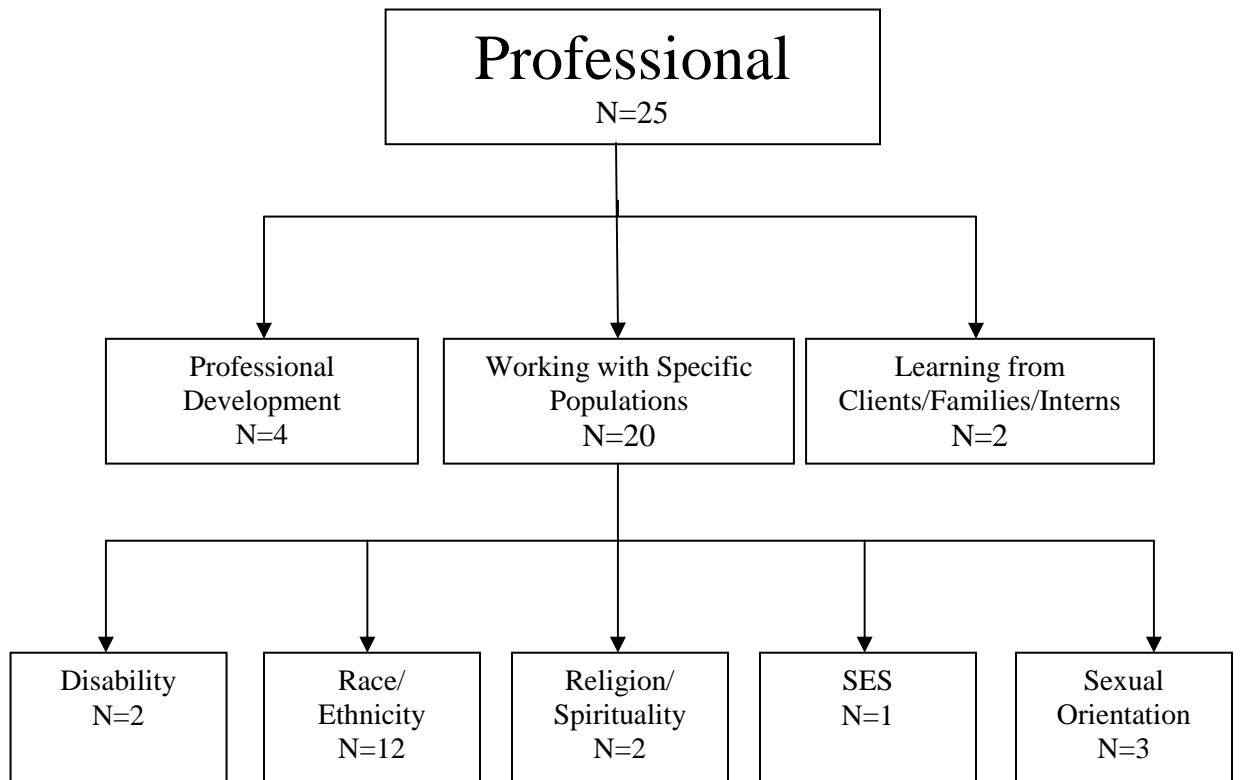| Step	Counselor/Client Difference	b	SEb	β	R^2	ΔR^2	Sig. ΔR^2
1	MC Grad Course	-.01	.13	-.01	.07	.71	
	In-Service	-.01	.12	-.01			
	Race/Ethnicity	.00	.00	.21			
	Age	.00	.00	.03			
	SES	-.00	.00	-.06			
	Disability	.00	.00	.19			
	Sexual Orientation	-.00	.00	-.00			
	Religion	-.00	.00	-.04			

Note. * $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

Qualitative Responses

At the end of the demographic questionnaire, the participants were asked an open-ended question about any additional multicultural experience that they may have had that contributed to them as professionals (See Appendix A). Thirty-seven (41.6%) of the 89 participants chose to answer this optional question. The responses were analyzed and coded for themes. These themes are presented in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1: Non-Professional-Themed Qualitative Responses

Non-Professional N=30

Own Experience as a Minority N=2	Lack of Experience/ Exposure N=3	Family & Home Life N=7	Social Activities N=2	Exposure N=9	International Travel N=7

Figure 2: Professional-Themed Qualitative Responses

Professional N=25

Professional Development N=4	Working with Specific Populations N=20	Learning from Clients/Families/Interns N=2

Disability N=2	Race/ Ethnicity N=12	Religion/ Spirituality N=2	SES N=1	Sexual Orientation N=3

As seen in Figures 1 and 2, there are more total responses than participants who answered the question. Several participants listed different experiences that influenced their work as counselors. Multiple responses from the same person were coded separately.

There were two overarching themes that emerged from the analysis: Professional and Non-Professional. The professional theme consists of responses that had to specifically with multicultural experience encountered at work. The non-professional theme consisted of responses that had to do with life outside of the workplace.

The non-professional theme (N=30; Figure 1) had more responses than the professional theme. It was partitioned into six sub-themes: "Own Experience as a Minority", "Explanations for Lack of Experience/Exposure", "Family and Home Life", "Social Activities", "Exposure", and "International Travel". "Own experience as a minority" has to do with minorities explaining how who they are influences their work. An example from this sub-theme was: *My own experience as a non-native speaker and a minority*. An example from "explanations for lack of experience/exposure" was: *I live in an area with few minorities and do not have racial minority clients*. A "family and home life" example was: *Live with someone from a different race*. The "extracurricular activities" sub-theme has to do with gatherings, meetings, and experiences that these respondents voluntarily participate in. An example was: *Leader in a community diversity group*. "Exposure" demonstrates the respondents being around a particular group without explicitly stating any interaction or personal involvement with people who are different from them. An example from this sub-theme was: *Allowing myself exposure to the*

transgender community. An example from the "international travel" sub-theme was: *I have traveled overseas*.

"Exposure" (N=9) had the most responses, followed closely by "international travel" (N=7) and "family & home life" (N=7). "Explanations for lack of experience/exposure" (N=3), "extracurricular activities" (N=2) and "own experience as a minority" (N=2) had fewer responses.

The professional theme (N=25; Figure 2) had somewhat fewer responses than the non-professional theme. It was segmented into three sub-themes: "Professional Development", "Working with Specific Populations", and "Learning from Clients/Families/Interns". There was one response, *Some of my clients (in a former work setting) had a vastly different value system than myself*, that did not fit into any of these three sub-themes and was labeled under the professional theme as "Miscellaneous". An example of a "professional development" response was: *Training from professional organizations*. An example from the "working with specific populations" sub-theme was: *I am the school counselor in a middle school that is predominantly black*. An example from the "learning from clients/families/interns" subtheme is: *I have had a biracial intern and two Japanese interns. These experiences added greatly to my multicultural awareness and opened my mind to other ways of thinking*. The "working with specific populations" sub-theme was further partitioned into five categories, demonstrating the populations that participants mentioned that they worked with: "Disability", "Race/Ethnicity", "Religion/Spirituality", "Socioeconomic Status (SES)", and "Sexual Orientation".

“Working with specific populations” (N=20) had many more responses than either of the other two sub-themes (“Professional Development”, N=4; “Learning from Clients/Families/Interns”, N=2). Within the “specific populations” sub-theme, “race/ethnicity” (N=12) had more responses than the other four sub-categories (“Disability”, N=2; “Religion/Spirituality”, N=2; “SES”, N=1; “Sexual Orientation”, N=3) combined. The “race/ethnicity” subcategory accounted for nearly half of the participants’ responses in the professional theme (N=25).

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter will begin with a discussion of the results of the current study. First, the main results will be discussed in relation to existing literature. Next, limitations of the study will be reported. Finally, a discussion of the future research directions will complete the section.

Discussion of Major Findings

The purpose of the current study was to explore the impact of multicultural training on school counselors' self-perceived multicultural competence. Although several studies have looked at the impact of multicultural competence on school counselors (Constantine & Gainor, 2001; Constantine & Gushue, 2003; Holcomb-McCoy, 2005) and school counselor trainees (Constantine, 2002; Schwallie-Giddis, et al., 2004), none have looked specifically at the effect of training on multicultural competence of school counselors. These results could have a considerable impact on the multicultural training of school counselors.

Pearson correlations performed between the three different forms of multicultural training (taking a multicultural graduate course, participating in a multiculturally-focused graduate program, and participating in multicultural in-service professional development) and the MCI subscales (Knowledge, Awareness, Skills, Relationship) yielded no significant results. Therefore, multicultural competence does not correlate at all with multicultural training in this sample answering the first research question and sub-questions 1a, 1b, and 1c. It does not appear that pre-service training (taking a multicultural graduate course, participating in a multiculturally-focused graduate program) more greatly influences multicultural competence than does in-service training

(participating in multicultural in-service professional development) or vice versa. Simply put, neither had any relationship to multicultural competence in this sample.

This outcome is surprising considering the amount of training these participants had received. Although this was not a research question, it was important to consider how much training the participants had. Nearly half of the sample (42.7%) had taken a multicultural graduate course *and* participated in in-service professional development. Additionally, only 4.5% did not report having any multicultural training at all. In other words, the great majority of this sample had had at least some kind of multicultural training. What we do not know is the content of the training or the quality of instruction, only that almost all of the participants have engaged in multicultural training. This may have had a significant effect on school counselors' multicultural competence.

There are several possible explanations why the multicultural training of the school counselors did not correlate with their scores on the MCI subscales. One possible reason is that multicultural training did not have any impact on self-perceived multicultural competence of the school counselors in this sample. Perhaps training is not the best way to produce multiculturally competent school counselors. However, another possible conclusion is that the lack of variability may be the reason why there is so little correlation between training and MCI scores. The majority of the sample had received at least some kind of multicultural training (See Table 2). If there had been more participants with little or no multicultural training a more conclusive comparison could have been made.

Another possibility has to do specifically with multicultural counseling courses. Perhaps the curriculum of school counseling multicultural courses is not adequate.

Historically, at their inception, multicultural counseling courses were taught from a "groups" perspective. Each class period was designated to learning about how to counsel a particular group (i.e., Class 1: African-Americans, Class 2: Latinos, Class 3: Native Americans, etc). While the literature supports a more integrative approach, not all courses have caught up. In addition, we do know that our sample is relatively experienced (See Table 1). Therefore, many of them who took a multicultural course in graduate school probably took the course at least ten years ago. It is probable that their courses were taught with a group framework. Although this is a form of multicultural training, this way of teaching multicultural courses is outdated and should be changed. It may not be sufficient to produce culturally competent school counselors.

One other possibility for the lack of correlation between multicultural training and MCI scores has to do with the *amount* of training that the sample received. Although it appears that this sample has received a lot of multicultural training, it is possible that taking a course once a week for a semester or sitting through an hour-long or half-day training on multiculturalism is simply not enough time to understand and apply this very complex subject. After participating in an intensive 9-month program, participants in Schwallie-Giddis' et al. (2004) study still did not feel that they were adequately prepared to work with diverse children and families. Although not statistically significant, the highest correlation between training and an MCI subscale (.20) was between participating in a multiculturally-focused graduate program and multicultural knowledge. It is possible that these types of graduate programs that infuse multiculturalism throughout their curriculum could be developed more in order to adequately meet the multicultural needs of school counselor trainees.

Another possible problem pertaining to training and self-perceived multicultural competence is that classes and other forms of training are not sufficient to create multiculturally competent school counselors. The results of the Schwallie-Giddis, et al. (2004) study demonstrate this. Alexander et al. (2005) advocated for an immersion experience in multicultural counseling training and this may be necessary to create multiculturally competent school counselors. Butler-Byrd, et al. (2006) added a component of working in a "challenged community" (p. 380). As opposed to the Schwallie-Giddis et al. participants, Butler-Byrd saw increases in self-reported self-awareness, counseling and professional skills, and social justice. Although not all participants reported these increases, the results appear to be promising. Alexander, et al. took things a step further by taking their school counselor trainees to another country and reported increases in multicultural skills. Although there are several issues related to full immersion programs that may be what is necessary to have impactful multicultural graduate training for school counselors.

There has not been research performed on this exact topic in the past, therefore, it is difficult to say whether or not this lack of correlation between training and MCI scores is in line with past research. However, the Schwallie-Giddis, et al. (2004) participants in the 9-month intensive multicultural training program did take part in open-ended interviews, where they reported that they did not feel sufficiently multiculturally skilled or multiculturally knowledgeable. This indicates that training is not enough to make school counselors feel multiculturally competent.

By contrast to the findings regarding training, the results also indicate that in-vivo exposure *is* correlated with self-perceived multicultural competence, but not all in-vivo

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experiences are equivalent in producing culturally competent school counselors. Only three of the in-vivo exposure variables were statistically significant: race/ethnicity, disability status, and sexual orientation, answering the second research question. Race/ethnicity had the two highest statistically significant correlations with MCI Awareness (.51) and MCI Knowledge (.33). This finding is not entirely surprising, considering that the MCI is loaded on race/ethnicity variables. In addition, race/ethnicity is a particularly salient multicultural issue in American society. It is an aspect of multiculturalism that is very visible and is changing rapidly in America (Greenberg, 2003). It is possible that school counselors are simply much more aware of the racial and ethnic differences between themselves and their clients. It is also possible that this is the minority group that the participants have the most contact with.

Why are the correlations between working with clients who are a different race/ethnicity than you and MCI Awareness and Knowledge statistically significant, but the correlations with race/ethnicity difference and MCI Skills and Relationship not statistically significant? Race and ethnicity are traits that are highly visible; people are usually very aware of the physical differences between themselves and others. Therefore, working directly with people of a different race/ethnicity may help raise awareness of multicultural issues both within and outside of the counseling relationship. Having these experiences may help the school counselor become more aware of their surroundings in terms of race and ethnicity. These same mechanisms that are helping to increase a school counselor's awareness of racial and ethnic issues may also aid in their knowledge. In order to adequately work with clients who are racially and ethnically different from them, the school counselors may be doing more reading and researching about people of their

clients' backgrounds. Simply listening to their clients' experiences probably also has a profound effect on the school counselor. A good school counselor will recognize opportunities to learn from clients, therefore increasing multicultural knowledge, as measured by the MCI.

In order for a school counselor to be multiculturally skilled, exposure to clients who are different may not be sufficient. Having participated in an in-vivo exposure experience while still in training or receiving supervision while working with racially/ethnically different clients may be necessary in order to improve multicultural skills. This may provide the insight needed to see a correlation between these variable and self-perceived multicultural skills. Another possibility for the lack of correlation between multicultural skills and racially/ethnically different clients has to do with increased awareness. It may be that with awareness being raised, participants are less positive about their own skills. They may have had negative experiences with racially/ethnically different clients or simply felt less competent when working with these clients. This increased awareness of one's own skills could lead to a diminished view of them. If these feelings were very strong, a negative correlation would appear between MCI Skills and this variable, but this is not the case for this sample. Therefore, it may be that this increased awareness has helped improve skills, but also made the school counselor realize that more improvement is necessary. This "balancing out" may be the reason why there is no significant correlation between MC Skills and in-vivo exposure to racially/ethnically different clients.

There is also not a significant correlation between working with clients who are racially/ethnically different from you and MCI Relationship. The reason for this may

have something to do with the definition and operationalization of the construct. There is much less research concerning the importance of a multicultural relationship as there is about multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. The MCI is one of the few measures to include this construct. This subscale has alpha levels lower than the other MCI subscales. It is possible that the questions on the MCI simply do not sufficiently capture the Relationship construct. Another possible reason for the lack of correlation is that working with racially/ethnically different clients does not influence multicultural relationships. Perhaps it is necessary to have more personal relationships in addition to relationships with clients in order for this variable to be correlated with MCI Relationship.

Two other in-vivo exposure variables were statistically significant as well. Difference in disability status was also correlated with MCI Awareness (.27). Although there are mental and emotional disabilities, many people interpret disability as physical disabilities. If this is the case for this sample, it would help explain the correlation with Awareness. The visible aspect of physical disabilities may have the same effect that race/ethnicity does. Being faced, literally, with someone who is different from you in their disability level, may help a school counselor become more aware of their own ideas about disability and help raise their awareness.

Sexual orientation is the final in-vivo variable that is correlated with an MCI scale (MCI Skills; .23). Sexual orientation is a heated and often volatile subject in our society today. Clients who are coming to school counselors with these issues may be dealing with major issues pertaining specifically to their sexual orientation, such as lack of feeling safe, bullying, threats, physical fights. Dealing with these issues may uniquely

require a school counselor to develop new skills for addressing these issues in the school context. It is also possible that the school counselor is a sexual minority and has to deal hateful clients, augmenting their own counseling skills.

Regression analyses between the in-vivo and statistically significant training (multicultural graduate course, in-service professional development) variables and the MCI subscale scores were also performed. After performing regression analyses for the MCI subscales, race/ethnicity was significant for MCI Knowledge and race/ethnicity, disability, and socioeconomic status were significant for MCI Awareness, therefore stepwise multiple regressions were performed for those two subscales. None of the variables (multicultural graduate course, in-service professional development, race/ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, disability status, sexual orientation, and religion) were found to be statistically significant for MCI Relationship or MCI Skills. Therefore, stepwise regressions were not performed for these subscales.

Race/ethnicity's unique contribution to MCI Knowledge scores was .11, which was statistically significant. When all other variables were added on the second step, the change in R^2 was only .06, not a statistically significant change. Therefore, it appears that only race/ethnicity uniquely contributed to the participants' scores on MCI Knowledge. This provides further support that working with clients who are of a different race/ethnicity than you contributes to multicultural knowledge as measured by the MCI.

Three in-vivo variables contributed to MCI Awareness subscale scores. Race/ethnicity had the largest unique contribution with an R^2 value of .27. When disability was added, the R^2 value rose to .33. In the third step, socioeconomic status was

added, raising the R^2 value to .41. When the remainder of the training and in-vivo variables was added, R^2 only rose by .02 to .43, which was not a statistically significant amount. Socioeconomic status had a unique contribution to the regression model even though its correlation with MCI Awareness was very low and not statistically significant (-.03). However, disability had a statistically significant correlation with MCI Awareness (.27), as did race/ethnicity (.51). This provides further support that working with clients who are different from you has a greater relation to multicultural counseling competence than multicultural training.

There may be another reason why in-vivo exposure correlated significantly with MCI subscales while training did not. One would assume that at some point during their careers, many of the participants received supervision. It is possible that while working with people who were different from them, these counselors were receiving supervision, which may have helped them better understand how working with these clients was impacting them professionally.

In addition to examining the correlations between the MCI and training, it is important to consider the impact of the MCI itself. Although the MCI is designed to measure multicultural competence in the areas of Knowledge, Awareness, Skills, and Relationship, it is unclear if it is truly measuring the constructs that it is meant to measure. The way in which the questions are asked on the MCI may not indicate multicultural competence that can be developed by training. The MCI may simply be measuring a person's disposition or attitude in relation to multicultural issues. Questions from the MCI include: *I enjoy multicultural interactions as much as interactions with people of my own culture* and *I examine my own cultural biases*. Are these things that

can be taught? Can you training a school counselor to enjoy multicultural interactions? Or is the MCI measuring a counselor's innate ability to enjoy multicultural interactions more than others? These are important questions that should be examined in future research.

These questions are especially interesting in light of the responses to the open-ended question. A large number (N=37, 41.6%) of the participants opted to respond to this question at the end of the demographic questionnaire. There were slightly more people who responded in the non-professional theme (N=30) than professional (N=25). In addition, the non-professional comments were more diverse. There were the most comments in the non-professional sub-theme of "exposure" (N=9), but several comments in other sub-themes as well. It is possible that this non-professional theme has more to do with this notion of disposition, or attitude, towards multicultural experiences. People who responded to the open-ended question with comments about their life and what they had experienced may want to be exposed to more people who are different from them because that is who they are. Instead of these non-professional experiences being a type of training, they may just be reflective of a multicultural disposition.

The professional sub-theme differed, with "working with specific populations" (N=20) dominating this theme. Under this sub-theme, "race/ethnicity" (N=12) was the group referred to the most. This is in line with the correlations and regression analyses. The participants believed that race/ethnicity was important to mention in their open-ended responses. It may very well be that race/ethnicity is the most important thing to mention because it has the largest overall impact on self-perceived multicultural competence.

Limitations

The participants in the current study were a subset of a larger study designed to evaluate the multicultural competence of all counselors. There are several limitations that arise because of this fact. The use of ACA members is one limitation. ACA members are more likely to be associated with Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)-approved programs. This may mean that the way that school counselors who are members of ACA define themselves as professionals is different from members of American School Counselor Association (ASCA). ASCA members or school counselors in various school districts probably would have been more appropriate populations from which to pull a sample of school counselors. In addition, the use of the MCI may not have been the most appropriate for this sample. As was mentioned before, there are several multicultural competencies that are unique to school counselors. A measure that incorporates those unique competencies may have been more appropriate.

Another limitation of the study was the low response rate. After getting back the initial materials, a follow-up letter should have been sent to try and obtain a greater percentage of participants. This would have resulted in more subjects for the larger study, but also would have probably resulted in a greater number of school counselors for the current study.

There were also a number of limitations associated with the demographic questionnaire. The demographic questionnaire only asked subjects what kind of multicultural training that they had received. It would have been helpful to ask more detailed questions about training. Information about the amount of training, the content

of courses, and the nature of in-service professional development would have allowed for more specific analyses and conclusions. Clarification on the demographic questionnaire around multicultural graduate program would have been helpful as well. One would imagine that every person who participated in a multicultural graduate program had also taken a multicultural graduate course. However, not all of the participants who checked off multicultural graduate program also marked that they had taken a multicultural graduate course. This would lead one to believe that perhaps some participants misunderstood the term. A short explanation on the questionnaire about the term may have reduced some of this possible confusion.

Finally, the MCI is a self-report measure. Therefore, participants are reporting on their *self-perceived* multicultural competence rather than their *actual* multicultural competence. It is generally socially acceptable, and expected, to be multiculturally competent. Social desireability may be leading participants to report that they are more multiculturally competent than they actually are. The correlation between multicultural training and competence would be altered or interpreted differently if this is the case.

Future Directions & Research

The current study has offered some insight about multicultural training and its impact on the multicultural competence of school counselors. However, more research is needed to expand upon this broad topic. The lack of correlation between multicultural training and self-perceived multicultural competence is not fully understood. A larger sample of school counselors with greater variability of multicultural training would be helpful in clarifying this issue. In addition to a larger sample, it may be advantageous to sample school counselors directly from schools or ASCA instead of ACA. It would also

be beneficial to use an instrument that was designed specifically for school counselors as opposed to counselors in general. A new study focused solely on school counselors with the aforementioned changes would offer more direct insight into the relationship between multicultural training and school counselors' competence.

It would also be beneficial to look more closely at training programs. For this study, information was not gathered about the nature of multicultural training, only type. It would be interesting to learn more about the content of multicultural courses and in-service professional development. It is possible that it is not as important whether or not a school counselor takes a multicultural course; what may be more important is what is being taught *within* those courses. Certain elements of a multicultural course may be significantly correlated with types of multicultural competence. More research on this topic would be a great contribution to the field.

The results of this study indicate that in-vivo exposure is important, possibly more so than formal multicultural training. Therefore, more research is needed on this topic. As outlined in this paper's literature review, there are programs that incorporate in-vivo exposure into their curriculum. More research about the intersection of these types of programs, multicultural training, and self-perceived multicultural competence is warranted. Supervision and its role in increasing multicultural competence in school counselors in relation to in-vivo exposure should also be examined.

The issue of self-report should be addressed in future research. All self-report measures are biased, therefore more research is needed looking at multicultural training and *observed* multicultural competence. Qualitative case studies around this issue would

be beneficial, as would longitudinal data. More varied measures of multicultural competence would make a valuable contribution to the field.

Finally, this study also has larger philosophical questions for how multiculturalism is studied and the language that is used. In much of the research and in this particular study, the word competence is used to describe where school counselors, and all counselors, should be in their multicultural training. However, some multicultural scholars will argue that multicultural competence is not something that can truly be achieved; rather it is something that counseling trainees and practitioners continually strive for throughout their careers. Should competence be the word used when discussing multicultural training? A possible alternate, more accurate description may be one's ongoing developmental multicultural experience. In the future this term, or something similar, may be used to replace the perhaps outdated concept of competence.

Additionally, when multicultural training is discussed this concept of competence is always mentioned. In the literature, multicultural competence is typically determined by a measure of some kind. It will be important in future research to truly examine what that competence (or ongoing developmental multicultural experience) looks like. When teaching a semester-long course or running a day-long workshop, how would a trainer determine whether or not the training was a success? Was indicators would determine that a school counselor trainee or practitioner is more or less competent? Would school counselors have to say declare their increased competence? Would they have to *show* it in some way? It will be important for researchers to examine what outcomes they seek in order to affirm a positive multicultural outcome. The examination of this aspect of the research will have major implications for researchers and practitioners.

Demographic Questionnaire

Please answer all questions as completely and honestly as possible. You will be able to fill in further information if necessary. Thank you!

- ➢ Age: Please check the applicable box:
    - ☐ 21-35
    - ☐ 36-45
    - ☐ 46-55
    - ☐ 56+-70

- ➢ Race/Ethnicity: Please check all applicable boxes:
    - ☐ White/Caucasian
    - ☐ Black/African-American
    - ☐ American-Indian/Eskimo/Aleut
    - ☐ Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
    - ☐ Hispanic or Latino Origin
    - ☐ Multi-racial
    - ☐ Other_____

- ➢ Gender: Please check the applicable box:
    - ☐ Male
    - ☐ Female

- ➢ Number of years in professional practice: Please check the applicable box:
    - ☐ 1-5 years
    - ☐ 6-10 years
    - ☐ 11-15 years
    - ☐ 16-20 years
    - ☐ 20+ years

- ➢ Highest Degree Obtained: Please check box corresponding to the highest degree obtained:
- ☐ Bachelor's
- ☐ Master's
- ☐ Advanced Graduate Status
- ☐ Doctoral
- ☐ Other_____

- ➢ Professional Credentials: Please check all that apply
    - ☐ Professional License
    - ☐ National Certification (e.g., NCC, CRC, NCSC)
    - ☐ State Certification
    - ☐ Other_____
        (OVER)

- ➢ Professional setting: Please check all that apply:
  - ☐ School
  - ☐ Agency
  - ☐ Private Practice
  - ☐ Business/Industry
  - ☐ Other

- ➢ Nature of Formal Multicultural Training: Please check all that apply:
  - ☐ Multicultural counseling graduate course
  - ☐ Multicultural graduate counseling or related degree program
  - ☐ In-service professional development
  - ☐ Other_____

- ➢ Nature of Multicultural Professional Experience:
  Estimated percentage of your clients/students who are racially/ethnically different from you___%
  Estimated percentage of your clients/students who are in a different age range than you___%
  Estimated percentage of your clients/students who are in a different socioeconomic bracket than you___%
  Estimated percentage of your clients/students who have a different disability status than you___%
  Estimated percentage of your clients/students who are have a different sexual orientation than you___%
  Estimated percentage of your clients/students whose religion/spiritual orientation is different from your own___%

- ➢ Optional: Please list any other multicultural experiences that you believe have affected your work as a professional:

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

Thank you so much for your participation and cooperation

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